

## Parables

The idea that the words in any story (including those in the book of Genesis) can have more than one meaning and still make sense can be likened to one of Jesus' parables:

“... indeed he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:

‘I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.’ ” [Mt. 13:34-35; Ps. 78:2]

Think of it: “...since the foundation of the world”! That might even include Creation, as in the book of Genesis. In fact, what if the book of Genesis is a parable? After all, if the “Son of God” would only speak in parables, then why not God the Father? For, according to John,

“...the son...can do only what he sees the Father doing.” [Jn. 5:19]

or, as I'm more used to hearing,

“A tree is known by its fruit.” [Lk. 6:44]

Parables, by their very nature, are meant to contain more information than what one “sees” on the surface. Perhaps that’s why some of them seem so irritating to so many people. I remember one particular parable that used to set my teeth on edge:

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this: Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible: the foolish ones did take their lamps, but they brought no oil, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry, ‘The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him.’ At this, all those bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, ‘Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out.’ But they replied, ‘There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves.’ They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other bridesmaids arrived later. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said ‘open the door for us.’ But he replied, ‘I tell you solemnly, I do not know you.’ So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.”

[Mt. 25:1-13]

I remember feeling irritated that the Kingdom of Heaven should be filled with such mean, stingy people—people who wouldn't even lend others a little bit of oil! This was definitely not my kind of heaven...and I wasn't at all sure that I wanted to go to such a place, in spite of everything that priests, ministers and the like had to say about it! I had never heard any explanation of this passage other than the idea that people should always "be ready" (whether you wanted to go or not!)...and certainly nothing about the uncharitable actions of those whom God seemed to prefer in His kingdom.

Then, God came along:

*"For your light to shine, you must have faith. Faith is the fuel. No one can give you any of their faith if yours is not enough. And faith is very hard to come by at the last minute."*

I had to look at the parable in a different way. Only then, did I understand that in order to have faith, you must

*"...not worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it." [Mt. 6:25]*

You must

“Set your hearts on his kingdom first...” [Mt. 6:33]

and everything you need will be given to you. Therefore, if you don't have what you need (be it *oil* or *faith*) in the Last Days (whatever that means!), then you're not going to find it, or get it from someone else, at the last minute. End of parable.

The book of Genesis is like that. It means different things to different people. Some are irritated by the contents, while some swear—though one really shouldn't swear, you know—that because it's in the Bible, it's the Word of God. End of discussion.

There are also those who believe that there are no deeper meanings than the ones that were taught to them as children, while others believe that these stories are the basis for assuaging the masses. Sadly, there have also been those who have used the book as a means of controlling...and even destroying...others.

There are probably as many different beliefs concerning the books in the Bible—Genesis included—as there are people. It all depends on how you look at it. Reality, after all, is decided on an individual basis, no matter what the topic. However, the way in which you interpret what you see tells an individual more about YOU than it does about whatever it is you are viewing or interpreting. If nothing else, it tells them “where you stand” in relation to the “event.”

“For a man’s words flow out of what fills his heart.” [Mt. 12:34]

New ideas often have a hard time coexisting with old ones. A new idea causes a change of heart; and therefore a change of actions. New Spirit, New Life; but never New Spirit, old way of living. That’s why

“No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on to an old cloak, because the patch pulls away from the cloak and the tear gets worse. Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; if they do, the skins burst, the wine runs out, and the skins are lost. No; they put new wine into fresh skins and both are preserved.” [Mt. 9:16, 17]

Apparently, it’s important that both are preserved, because,

“every scribe who becomes a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old.”

[Mt. 13:52]

If they weren’t both preserved, how could anyone tie them together, later on?