Bible Hermeneutics

Parables and Proverbs

Rule of Emphasis

Absolute or Relative

Minor Rules
Parables and Proverbs

- Are Sunday School teachers right?
- Are parables to help the uneducated?
- What does the Bible actually say?
- How did the apostles react to them?
- Pastors can teach anything with them.
“These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.”

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John 16:29
Parables and Proverbs

“His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou *plainly*, and speakest no proverb.”

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John 16:29
“Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel.”

Ezekiel 17:2
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Ezekiel 17:2
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6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

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Proverbs 1
10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?  
11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.  
12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.  
13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

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Matthew 13
Parables and Proverbs

- Parables are hard to understand
- Parables are riddles for interpretation
- Proverbs are dark sayings and not plain
- They are not to make truth easy at all!
- Without caution, they can lead to error
“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

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Proverbs 29:18

- This is used for building campaigns!
- This is used for forward planning!
- But the proverb limits it to revelation!
Identify Context / Intent

• The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37)

• Some preach salvation from it!

• Their creativity is to be commended!

• But they are totally, grossly wrong!

• Take this path and there is no map!
The Good Samaritan

- The wounded Jew is not dead sinners!
- The Samaritan is not a preacher!
- The wine is not the gospel message!
- The oil is not the Holy Spirit!
- The two pence are not two testaments!
- The inn is not a local church!
The Good Samaritan

• What is the lesson’s context / intent?

• “But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?” (10:29)

• “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?” (10:36)

• The parable is to define “neighbour”!!!
The Prodigal Son

• A lesson in how to be a good father?

• A lesson in dividing the inheritance?

• A lesson in restoring church members?

• It is primarily to rebuke self-righteous!

• It is primarily about the older brother!

• Luke 15 rebukes Pharisees (15:2-3)!
A lesson in regeneration - conversion?

Is this a lesson in unconverted elect?

There is no salvation speculation here!

It was to teach apostles how to hear!

Every man can be all four grounds!

Take heed how you hear (Luke 8:18)!
The Unjust Steward

- A difficult, obscure parable!
- Not a lesson in financial management!
- Not a lesson to catch up to the world!
- Not Jesus praising an unjust steward!
- The lesson is preparing for the future!
- We should exceed the world’s children!
The Lesson Over Details

- Details serve the lesson in context!
- Leaven can be false doctrine (Mat 16:6)
- Leaven can be wickedness (I Cor 5:7-8)
- But it can be the kingdom (Matt 13:33)
- Kingdom leaven affects all the lump!
- The kingdom grew from small to large!
Use Proverbs Carefully

“Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird” (Proverbs 1:17).

• Remember, they are dark sayings.
• Remember, they need interpretation.
• Is a fowler foolish if a bird sees a net?
• A bird is stupid for seeing his own trap!
• Foolish young men ignore warnings (1:18)
Use Proverbs Carefully

“Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.”

Proverbs 5:16

• Water was just used for lawful sex (5:15).
• Here the water flows publicly from you.
• It is an entirely different water!
• This water is your lawful children!
• The strange woman cannot give this!
Use Proverbs Carefully

“Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him” (Prov 8:30).

• Is this God and Jesus, the eternal Son?
• It sounds like it, if you love sounds!
• We want the sense of words in context!
• This is the figure of personification!
• Lady Wisdom was in the beginning!
Use Proverbs Carefully

“Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant” (Prov 9:17).

• Are stolen waters truly sweet?
• Is stolen bread in secret pleasant?
• These are the lying words of a whore!
• This is the seduction of fornication!
• Despise and reject these lying words!
“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”

Proverbs 11:24

- If you throw away money, does it grow?
- What withholding is under consideration?
- This is generosity in godly giving!
- Only godly scattering will increase!
- Ungodly savings or miserliness will fail!
Use Proverbs Carefully

“All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast” (Prov 15:15).

• How is the man here afflicted?
• Is he a Job that never gets any relief?
• The parallelism guides interpretation.
• The two clauses are parts of one lesson!
• Your attitude can affect your whole life!
Use Proverbs Carefully

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Prov 20:1).

- How does wine mock?
- How does strong drink rage?
- Drunkenness is condemned here.
- This is metonymy of cause for effect.
- Excess of either will bring these results.
Use Proverbs Carefully

“The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly” (Prov 20:30).

• Are these mere health observations?
• Are the stripes a teenager’s six-pack?
• Wisdom is here, not *Muscle and Fitness*.
• Corporal punishment described two ways.
• Proper beating will save the soul from evil.
“Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not” (Prov 29:24).

• Who is cursing?
• Who is cursed?
• What is bewraying?
• Who should bewray what?
• Helping a thief by not testifying brings doom to your own soul!
Proverbs Babel

- Modern Bible versions corrupt Proverbs
- God promised to destroy worldly wise
- “Dark sayings” overwhelm their ability
- They say they only “updated language”
- Their folly is like Pharaoh’s magicians!
“The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.”
Proverbs 12:27

“The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.”

New King James Version

“The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting. But diligence is man’s precious possession.”
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The MESSAGE

“A lazy life is an empty life, but ‘early to rise’ gets the job done.”
Proverbs 12:27

“The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.”

Contemporary English Version

“Anyone too lazy to cook will starve, but a hard workers is a valuable treasure.”
Proverbs 12:27

“The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.”

New Century Version

“The lazy catch no food to cook, but a hard worker will have great wealth.”
Proverbs 21:28

“A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.”
Proverbs 21:28

“A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.”

New King James Version

“A false witness shall perish, But the man who hears him will speak endlessly.”
Proverbs 21:28

“A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.”

New International Version (#1)

“A false witness will perish, and whoever listens to him will be destroyed forever.”
“A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.”

New International Version (#2)
“A false witness will perish, but the words of an obedient man will live on.”
Proverbs 21:28

“A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.”

The MESSAGE

“A lying witness is unconvincing; a person who speaks truth is respected.”
“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.”
“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.”

New King James Version

“The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body.”
Proverbs 18:8

“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.”

The MESSAGE

“Listening to gossip is like eating cheap candy; do you really want junk like that in your belly?”
Proverbs 18:8

“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.”

Contemporary English Version

“There’s nothing so delicious as the taste of gossip! It melts in your mouth.”
Proverbs 18:8

“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.”

New Century Version

“The words of gossip are like tasty bits of food. People like to gobble them up.”
Proverbs Babel

- Modern Bible versions corrupt Proverbs
- God promised to destroy worldly wise
- “Dark sayings” overwhelm their ability
- Their folly is like Pharaoh’s magicians!
- For more such: [http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/proverbs-babel.pdf]
Rule of Emphasis

• The Bible may state a clear emphasis.

• Some things are more important.

• We want God’s priorities always.

• Some priorities are by clear inspiration.

• Learning God’s ranking gives wisdom.
Rule of Emphasis

- Private holiness trumps public worship
- Mercy in trouble trumps sacrifice
- Judgment, mercy, faith trump tithing
- Charity exceeds faith and hope
- Proverbs is full of priorities by “better”
- A Bible study of “better,” “more,” etc.
Rule of Emphasis

- The Bible shows priority by emphasis
- Observe more extensive treatment
- His death and resurrection over birth
- Teaching in the church over singing
- Obey authority over rebel exceptions
Rule of Emphasis

• Some topics emphasized in one place
• Some chapters dedicated to one topic
• Do you know Bible enough to go there?
• Election and reprobation? Romans 9!
• A little test to test your knowledge!
Absolute or Relative

- Points emphasized by absolute terms
- Paul’s influence was relatively small
- They exaggerated it for a big response
- The Bible is absolute truth – even with relative statements!
Absolute or Relative

- Absolute terms may be relative in force
- This is neither exaggerating or lying
- The lack of modifiers requires study
- Luke 14:12-14 forbid family meals?
- *Thou shalt not kill* absolute or relative?
Absolute or Relative

• James blasted swearing; Paul swore!

• May women wear clothes (I Pet 3:3-4)?

• May we ever resist evil (Matt 5:39)?

• Jesus condemn planning (Mat 6:31-34)?

• Does end justify any means (I Co 9:22)?
Absolute or Relative

• Proverbs requires this rule of caution.

• General rules with exceptions.

• Riches do not always follow diligence.

• Some children are incorrigible (De 21).

• Diligence works, but always to king?
Absolute or Relative

- Right answer always kissed (Pr 24:26)?
- A good word always work (Pr 12:25)?
- Universal terms with limits (Acts 2:44).
- Universal for many (Matt 3:5; Mk 1:33)?
- Universal for all kinds (1 Tim 6:10; 2:4).
Absolute or Relative

- Universal negatives allow particular exceptions (Matt 5:34; John 3:32; etc.).

- Universal positives allow particular exceptions (Luke 18:1; I Tim 4:17).

- Eph 1:22 and Heb 2:8 have all things under Christ, but what of I Cor 15:27?
Absolute or Relative

• Our Arminian opponents love the words “all” and “world,” but they hate the combination (Luke 2:1; Col 1:6)!

• They love “not willing that any should perish,” but they ignore “all which he hath given me I should lose nothing”!
Proof Text or Reference?

• A proof text proves a point.

• A reference text only refers to it.

• Do not try to prove by a reference text.

• Each text proves something, but what?

• The difference requires previous rules.
God Is Love (I John 4:16)

• Proof or reference text? For what?

• God is capable of love and does so.

• But what or whom does He love?

• And for how long?

• Is He only love or always love?
God Is Love (I John 4:16)

- Does He love you?
- Can He also hate?
- What or whom might He hate?
- The words prove little about His love.
- The details are furnished elsewhere.
Multiple Witnesses

• Legal rule of two or three witnesses

• Reject doctrine from only one verse

• Think baptism for dead (I Cor 15:29)!

• Only I John 5:7 for trinity? Think again!

• Gen 1:26; Isaiah 48:16; Luke 3:22; John 1:29-34; 14:26; Acts 2:33; II Cor 13:14!
Progressive Revelation

- God reveals more truth over time.
- Moses knew God above Abram (Ex 6:3).
- O.T. is beggarly shadows in light of N.T.
- Paul knew secret things (Eph 3:1-12).
- We follow Christ by Paul (I Cor 11:2).
Simple Over Complex

- False teachers use complexity (Co 2:8).
- Simplicity is a general rule (II Co 11:3).
- If equal alternatives, choose simple.
- Harold Camping’s number schemes are timely for May 25, 2011!
Bible Hermeneutics

• God has taught us much to save us.

• Men like Harold Camping have no rules.

• Personal qualifications are crucial.

• Rules cannot help ignorance of Bible.

• Read the Bible every day and learn it.

• May God preserve us by His word!
For More Truth Like This

A Complete Outline of Hermeneutics


www.LetGodBeTrue.com