

THE TWO SONS

Interpreting the Parables of Jesus by Craig Blomberg¹

REVIEW: Name the four parable designs/characteristics. How do you determine which is which?

BONUS: What is the central theme uniting the parables?

SIMPLE 3-POINT PARABLES

The Parable of the Two Sons - (Mt. 21:28-32)

I. The three main characters and their correlating identities

Main Characters

→
→
→

Who They Represent

II. Things to consider about the parable

- The parable of the two sons offers yet another passage remarkably parallel to the story in Luke 15 of the prodigal and his family. It too describes a father with contrary offspring—one who says he will go to work in the family vineyard but does not do so, and one who says he will not go but then changes his mind as well. As in Luke 15, the parable is applied to the Jewish leaders and to “sinners.” One could almost imagine it as an abbreviation of the parable of the prodigal son with all of the interesting detail omitted!
- *Those that are represented are essentially the same, but in what way does it end differently?*

- *Note the progression of the three parables in Mt. 21:28-22:14. “The crescendo of condemnation.”*

PB 1: 21:32

PB 2: 21:43-44

PB 3: 22:13

- *All three are in the context of the preaching of John the Baptist. (Mt. 21:23-27)*

Q: What was the topic when Jesus entered John the Baptist the discussion?

A:

¹ Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, Second Edition. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2012). **Almost all of this study is taken directly from Blomberg while small portions are italicized to identify a synthesis of his book or a question generated for the purpose of this study.**

I. Three main characters and three main points

1. *Father (God) gives clear instruction → Repentance (specifically through John the Baptist)*
2. *Son 1 unashamedly refuses to obey & verbalizes it publicly → internally driven to obedience*
3. *Son 2 publicly, verbally complies → internally is driven to disobedience*

It wasn't simply that [the Jewish leaders] needed to change their minds; as the story ends we are told that these authorities also needed to believe John and then act on the course of righteous behavior he urged. It is one thing to understand and give mental assent or even lip service to something a prophet says. It is another matter all together to "believe him," by which Jesus means put feet in the right direction to demonstrate one's assent.

II. Application

The Baylor Surveys of Religion claims that "those who believe in some kind of G/god remains well above 90%. Pure atheism is not growing, despite the vocal claims of a small minority." How many of that enormous percentage would Jesus acknowledge are His?

1. *How does this parable impact your walk with Christ?*
2. *How does this affect your view of others?*
3. *In what way might this change the way you witness to others?*

Looking Ahead: Another Simple 3-Point Parable (Faithful and Unfaithful Servants - Lk. 12:42-48; Mt. 24:45-51)