

Course Outline

Introduction

- a. The familiarity of the parables
 - i. Well-known to many even outside the church.
 - ii. Central to Jesus' ministry.
 - iii. Appeal due to narrative form.
- b. The problems which familiarity breeds
 - i. Historical background may be lost.
 - ii. The shock factor may be missed.
 - iii. The symbolism is not always apparent.
 - iv. Certain parables are more cryptic than others.
 - v. The challenging demands seem to conflict with other Scriptures.

I. The History of Interpretation

- a. The Patristic Era (ca. A.D. 100-500)—The development of allegorizing
- b. The Middle Ages (ca. A.D. 500-1500)
 - i. Allegorizing increases and varies.
 - ii. Fourfold level of interpretation develops.
- c. The Reformation and Its Legacy (ca. A.D. 1500-1900)
 - i. Protests by Luther but Christological approach predominates.
 - ii. More radical break by Calvin but successors don't follow suit.
- d. The Modern Period (ca. A.D. 1900-present)
 - i. Adolf Jülicher's radical paradigm shift.
 - 1. No allegory in the parables
 - 2. One main point only
 - 3. Natural, down-to-earth, and lifelike
 - ii. Response to Jülicher: General endorsement but with modifications.
 - 1. Main point more concretely anchored in Jesus' historical setting
 - 2. Use of the unexpected as key to the central truths
 - 3. Limited role of allegory in parables
 - 4. The challenge of non-propositional interpretation

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