

## Jesus' Parables in Chronological Order

### Parable #29 — Luke 15:3-7 — The Lost Sheep

<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders <sup>6</sup> and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ <sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

### Parable #30 — Luke 15:8-10 — The Lost Coin

<sup>8</sup> “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup> And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ <sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Parable #29 — Luke 15:3-7 — The Lost Sheep

1. Jesus told two previous parables about sheep (Matthew 18:12-14, John 10:1-18). In the first, he contrasted the sheep to “little ones” (children, seekers). In the second, he contrasted the sheep to ones who know him (followers, Christians). In this parable, to whom does he contrast the herd of sheep? The lost sheep?
2. “Sinner” is not a word that often comes up in casual conversation. What comes to mind when you hear the word? What word(s) would we more likely use to refer to a “sinner” today (crook, perp, embezzler, scamster, shill, or \_\_\_\_\_)? Do any modern words really describe the concept?
3. What does the word “sin” mean? Does it mean something different to different religious groups (Jews, Roman Catholics, Buddhists, Protestants, Christians)?
4. Who was Jesus’ audience for this parable? (15:1-2)
5. How are we like sheep? In what ways do we go astray?
6. Jesus says the shepherd will hunt for a lost sheep and bring it home and there will be rejoicing. But in Verse 15:7, he implies that a lost sinner must do one additional thing that a sheep does not have to do. What is it that we need to do?
7. How does the picture of “rejoicing in heaven” over repentance make you feel?

Parable #30 — Luke 15:8-10 — The Lost Coin

1. What value did the woman place on each coin? Why did she look so hard for it?
2. How is a repentant sinner like a found coin? Why does God care so much about repentant sinners?
3. How many repentant sinners does it take to cause heavenly rejoicing? How does that make you feel?
4. In what ways does God’s value of people differ from ours? Who would you rejoice more over accepting Jesus as savior, a close family member or a scavenger in the Guatemala City Garbage Dump? (Be honest!)

3. Sin is a term used mainly in a religious context to describe an act that violates a moral rule. Commonly, the moral code of conduct is decreed by a divine entity.

Sin is often used to mean an action that is prohibited or considered wrong; in some religions (notably some sects of Christianity), sin can refer to a state of mind rather than a specific action. Colloquially, any thought, word, or act considered immoral, shameful, harmful, or alienating might be termed “sinful.”

In *Biblical Christianity*, sin is portrayed as not following God's moral guidance, based on the account of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis. They disobeyed God by eating the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which gave them the ability to judge and know good from evil for themselves. Thus, the moment Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the tree—which God had commanded them not to do—sinful death was born; it was an act of disobedience, thinking they could become like gods, that was the sin. However, because Eve was deceived, while Adam was not, it is usually believed that Adam held the greatest responsibility for the evil that took place, for which reason the Fall of man is referred to as the “sin of Adam.”

The Greek word in the New Testament that is translated in English as “sin” is *hamartia*, which literally means missing the target. 1 John 3:4 states: “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.” Jesus clarified the law by defining its foundation: “Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40)

*Roman Catholic* doctrine distinguishes between personal sin (also sometimes called “actual sin”) and original sin. Personal sins are either mortal or venial.

Mortal sins are sins of grave (serious) matter, where the sinner is fully aware that the act (or omission) is both a sin and a grave matter, and performs the act (or omission) with fully deliberate consent. The act of committing a mortal sin cuts off the sinner from God's grace; it is in itself a rejection of God.

Venial sins are sins which do not meet the conditions for mortal sins. The act of committing a venial sin does not cut off the sinner from God's grace, as the sinner has not rejected God. However, venial sins do injure the relationship between the sinner and God, and as such, must be reconciled to God, either through the sacrament of reconciliation or receiving the Eucharist (Communion or the Lord's Supper).

*Judaism* regards the violation of the divine commandments to be a sin. Judaism teaches that sin is an act, and not a state of being. Humankind was not created with

an inclination to do evil, but has that inclination “from his youth”(Genesis 8:21). People do have the ability to master this inclination (Genesis 4:7) and choose good over evil (conscience)(Psalm 37:27). Judaism describes three levels of sin. The first and most serious one is someone who sins intentionally. The second is one who commits a sin by accident. The third category is someone who was raised in an environment that was assimilated or non-Jewish, and is not aware of the proper Jewish laws. This person is not held accountable for his or her actions.

*Islam* sees sin as anything that goes against the will of Allah (God). Islam teaches that sin is an act and not a state of being.

*Buddhism* does not recognize the idea behind sin because in Buddhism, instead, there is a “Cause-Effect Theory.” known as Karma, or action. In general, Buddhism illustrates intentions as the cause of Karma, either good, bad, or neutral.

In *Hinduism*, the term sin is often used to describe actions that create negative karma by violating moral and ethical codes.

(Above excerpted from Wikipedia)

### Parable #30 — Luke 15:8-10 — The Lost Coin

1. The lost coin was either a Greek *drachma* or Roman *denarius*, each worth about an average day’s wages (Matthew 20:2). Near Eastern houses frequently had no windows and only earthen floors, making the search for a single coin difficult.

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