

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## He Is A Son, Not A Coin

(Jerry Fite)

Jesus spoke in parables after many rejected His clear teaching (*cf. Matthew 13:13-17*). Each parable conveyed a spiritual truth consistent with the physical or more familiar truth which Jesus laid down beside it. For example, in the parable of the sower, you see a man sowing seed upon different types of ground. Jesus' hearers could identify with the truth told in the story of the hard ground, rocky ground, shallow ground and finally, the good ground. But the real message Jesus desires to convey in the familiar experience of different soil types is how different hearers receive the seed of God's Word (*cf. Matthew 13:18-23*). The familiar, physical account was being laid beside the more important spiritual truth.

In Jesus' parables there is never anything out of the ordinary or contradictory to real life. The growth of seed, the inner spreading of leaven in bread or the drawing up different types of fish in a fisherman's net are all consistent with man's first century experience.

When Jesus spoke the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son, He again laid down truth which His hearers

could identify with through common experience. Sheep stray away and are lost. Misplaced coins are lost, and children leave home and become lost. The spiritual message Jesus sought to convey was how contradictory to these accepted truths was the attitude of the Pharisees and scribes when viewing the spiritual reality of people lost in sin.

Jesus spoke the parable after the Pharisees and scribes grumbled that Jesus “receives sinners and eats with them” (*Luke 15:2*). Jesus says, “*What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it*” (*Luke 15:4*)? The more important spiritual message of Jesus is: you would rejoice over lost sheep, found and saved; I am manifesting the same attitude toward the more important lost souls of mankind.

Because Jesus' parables conveyed nothing contradictory to reality, it is interesting to note how the account of the lost son differs somewhat from the lost sheep and coin. They all emphasize the same truth of the effort to seek the lost and the consequent joy of their finding safety. But

notice that with the sheep and coin, one goes after the straying animal and misplaced coin, but with the lost son, the Father stays at home and waits.

The coin cannot come to itself, but the son does. He is an intelligent human being while the coin is an inanimate object. You can find the coin, pick it up and put it in its proper place. But a son, who has gone away following his own desires, must be persuaded to find his way back to safety.

The son “came to himself” through suffering the wages of sin (*Luke 15:17*). Unlike a coin, he could reason and clearly see the consequences of his profligate lifestyle. Now in the depths of despair, he reminds himself of the good that those under his father's roof enjoyed. He is ready to return home. Parents, would it not be easier if your children were like a coin? Just sweep in, pick up the lost son or daughter and put them back in their proper place. But the son is not a coin. Often, parents must patiently wait, anticipating the joy of the lost son or daughter returning. The shepherd seeks the lost sheep. The woman seeks the misplaced coin. But the father must wait for the son to realize his lost condition.