

MARK 4 :1 – 25 STUDY NOTES

Jesus first introduced the idea of parables in Mark 3:23 in his response to the teachers of the law from Jerusalem when they accused him of being possessed by demons which explained his power over demons. Chapter 4 gives more details concerning Jesus' use of parables in his teaching. Parables are different from allegories in that they are meant to "put things side by side" while allegories are meant to "say things in a different way." In parables you have a single truth expressed or a single answer given to a question while in allegory you have a detailed illustration where all the details matter. (like in Pilgrim's Progress). A parable requires close examination in order to get to the truth of the matter.

In Palestine there were natural acoustics and especially by the Lake where in this case, Jesus goes into a boat while the people surround the boat at the waters edge. His voice would then project so that many people could hear him. Also, seeds were supposed to produce more seeds and it was hoped that there would be from seven to a hundred seeds produced from one. A hundred fold would be rare though not impossible. Note the following Old Testament passages concerning this. Genesis 26:12 and Ecclesiastes 11:1-6.

There is a reference in this passage to Isaiah 6:9-10. See also Isaiah 43:8; Isaiah 44:18; and Ezekiel 12:3.

1. Observe the setting. What are the variables, constants, elements, and goals in this parable?
2. Why does Jesus speak in parables?
3. What is the significance of his explanation of the parable? What does it mean to us today?