

(D) Jesus taught that part of his mission was to *reveal* God’s truth through his teaching.

- **PARABLE #6: PARABLE OF LIGHTING A LAMP IN ORDER TO ENABLE SEEING.** (applied to God’s intention)
  - Just as one does not light a lamp in order to conceal it under a basket, so God does not send his Light [true understanding] into the world in order to conceal it. He sends his Light [true understanding] into the world in order to reveal it and make it known so that that Light might illuminate people’s lives. Therefore, however much it might appear that Jesus is “hiding” the truth—because he is teaching in parables, for example—that is not, in fact, what Jesus is doing. God’s intention is for Jesus to *reveal* his truth to mankind, not to *hide* it from them. God desires that nothing he has chosen to reveal remain secret; and Jesus’s desire corresponds with God’s desire.
    - *Mark* 4:21–22
    - *Luke* 8:16–17

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(E) Jesus taught that he would be required to go to his death on behalf of mankind.

- **PARABLE #7: PERFORMED PARABLE OF THE FOOT-WASHING.**
  - Jesus acted out the role of a slave performing a humble act of service for his disciples. He did this in order to depict the fact that, in just a few hours, he would once again humble himself and perform a profoundly consequential act of service for his disciples. In fact, the act of service that he would later perform for them was absolutely essential if they were to receive forgiveness and Life. (To be specific, he was about to go to the cross to die for their sins.) Therefore, the washing of his disciples’ feet was intended to serve as a parabolic depiction of his going to the cross to die for his disciples.
    - *John* 13:5–17

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- **PARABLE #8: PARABLE REGARDING JESUS AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD.**
  - A good shepherd who is committed to the welfare of his flock will be willing to lay down his life for his sheep. An uncaring hireling is not willing to lay down his life for those same sheep. By analogy to a good shepherd, Jesus—God’s Messiah—is committed to the welfare of God’s people such that he will willingly sacrifice his life for them.
    - *John* 10:11–18

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(F) Jesus taught that he was the one who fulfilled the prophet Zechariah's prediction that one would come who had been appointed by God to serve as king of the kingdom that God had promised to establish.

- ***PARABLE #9: PERFORMED PARABLE OF RIDING INTO JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY.***
  - Jesus's act of entering Jerusalem on a donkey was a reenactment of a vision that the prophet Zechariah had described. Zechariah's vision was a vision of the one appointed to be king of God's kingdom coming to the people of Israel in anticipation of God fulfilling his promise to Israel to establish them as a righteous and prosperous kingdom. In Zechariah's vision, the king comes to Israel riding on a donkey. This feature of Zechariah's vision would seem to predict that, at least at his initial introduction to the people of Israel, God's king would be less than impressive. He would be rather humble, ordinary, and unremarkable.
    - *John 12:14–15*
    - *Matthew 21:1–7*
    - *Mark 11:1–7*
    - *Luke 19:29–35*

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*Theme #2 > Another important theme in Jesus's parables is his prediction that the religious establishment of his day would reject him and his teaching:*

(A) Jesus predicted that the religious establishment would reject him and would then be judged by God as a consequence.

- ***PARABLE #10: PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD OWNER'S SON.***
  - Consistent with their history, the Jewish establishment was about to reject and mistreat Jesus, even though he was God's Son. In this parable, Jesus tells a story that is loosely analogous to how Israel has responded to and treated God's prophets and predicts, by analogy, how they are about to treat God's Son. Jesus's primary point and emphasis is to predict the judgment that will fall upon his contemporaries for their murder of God's Messiah.
    - *Matthew 21:33–45\**
    - *Mark 12:1–12\**
    - *Luke 20:9–19\**
- ***PARABLE #11: PARABLE OF THE REFUSED INVITATIONS TO THE BIG DINNER PARTY.***
  - Jesus tells a story where men invited to a big dinner party decline their invitation to the party for a variety of different reasons. They deem something else

more important and interesting than attending the dinner. In a manner loosely analogous to this, Jesus is predicting that the Jewish establishment of his generation will find other things more important and more interesting than dining with him in the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, by analogy to the story he is telling, he predicts that God will—in place of the contemporary Jews who refuse his invitation—grant many “sinners” from among the Jews, as well as many Gentiles, a place at the table with Jesus in the coming Kingdom of God.

- *Luke 14:16–24*

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- ***PARABLE #12: PARABLE OF THE WEDDING FEAST.***

- Jesus tells the story of a king inviting various individuals to the wedding feast of his son. When he sends his slaves out to inform the invitees that the wedding feast is ready, the invitees are unwilling to come. So he sends out more slaves to summon the invitees to the dinner. Most of the invitees ignore the summons—going about business as usual—and some invitees mistreat the slaves, even sometimes killing them. As a consequence, the king sends out his army to destroy the city of these individuals who have refused his invitation. He then instructs his slaves to fill the wedding hall with many otherwise “uninvited” people to take the place of those individuals who declined his invitation. However, when one of those “uninvited” individuals was found not to be dressed in a manner worthy of the feast, he was thrown out of the dinner and punished severely. Jesus is utilizing this story to recite, by analogy, the history of Israel. Israel has been uninterested in God’s invitation to his wedding feast. Israel has mistreated and even killed the prophets who came to them to summon them. As a consequence, God is going to destroy the people of Israel who have refused his invitation and mistreated his servants. And he is going to give their place at the wedding feast to Gentiles. (However, only some of those Gentiles will be qualified to enjoy the wedding feast.)

- *Matthew 22:1–14\**

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- ***PARABLE #13: PARABLE OF THE DOOMED FIG TREE.***

- Jesus tells the story of a vineyard owner disappointed in a fig tree because it is not bearing fruit. He instructs the keeper of his vineyard to cut it down. The vineyard-keeper asks for one more year to try to coax it into bearing fruit in that next year. If it does not, he agrees that it should be cut down. By analogy, Jesus is describing his own mindset and desire. He has come to a point in his ministry where—in view of Israel’s unbelief—he agrees that they deserve to be judged. However, Jesus desires for God to wait “one more year” before he commits to judging Israel for their unbelief and lack of repentance. The significance of this parable for Jesus’s contemporaries is this: just as the fig tree in the story is existing on borrowed time, so are Jesus’s contemporaries living on borrowed time. Repentance is urgent. The time to repent is now.

- *Luke 13:6–9\**

(B) Jesus warned his followers that—due to their stubborn self-centeredness and/or spiritual blindness—the Jewish people of his day would stubbornly refuse to believe the truth about him.

• ***PARABLE #14: PARABLE OF CHILDREN AT PLAY IN THE STREET.***

- The generation of Jews contemporary with Jesus are responding to God’s messengers like entirely self-centered, petulant, whiny children who want what they want and who refuse to be happy with anything except what they want. (They complain that John the Baptist is too much of an ascetic, while they complain that Jesus is not austere enough.) Like completely self-centered children, they will not accept as their Messiah anyone who is not exactly who they want him to be.

• *Luke 7:31-35*

• ***PARABLE #15: FABLE OF RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.***

- This story is a fable where the “moral of the story” is that, if a people are hardened against God and his truth, then even a man coming back from the dead would not be enough to convince them to believe the truth and repent.

• *Luke 16:19–31*

(C) Jesus—using a parable—rebuked the religious establishment for their inexcusable rejection of the truth about him. Jesus suggests that they have no excuse for their failure to believe.

• ***PARABLE #16: PARABLE OF ASSESSING THE WEATHER FROM THE SKY.***

- It is possible, from an assessment of the observable atmospheric conditions, to know what the weather is and to predict and anticipate what will happen in the weather. By analogy, it is possible—from the observable signs accompanying him (that is, from the miracles being performed by him)—to know that the Messiah has come and is present with us.

• *Luke 12:54–56 [cf. Matt. 16:1–3]*

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*Theme #3 > Another important theme in Jesus’s parables is his critical assessment of the attitudes, beliefs, perspectives, and teachings of the religious establishment of his day:*

(A) Jesus warned his followers that they should not seek to emulate the religious leaders of their day, for those leaders are without any true understanding and are not worthy to be followed.

• ***PARABLE #17: PARABLE OF A BLIND MAN LEADING A BLIND MAN INTO A PIT.***

- Just as a blind man cannot be safely guided by another blind man, so is an ignorant, self-deceived Pharisee unable to serve safely as a guide, counselor, or teacher to another ignorant, self-deceived human being.