ALLEGORIZING A PARABLE

1. Difficulties arise when we insist on our own interpretation and go beyond the explanation given in the Bible.

2. An example is the interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 by Origen (185 –254 AD) and Augustine (354 - 430 AD). This is Origen’s interpretation, which does NOT follow correct exegetical rules...
   - The man who was going down to Jericho is Adam. Jerusalem is paradise, and Jericho is the world. The robbers are hostile powers (the flesh and the demonic). The priest is the Law, the Levite is the prophets, and the Samaritan is Christ. The wounds are the result of disobedience, the beast is the Lord’s body. The inn is the Church and the manager of the inn is the head of the Church to whom its care has been entrusted. The Samaritan’s promise to return represents the Second Coming of Christ.

PARABLES AND ALLEGORIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. One example of an Old Testament parable is found in 2 Samuel 12:1-4 in the prophet Nathan’s story which convicted King David of his sin with Bathsheba.

2. An example of an allegory in the Old Testament is Proverbs 5:15-19 which addresses marital faithfulness by urging a man to “drink of his own cistern” and no one else’s. We are told the allegory’s meaning in verses 20-23 where the commandment is repeated in plain language.

For more information on how to interpret the Bible go to our Institute website at www.discipleshipdevelopment.org.

Christian Life Center, A Foursquare Church
9085 California Avenue, Riverside, CA 92503 | 951-689-6785
Pastors Jack & Jane Lankhorst
9. The unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-35)
10. The laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16)
11. The two sons (Matthew 21:28-32)
12. The wicked vinedressers (Matthew 21:33-46)
13. The wedding feast (Matthew 22:1-14)
14. The wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)
15. The talents (Matthew 25:14-30)
16. The growing seed (Mark 4:26-29)
17. The two debtors (Luke 7:41-43)
22. Taking the lower place (Luke 14:7-11)
23. The great supper (Luke 14:15-24)
25. The lost coin (Luke 15:8-10)
27. The unjust steward (Luke 16:1-15)
28. The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)
29. The unprofitable servants (Luke 17:7-10)
31. The Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14)
32. The minas (Luke 19:11-27)

INTERPRETING A PARABLE
1. Most of the parables revolve around Jesus’ message of the Kingdom of God and are to be read in that light.
2. What’s the point? A parable, unlike an allegory, has one main point.

3. Try to understand the earthly details as well as the original hearers did. Many parables were taken from the agrarian life of the day.
4. What events surround the parable?
5. What prompted Christ to speak the parable and to whom was the parable spoken?
6. Note the attitude and spiritual condition of the original hearers. Was He speaking to disciples and followers or religious leaders?
7. What are the facts of the parable itself?
8. What would Jesus have wanted the original hearers to “catch” from this?
9. What is the message for us, today?
10. How would you share the applicable truths from this parable to someone today?

ALLEGORIES
An allegory is a story or teaching that is meant to convey a figurative meaning. It often involves several comparisons in which each element of the story or teaching stands for something specific. New Testament examples include:
1. Jesus as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18)
2. The vine and the branches (John 15:1-11)
3. The Last Supper (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 21:14-23)
4. Paul as the builder (1 Corinthians 13:10-15)
5. The armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17)

INTERPRETING AM ALLEGORY
2. State who the original hearers were and note why the allegory was told.
3. List the basic points of comparison and the things for which they stand.
4. Why are these truths important then and now?