

# Structural analysis of jesus narrative parables - dilemma on understanding parabl...

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The paper "Structural Analysis of Jesus' Narrative Parables - A Conservative Approach by Christian Davis" is a spectacular variant of an article on religion and theology. The historical Christ in the Bible can be read with conjoining parables in His teachings making the theologians and scholars to probe on the veritable meaning behind each parable. This paper reflects a journal critique of a structural analysis made on Jesus' narrative parables to further generate unbiased understanding on the works of Christ and scholarly analysis of the written scripture since some parables vary on the way they were told by the Gospel writers.

### Brief Summary

This study explores on the journal article of Christian Davis (1988) entitled "Structural Analysis of Jesus' Narrative Parables: A Conservative Approach" where several types of analysis approach made by theologians and scholars were thoroughly discussed and compared. He expressed the variation among parable narration by the Gospel writers Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Thomas, 1 which resulted in scrutiny among the scholars. The journal article is an extensive study of the mentioned topic citing several authors in relevance and with wide-angled approach discussing several methods of interpretation of the parables.

### Critical Interaction

Davis' journal commenced with consideration of dilemma on understanding the real meaning behind the narrative parables of Jesus as presented in the Gospels of the New Testament of the Bible. He then stated the traditional

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approach that theologians utilized in the early years accepting these parables the same as the classical ones that aim to teach a single lesson and not universally accepted. In addition, critiques considered these parables as human texts apart from the other spiritual texts that convey God's revelations. To further create an understanding of this, he compared the approaches utilized citing the difference between experimental hermeneutical approach and the structuralist approach. Naming several scholars who support each approach helped him build a reputable and logic analysis of the issue at hand starting from literature as early as the 1970s. Since there are more supporting studies on the structuralism approach, Davis focused more on this in his discussions stating that parables are short narratives that provide the most fitting material for structural analysis. Through his introspection, he agreed that understanding of the parable requires understanding of the culture of the people in the origin of the parables thus creating the notion that there is indeed an underlying meaning on Jesus' parables that can only be disserted through methodical analysis.

Agreeing to this approach of analysis, Davis elaborated in his study his interpretation of Jesus' parables guided by three assumptions: " that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant word of God, that particular passages in the Bible can be isolated from their contexts and treated as independent units of discourse, and that the structure of a unit of discourse is related to the underlying meaning of that unit." 2 Davis' work is inspiring for a literary writer in a way that it is guided by his faith yet never failed to be unbiased and factual in the statements made. The strength of his articles roots from

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his presentation of facts that support and at the same time oppose his assumptions and that of his resources, thus creating an inner debate and wide understanding of the issue on the part of the readers. Furthermore, it is noticeable that Davis acknowledges his limitations as a scholar writer as he stated his inclusion of only twenty-seven parables as according to him, “identifying all of Jesus’ parables is a nearly insurmountable task in itself.” To further aid his readers in understanding his arguments, he included figures of several Actantial schemas and related them to the categorized sum of parables. This logical presentation generates a clearer view of the schemes to hasten one’s analysis of each story. By the end of his article, he restated the coverage and limits of his study and served the conclusion as a quick comparison of all the analysis made among the parables. He finished off with the understanding that the general lesson offered by the Gospel is about giving even if it is presented in various ways.

## Conclusion

Overall, the Davis presented a well researched and extensive analysis of the topic at hand. It was highly noticeable how he continued to be neutral in his discussions throughout his article that he cited previous studies that support his assumptions and also those that criticize them. His goal in analysis of the parables in structures approach was achieved as he carefully categorized each story according to the schemes that they follow thus facilitating a better understanding of his point on the part of the readers.