

Book Review

The Parables of Jesus, A Commentary. Arland J. Hultgren, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, UK, 2000, Pp xxix - 522.

This book is an in-depth study of the parables of Jesus, especially those found in the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas. In the first section Hultgren gives an introduction to the parables of Jesus. He identifies and classifies the parables of Jesus, speaks of the distinctive elements in those parables, points out the universal and particular in them and concludes by raising three issues related to the interpretation of the parables.

In sections 2-8, the author classifies the parables into parables of Revelation of God (Mt 18:12-14; 23-35; 20:1-16; Lk 15:4-7,8-10,11-32), Exemplary Behaviour (Lk 10:25-37; 12:16-21; 16:19-31; 18:10-14) Wisdom (Mt 7:24-27; 24:45-51; 25:1-13; Lk 6:47-49; 12:42-46; 14:28-30,31-33;

16:1-8; Life before God (Mk 4:3-8,13-20; 13:34-37; Mt 7:9-11, 1:16-19; 13:3-8, 18-23; 21:28-32; 25:14-30; Lk 7:9-11,31-35,41-43; 8:5-8; 11:5-8,11-13; 12:35-38; 13:6-9; 17:7-10; 18:2-8; 19:12-27; Final Judgment (Mt 13:24-30, 37-43, 47-50; 25:31-46); Allegorical Nature (Mt 12:1-12; Mt 21:33-46; 22:1-14; Lk 14:16-24; 20:9-19) and the Kingdom (Mk 4:26-29,30-32; Mt 13:31-32,33,44,45-46; Lk 13:18-19,20-21). He translates each parable and makes a deep and detailed exegetical commentary. He gives also an exposition of each parable after the commentary. At the end of each parable he gives an extensive bibliography.

After the detailed study of the parables, Hultgren adds a section titled "The Evangelists as Interpreters of the Parables of Jesus." He contends here that the Synoptic writers used the parables to suit their theological goals, while the parables shaped the outlook of the evangelists themselves. The book ends with a last section on the parables in the Gospel of Thomas.

This book of Hultgren is certainly one of the best books we have in English on the parables. It is really a detailed study of the parables. It is basically a historical critical study. The author combines high level of sound scholarship with perfect clarity and helpful insights. His presentation is non-technical. He is at his best in the exegetical commentary section. The extensive bibliography at the end of each parable makes it easy to any one to do further research. I would

unhesitatingly recommend this book to Bible teachers, students, preachers and all who are involved in the ministry of the Word.

Yet in such an in-depth study of each parable one would expect a more thorough introduction to the parables in general. Besides the 'exposition' section is often quite generic and it has to be supplemented by contextual interpretations.

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