

Parable - An *extended*, or developed, *simile* that also is a comparison (from *para* - along side, and *ballo* - throw, bring, place), but it differs from an allegory in that the figure also is a reality, or a real situation. We generally look for the point at which they compare. Parables, like allegories, can also illuminate or disguise. In Matthew 13:10-15, it states that one reason a parable is used is so some will not understand. (See Matthew also 13:24; 31-33)

Proverb - A general comparison also. In fact, the Hebrew word *masal* is translated in the Old Testament as “proverb” and in the New as “parable.” When its figure is more in the form of disguise, it is translated “dark saying” or “riddle.”

More Figurative Expressions.

Irony - To assert or say something implying the opposite.

Job 12:2 -- Truly then *you are the people* and with you wisdom will die!

Hyperbole - An exaggeration (or over-statement) not intended to deceive.

Psalms 6:6 -- *I melt my couch* with my tears.

Epanadiplosis (and Epizeuxis) - The repetition of important words for emphasis.

Revelation 4:8 -- Holy, *holy, holy* is the Lord God...

Euphemism - To substitute a less offensive word.

Acts 7:60 -- When he said this, he *fell asleep* (died).

Litotes (and Meiosis) - To mildly affirm a thing by denying its opposite.

Isaiah 42:3 -- *A bruised reed* he will *not break*, and a smoking flax he will *not quench*.

Ellipsis (also Aposiopesis, Brachylogy) - The omission of words that might be necessary for sentence structure, but not for the meaning which is readily implied.

Matthew 16:3 -- You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot _____ the signs of the times.

Zeugma - When words are placed together in a context that does not necessarily suit one another.

1 Corinthians 3:2 -- *I gave you milk* to *drink* not solid food.

1. PROPER ATTITUDE

To properly begin to understand the Bible, one has to take it seriously as God’s word. It is a very special piece of work covering the work of God from the start of history to the revealing of His expectations of the people who He created. If one treats the Bible only as a work of man, then the miracles and prophecy have no relevance and most of what it says must be regarded as either fantasy or lies. If, however, one treats it as what it is, the revealed mind of the Creator and His purpose for His creation, then one will look intently at it with proper reverence and take from it the wisdom and instruction of the Almighty.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 -- *And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God’s message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.*

2 Peter 1:20-21 -- *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

James 1:25 -- *But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.*

2. A GOOD TRANSLATION

Any translator will tell you, “All translations are traitors.” This means only that some things are lost and some things are gained in translating. This is due to the difference in languages, especially in the use of figurative language. Idioms also do not convert easily. Even trying to understand older English can be a task. As an example, when Shakespeare’s Juliet comes out on the balcony and asks, “Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou?” she is not asking *where* he is. She is asking “Why?” Why are we trying to be lovers while our families are feuding? In the King James Version, in Matthew 26:50, “wherefore art” is used and means the same thing. This is one reason translations need modern English updating.

The question often asked is, “which translation is the best?” Here are some guidelines, especially if you go no further than to use a translation for study. First, get one that is easy to read. Second, get one that is done by a group of scholars, otherwise they tend to be

