

## The Challenge of Jesus' Parables.

Edited by Richard N. Longenecker

### Book Review.

The Challenge of Jesus' Parables is a collection of essays organized and edited by Richard N. Longenecker. The book includes essays by Klyne R. Snodgrass, Robert H. Stein, Craig A. Evans, Morna D. Hooker, Donald A. Hagner, Richard N. Longenecker, Allan W. Martens, Richard T. France, Stephen C. Barton, Stephen I. Wright, Walter L. Liefeld, Sylvia C. Keesmaat, and Michael P. Knowles. The first chapter covers the history of parables and interpretation of parables in historical and cultural settings. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are focused on exploring individual parables.

This book offers a new perspective on the significance of Jesus' parables for modern Christians. The Book, which is a part of the McMaster New Testament Studies Series, focuses on many key aspects of the parable genre, including its use of allegory, the Gospel's context of the parables, and the relevance of these stories to modern situations. Gospel parables are crucial to gaining the understanding of Jesus and the mission that he carried out. The parables are more than just tales, and modern readers who want to understand the full meaning of them face a number of challenges that are significant in the field of biblical studies. In "The challenge of Jesus' parables" thirteen New Testament experts who contribute their knowledge to this book, provide the background information that is required to comprehend the original context and meaning of Jesus' parables in addition to their current applicability. All of this information is presented in a way that is simple enough for average bible students to comprehend. Richard Longenecker brings up some very fascinating topics in his discussion of the emotive and moral

functions of the parables. Although it may be an exaggeration to state that a parable is not something that is understood, but rather experienced, he claims that it is nevertheless a vehicle and message that may change the reader due to the combination of its literary style, its truth, the presence of the Spirit, and the human response: "a parable is both a vehicle and a message and as such it possesses both informative and affective dimensions" (37). Thirteen authors contributed to this book to provide Jesus' parables with their intended significance and modern applicability. Therefore, a deeper examination of the author's distinctive understanding of Jesus' Parables offers direction for biblical research.

Readers of the Gospels in the modern day who are interested in comprehending the meaning of Jesus' parables will find that these parables, which are recorded in the Gospels, offer a significant level of difficulty. This is true not just regarding the audience to whom they were originally directed, but also for those who read them now. But nevertheless "The challenge of Jesus' parables" provides a deep examination of the parables, their interpretations, and their applicability to modern society. For example, the purpose of Jesus' parables is to make us think, provide a challenge, and provide a direct response to his message to follow him as a disciple. This is especially understandable at the initial level and in the case of parables that emphasize discipleship. The fact that Jesus used not just parables but also similitudes and allegories from the Bible to alter lives demonstrates, according to Longenecker, that it is not so much the form but the substance that God utilizes to transform people who hear and react to his word. "The parables of the Bible possess a twofold nature. They contain both an informative dimension (the reality part) and an affective one" (48) . It is obvious that the people who contributed to the book come from many different places and offer their own distinct points of view to the

discussion, which makes the book an excellent resource for anybody interested in biblical studies.

Moreover, one of the key themes of the book is the importance of understanding the cultural and historical context in which the parables were written. Divided into four parts, the book discusses the "history, genre, and analogies" of the parables. As Klyne Snodgrass points out, we have gone full circle from one old type of allegorizing to a more careful and valid current version, he provides a very instructive, short review of the history of interpretation, particularly in the modern time. Robert Stein addresses the issue of genre, acknowledging that the parables have both instructive and emotive components. Moreover, Craig Evans provides an analysis of the parables found in the Old Bible, the intertestamental period, and the early rabbinic writings, comparing them with Jesus' parables. "Centuries of Christianity offers valid and instructive points of comparison to the parables of Jesus. For understanding the earliest rabbinic parables is to be able to understand the parables of Jesus" (48). The parables were written long time ago, so their relevance to modern readers may take some interpretation. Nevertheless, the relevance and meaning of the parables may be better understood if we consider the historical and cultural setting in which they were first spoken.

The challenge that is offered by the parables is another major element that runs throughout the book as the parables that Jesus told are not always straightforward or simple to relate to modern life. For instance, these parables challenge us to discover redemption in Jesus Christ, to bear fruit, and to have faith that the Kingdom will come in its fullness despite the fact that it may not seem to be coming at all right now. In addition, the book provides commentaries on the parables, emphasizing their significance in Jesus' mission. Considering the rejection of Jesus'

message of the kingdom by the Jews, the author claims that Jesus "the makes use of teaching devices that could both conceal and reveal the mysteries of that kingdom. But the parables of Matthew 13 are not just to be understood as teachings pertinent for disciples of that day, for all" (122). As a result, the parables often include some complicated concepts and controversial themes that require thinking. If we invest enough time, we may draw wisdom from the parables that will help us live lives of more significance and fulfilment.

In addition, the book is both intellectual and theological, since its' chapters are written in a modern research language. The well-established academics use modern methods of study to address the concerns and questions of modern church members. Moreover, this book may serve as a guidebook for theology students and pastors of the church in presenting Jesus' parables within the framework of modern challenges. The authors' goal was to make their insights more accessible to the theology students and modern church members. "The Challenge of Jesus' Parables" is a valuable resource for anybody interested in biblical studies since it demonstrates how Jesus used parables to teach his disciples. It gives readers deeper understanding of Jesus' teachings and shows how to put them into practice in our daily lives. The authors who contributed to the book make it a valuable resource that welcomes many points of view. The relevance of the parables may be better grasped if we look at them from different perspectives. The book serves as a reminder that the parables are more than simple stories- they are messages that can transform the reader's life through their literary form, truth, the presence of the Spirit, and the human response they call for.