

Parables

Explanation

Jesus was a masterful teacher who often used parables to convey different levels of meaning to audiences with different levels of faith or understanding. See chart 7-7 for a full list of the parables. On two occasions reported in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus took his disciples aside and told them the deeper meaning of his parables, for those who had eyes to see and ears to hear. Chart 9-6 illustrates the explanation he gave of the parable of the sower, and chart 9-7 shows the meaning of the parable of the wheat and the tares, both found in Matthew 13. The Prophet Joseph Smith affirmed that Jesus actually explained the symbolic meaning behind each of his parables: “The parables were all plainly elucidated” by Jesus to his disciples. Chart 9-8 displays the explanations given by Joseph Smith of the meanings behind the other parables in Matthew 13.

References

- Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 98–102.
- V. George Shillington, ed., *Jesus and His Parables: Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997).

Joseph Smith's Explanations of the Parables in Matthew 13

MUSTARD SEED (vv. 31–32)

The expansive growth of the restored kingdom through the sprouting of the Book of Mormon out of the earth “in the last days”

LEAVEN (v. 33)

The rise of the Church of Jesus Christ out of “a little leaven that was put into three witnesses”

TREASURES HIDDEN IN THE FIELD (v. 44)

The Latter-day Saints, selling all that they have, and gathering themselves together unto a place that they may purchase

MAN SEEKING GOODLY PEARLS (vv. 45–46)

Men traveling to find places for Zion,... who, when they find the place for Zion, or the pearl of great price, straightway sell all that they have, and buy it

NET CAST INTO THE SEA (vv. 47–48)

The seed of Joseph, spreading forth the Gospel net upon the face of the earth

SCRIBE BRINGING FORTH OUT OF HIS TREASURY BOTH OLD AND NEW (v. 52)

The restoration of old truths and covenants through the Book of Mormon coming forth..., also the translation of the Bible—thus bringing forth out of the heart things new and old