

# THE PARABLES OF JESUS (NTGK6323)

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
New Testament Department, Biblical Studies Division  
Dr. Norris Grubbs, Professor of NT and Greek  
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## **NOBTS MISSION STATEMENT:**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

## **COURSE PURPOSE, CORE VALUE FOCUS, AND CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES:**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “academic excellence” especially highlighted in this course. The seminary is emphasizing the core value of doctrinal integrity this year, “Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it, teach it, proclaim it, and submit to it. Our confessional commitments are outlined in the “Articles of Religious Belief” and the “Baptist Faith and Message 2000.”

NOBTS has seven basic competencies guiding our Masters degree programs: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual & Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. This course addresses the “Biblical Exposition” competency by helping the student learn to interpret the Bible accurately.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This study will include a detailed analysis of the Greek text of selected parables of Christ as found in the Synoptic Gospels. The literary genre of parable will be studied, recent studies in the area will be reviewed, the backgrounds for understanding the parables will be examined, and the Synoptic parables will be interpreted.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The outcomes of this course should include the following:

1. Students should understand the state of research related to the parables of Jesus
2. Students should gain an increased appreciation for the relevance of the exegetical study of the parables
3. Students should acquire the ability to apply their understanding of the Greek language and of the parables to a sound interpretation of the text

## **COURSE TEACHING METHODS:**

This course will be taught via a combination of pedagogical methods, including but not limited to the following: lectures, student assignments, small group work, and student presentations. Both inductive and deductive approaches to learning will be utilized.

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

1. *The Greek New Testament*, UBS 5th ed. (or 4<sup>th</sup> Revised), or the Nestle-Aland 28th ed.
2. Craig Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition
3. Simon J. Kistemaker: *The Parables: Understanding the Stories Jesus Told*

## RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

1. Kenneth Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* and *Through Peasants' Eyes*
2. Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive guide to the Parables to Jesus*, 2nd edition

## REQUIREMENTS IN THE COURSE:

1. The student will attend and participate in the class sessions.
2. The student will complete the assigned translations according to the schedule. Translations will be checked by class participation and during the midterm and final.
3. The student is required to read the assigned material according to the schedule. The reading log attached to the syllabus must be completed and turned in during the time for the final exam to demonstrate the completion of this assignment.
4. A midterm and a final exam covering the Greek text, assigned readings, and all class material studied up to the time of the exam. Each exam includes short answer & exegesis questions.
5. Each student will select a background study from the attached list. A typed study about 3 to 4 pages in length will be presented in class, with digital or print copies made available for all class members. The presentation is on the date assigned for the parable.
6. Each student will prepare an exegetical paper on one of the parables or a topic that applies to several parables. The paper topic must be approved by the professor ahead of time. The paper should be a formal research paper about 10 to 15 pages double-spaced in length according to Turabian on form and style.

## COURSE EVALUATION:

Participation	10%
Reading Log	10%
Background Paper	15%
Translations	15%
Midterm	15%
Final	15%
Exegetical Paper	20%

## CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS: (K = Kistemaker CB = Blomberg)

Jan	22	Introduction to the course		
	24	Synoptic Problem		
	29	Introduction to the Parables		CB: 17-193; K 9-20
	31	Parable of the Soils (Video)	Mk. 4:1-9, 13-20	CB 288f, K30f
Feb	5	The Wheat and the Tares	Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43	CB 244f, K 44f
	7	<b>Pontotoc Day</b>		
	12-14	Mustard Seed	Mt. 13:31-35	CB 391f, K 51f
		Leaven		
		Hidden Treasure and the Pearl (Video)	Mt. 13:44-46	CB 381f, K57f

	19	<b>Translation Day</b>		
	21	Lost Sheep Lost Coin	Lk. 15:1-10	CB 211f, K 171f
	26	Gracious Father (Video)	Lk. 15:11-32	CB 198f, K 176f
	28	<b>Background Presentations</b>		
Mar	5	<b>Mardi Gras</b>		
	7	Marriage Feast	Mt. 22:1-14	CB 303f, K 91f
	12	Two Sons	Mt. 21:28-32	CB 226f, K 79f
	14	<b>Midterm Exam</b>		
	19-21	<b>Spring Break</b>		
	26	Friend at Midnight	Lk. 11:5-13	CB 375f, K 148f
	28	Persistent Widow (Video)	Lk. 18:1-8	CB 368f, K 204
Apr	2	Gracious Employer	Mt. 20:1-16	CB 281f, K 71f
	4	Rich Fool	Lk. 12:16-21	CB 359f, K 151f
	9	The Good Samaritan (Video)	Lk. 10:25-37	CB 295f, K 140f
	11	Pharisee and Tax Collector	Lk. 18:9-14	CB 340f, 209f
	16	<b>Background Presentations</b>		
	18	Unforgiving Servant	Mt. 18:21-35	CB 314f, K 65f
	23	Talents	Mt. 25:14-30	CB 269f, K 119f
	25	Rich Man and Lazarus	Lk. 16:19-31	CB 254f, K 194f
	30	Unjust Steward (Video)	Lk. 16:1-18	CB 322f, K 187f
May	2	Wicked Tenants <b>Exegetical Paper Due</b>	Mk. 12:1-12	CB 329f, K 82f
	7	Ten Virgins	Mt. 25:1-13	CB 238f, K 113f
	9	Theology of the Parables		CB 408-46

**Final Exam May 16th 9:00-11:00**

**BACKGROUND TOPICS:** (1st c. Palestine)

The Sower	Climate and Agriculture in Palestine
The Wheat and the Tares	Wheat and Tares, Figs and Harvest Time
A Publican and a Pharisee	Personal Prayer Practices among Jews Publicans and Tax Collectors in Palestine
A Prodigal Son (Elder Son)	The Family Status of Sons in Judaism
The Rich Fool	Living Conditions among the Wealthy
The Rich Man and Lazarus	The Concepts of Hades and Abraham's Bosom
The Banquet Guests	Banquets, Celebrations and Hospitality Rules
The Persistent Widow	Widows: Status, Rights and Economic Security Local Judges and Justice in Palestine
The Good Samaritan	Highway Robbers/Robbery in Palestine Samaritan--Jew Relations in Palestine
The Faithful Servant	Landowners and Tenant Farmers in Palestine
Two Debtors	Loans, Payments, and Collection Practices
A Master and his Servant	Gentile & Jewish Slaves/Servants in Palestine
The Ten Virgins	Wedding Practices in Judaism
The Talents	"Banking" in the first century
The Wicked Tenants	Expectations of tenants in the first century
Workers in the Vineyard	Migrant Farm Workers in Palestine
The Great Banquet	Hospitality rules in the first century
Pearls	Land Ownership and Sales in Palestine
Treasure and Leaven	Cooking practices in the first century

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON BACKGROUND SOURCES**

**Primary Sources:**

Archaeological Finds	Pseudepigrapha	Josephus
Dead Sea Scrolls	Apocrypha	Philo
Nag Hammadi	Targums	Suetonius
LXX	Rabbinic Lit.	Church Fathers

**Secondary Sources:**

**Bible Dictionaries:**

Anchor Bible Dict., IDB, ISBE (rev.), ZPEB, Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (incl. the 20th Century E. of R. K. supplements), Hasting's Dict. of the Bible, etc.

**Books on Parables:**

Bailey, *A Poet and a Peasant*  
Bailey, *Through Peasants' Eyes*  
Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.  
Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*  
Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*  
Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*  
McArthur and Johnston, *They Also Taught in Parables*  
Scott, *Hear then the Parable*  
Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*

Biblical Backgrounds Books:

Lohse, *The New Testament Environment*

Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (in 1 vol., formerly 2 vol.)

Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*

Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: NT*

Matthews, *Manners and Customs in the Bible*

Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*

Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*

Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians*

Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*

Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*

Wilkins, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*

Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary on the NT

## Reading Log

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please put the date you completed the reading assignments.*

<b><i>Class Date</i></b> (Read material for parables assigned for that date)	<b><i>Kistemaker</i></b>	<b><i>Blomberg</i></b>	<b><i>Indicate in the space below the date read</i></b>
Jan 22 - 31	9-20 30-f	17-193 288f	
Feb 5 - 14	44f 51f 57f	244f 391f 381f	
Feb 21 - Mar 12	171f 176f 91f 79f	211f 198f 303f 226f	
Mar 26 – Apr 4	148f 204 71f 151f	375f 368f 281f 359f	
Apr 9 – Apr 18	140f 209f 65f	295f 340f 314f	
Apr 23 – May 2	119f 194f 187f 82f	269f 254f 322f 329f	
May 7-9	113f	238f 408-46	