

## Luke 15 notes

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All passages from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

This chapter covers a central theme via the interrelated parables of the lost sheep, lost coin and lost son: The Son of God was sent to “find” and “bring back” the “lost sheep” of Israel. With the soon approach of the annual Lamb Selection Day for Passover — 10<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of God’s calendar — it’s fitting to note God’s “tale of three lambs” in Luke 15 and throughout Scripture:

1. flock or sheep pen of God (the righteous)
2. lost sheep from that flock (“sinners” and those “far off” of the nations)
3. “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29)

Rather than being those who flippantly said to the Lamb of God, “I will follow you wherever you go” (Matt. 8:19; Luke 9:57), we should yearn to become those who truly are like the perfectly complete number of the people of God described in *Revelation 14*:

“And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. <sup>3</sup> And they \*sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. <sup>4</sup> These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. **These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.** These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. <sup>5</sup> And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.” (Rev. 14:2–5)

## Luke 15:1–2: Yeshua “receives” sinners

Luke 15:1–2	Matt. 9:10–13	Luke 5:29–32	Mark 2:15–17
Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. <sup>2</sup> Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”	Then it happened that as Iesous was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Iesous and His disciples. <sup>11</sup> When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?” <sup>12</sup> But when Iesous heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup> But go and learn what this means: ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE’ [Hosea 6:6], for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”	And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them. <sup>30</sup> The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?” <sup>31</sup> And Iesous answered and said to them, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>32</sup> “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”	And it happened that He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Iesous and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him. <sup>16</sup> When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, “Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?” <sup>17</sup> And hearing this, Iesous said to them, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

The reason why Yeshua told the three parables in Luke 15, and a springboard for the discussion of materialism in the following chapter, is the “grumbl[ing]” of the Pharisees and scribes, who were teachers of the Torah as well as copyists, about Yeshua’s having close association via table fellowship with “sinners” such as tax collectors, who were often less-than-scrupulous agents of the oppressive and pagan Roman empire, and prostitutes (Matt. 21:31–32).

The P’rushim — the “separate ones” — didn’t eat with “sinners,” as noted by one sage: “Let not a man associate with the wicked, not even to bring him to the Torah.”<sup>1</sup> One can easily get this teaching from the Torah instructions on clean and unclean, no intermarriage with foreigners, contact between the high priest and the dead, no syncretism with worship of other deities and no blending of two things that aren’t the same (different fabrics in the same garment, different seeds in the same plot of land, etc.).

After all, apostle Paul — supposedly, the post-Torah teacher of the ways of Christ — drew from the Torah and Prophets in teaching that believers in Messiah should not be unequally yoked:

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. <sup>17</sup> “Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; AND I will welcome you. <sup>18</sup> “And I will be a father

1 Daniel Lancaster. *Torah Club: Chronicles of the Messiah*. Vol. 4. Marshfield, Mo.: First Fruits of Zion, 2010. Citing *Mekilta* Exodus 18:1 (65a).

to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” says the Lord Almighty.

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 6:14–7:1)

Paul drew from Ex. 29:45; Lev. 26:12; Jer. 31:1; and Ezek. 37:27 to show that God’s people in the wild, licentious port city of Corinth should be careful of mixing their new lives with God with their old lives. This command to “come out” to be true *p’rushim* from the ways of the world is echoed in *Revelation*:

And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. <sup>3</sup> “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.”

<sup>4</sup> I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; <sup>5</sup> for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. <sup>6</sup> “Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. <sup>7</sup> “To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I SIT AS A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW [Isa. 47:7; Zeph. 2:15], and will never see mourning.’ <sup>8</sup> “For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.” (Rev 18:2–8 NAS95)

But those who are returning to God aren’t “unclean” anymore, because God declared them righteous because of their trust in Him more than in their past lives (Acts 10). Paul chastised Peter for bowing to peer pressure from visiting P’rushim and treating fellow believers, who happened to not have a Jewish background, as unbelievers:

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup> For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. <sup>13</sup> The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup> But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “If you, being a Judean, live like the Gentiles and not like the Judeans, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Judeans?”

<sup>15</sup> “We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; <sup>16</sup> nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. <sup>17</sup> “But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! <sup>18</sup> “For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. <sup>19</sup> “For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. <sup>20</sup> “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. <sup>21</sup> “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.” (Gal. 2:11-21)

Like the Master, we are to seek out the lost, but we must be careful when doing so. At meetings of Celebrate Recovery, a Bible-believing addiction-fighting group, the following counsel from apostle Paul is recited:

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup> For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. <sup>4</sup> But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. <sup>5</sup> For each one will bear his own load.” (Gal. 6:1–5)

The Greek word for *receive* is προσδέχομαι *prosdechomai* (Strong’s lexicon No. G4327) has two interrelated meanings, according to the Thayer lexicon<sup>2</sup>:

- “in Greek writings from Aeschylus and Herodotus down, *to receive to oneself, to admit, to give access to oneself*”
  - Yeshua was granting access to Himself, saying the House of God was open to receive those returning. That’s something Solomon prayed for in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 8.
- “from Homer down, *to expect*”
  - God is waiting for, expectantly, the return of rebellious Israel and those “far off” from God among the nations after thousands of years of separation from the knowledge of God.

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<sup>2</sup> Thayer, Joseph H. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Cambridge, Mass.: 1885.

## Luke 15:3–7: Parable of the lost sheep

Luke 15:3–7	Ezekiel 34	
<p>So He told them this parable, saying, <sup>4</sup> “What man among you, if he has 100 sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the 99 in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> “When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ <sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.”</p>	<p>Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, <sup>2</sup> “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophecy and say to those shepherds, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?’ <sup>3</sup> “You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock. <sup>4</sup> “Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. <sup>5</sup> “They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered. <sup>6</sup> My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek for them.” ’ ’ <sup>7</sup> Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: <sup>8</sup> “As I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “surely because My flock has become a prey, My flock has even become food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd, and My shepherds did not search for My flock, but rather the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock; <sup>9</sup> therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: <sup>10</sup> “Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand My sheep from them and make them cease from feeding sheep. So the shepherds will not feed themselves anymore, but I will deliver My flock from their mouth, so that they will not be food for them.” ’ ’ <sup>11</sup> For thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. <sup>12</sup> As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. <sup>13</sup> I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. <sup>14</sup> I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,” declares the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup> I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick;</p>	<p>but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment. <sup>17</sup> “As for you, My flock, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I will judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and the male goats. <sup>18</sup> ‘Is it too slight a thing for you that you should feed in the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pastures? Or that you should drink of the clear waters, that you must foul the rest with your feet?’ <sup>19</sup> ‘As for My flock, they must eat what you tread down with your feet and drink what you foul with your feet!’” <sup>20</sup> Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them, “Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup> Because you push with side and with shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns until you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup> therefore, I will deliver My flock, and they will no longer be a prey; and I will judge between one sheep and another. <sup>23</sup> “Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup> “And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I the LORD have spoken. <sup>25</sup> “I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. <sup>26</sup> I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing. And I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing. <sup>27</sup> “Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure on their land. <sup>28</sup> “Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. <sup>29</sup> “They will no longer be a prey to the nations, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them; but they will live securely, and no one will make them afraid. <sup>30</sup> I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and they will not endure the insults of the nations anymore. <sup>31</sup> Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people,” declares the Lord GOD. <sup>32</sup> “As for you, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God,” declares the Lord GOD.</p>

In the parable, Yeshua taught that God is seeking to bring back those who lose their closeness with God because of enticements, distractions and inattentiveness to their drift from the presence of God. That’s part of the mission of the Messiah, the Lamb of God, as foretold by Yeshiyahu (Isaiah):

“All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.” (Isa 53:6–7)

Through the prophet יֶקֶחְזֶקֶל Yekhezqel (Ezekiel), God expressed sadness and anger at those appointed to lead the people closer to God — called “the shepherds of Israel” (v. 2) — actually did the opposite. This applied to Yeshua’s day and is germane to ours. God gets angry with teachers and leaders of His people who put their own interests and traditions ahead of the message of God to “receive” those returning to Israel and joining that Body of the Messiah from the nations.

Thankfully, the LORD foretold through Ezekiel that He would set “one shepherd, my servant David” over His “flock.”

As the 10<sup>th</sup> plague against Mizraim (Egypt), specifically the firstborn inside its borders, was about to come and finally free Israel from bondage there, God gave the instruction for the selection of lambs to block God’s Destroyer from killing the firstborn in that house (Ex. 12:3–6). God instructed each family or a group of families to select for themselves an unblemished yearling male sheep or goat on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, מִשְׁמֶרֶת mishmeret (Strong’s lexicon No. H4931), *to guard, watch, also charge, function*<sup>3</sup> it from that day until the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup> day — Pesakh (Passover) when they would kill the animal and put the blood on the entry posts of their homes.

### Luke 15:8–10: Parable of the lost coin

Luke 15:8–10
<p>“Or what woman, if she has 10 silver coins [<i>drachma</i>, a day’s wage] and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup> When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!’ <sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”</p>

### Luke 15:11–32: Parable of the “lost” son

Luke 15:11–32	Matt. 21:28–32
<p>And He said, “A man had two sons. <sup>12</sup> “The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.’ So he divided his wealth between them. <sup>13</sup> “And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. <sup>14</sup> “Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup> And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. <sup>17</sup> “But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! <sup>18</sup> ‘I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.’”</p> <p><sup>20</sup> “So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> “And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup> “But the father said to</p>	<p>his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; <sup>23</sup> and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup> for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate. <sup>25</sup> “Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> “And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. <sup>27</sup> “And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.’ <sup>28</sup> “But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. <sup>29</sup> “But he answered and said to his father, ‘Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; <sup>30</sup> but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.’ <sup>31</sup> “And he said to him, ‘Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup> ‘But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.’”</p>
	<p>“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’ <sup>29</sup> “And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he regretted it and went. <sup>30</sup> “The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, ‘I will, sir’; but he did not go. <sup>31</sup> “Which of the two did the will of his father?” They *said, “The first.” Iesusus *said to them, “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup> For Iohannes came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him.”</p>

This parable often is called “the lost son.” But unlike the sheep and the coin, the second son consciously left his father’s house. The old saw, “You didn’t know how good you had it,” might suggest that the second son, too, didn’t fully understand what he was doing.

Yet, isn’t that truly the case with all who through ignorance, indifference or rebellion walk away from the Kingdom of Heaven? What’s important is how we respond when we realize that was a dumb idea. Do we come back to our Father’s household, realizing there is no excuse for our walking away nor compensation we can offer for what our Father had to do to clean up the mess created by each of our departures since Eden?

3 Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906.



The parable of the two sons also teaches that the first son, too, didn't know how good he had it. That son also resented his father's lavish celebration when his "dead," "lost" brother left his licentious life and returned. The first son wanted praise for dependably following his father's instructions, but his father told him that he didn't have to strive or yearn for what was already his.

At the beginning of Matthew's account of Yeshua's "sermon on the mount" (Matthew 5-7), Yeshua listed nine "blessed are" — really, "happy are" — statements and two parables of God's servants being "salt" and "light" in the world. Yeshua prefaced six "you have heard it said ... but I tell you" teachings on the Torah by saying that true "righteousness" means following God's instructions at a more fundamental layer than the teachers of the Torah and the Pharisees (those who separate themselves from the "unclean" via the Torah and expansions upon it).

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> "For [because] I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:17-20)

God expects those who are a part of His emerging government of Earth to work toward its goals. Becoming part of that government can't be earned. Yeshua told a parable about "doing your work from the soul, as if from the Lord" (Col. 3:22-25; Eph. 6:5-8; Eccl. 9:10) in the context of a teaching on not knowing when the Day of the LORD will come:

"Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? <sup>46</sup> Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. <sup>47</sup> "Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. <sup>48</sup> "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' <sup>49</sup> and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; <sup>50</sup> the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, <sup>51</sup> and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 24:45-51)

In *Luke 16*, Yeshua tells His students a parable of an embezzling property manager who when facing an audit from the owner settles up the owner's delinquent debtors — at steep discounts — to recoup what the manager had stolen. That prudent decision to use earthly resources

to help establish God's government

"He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. <sup>11</sup> Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? <sup>12</sup> "And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? <sup>13</sup> "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." <sup>14</sup> Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. <sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. <sup>16</sup> The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until Ioannes; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. <sup>17</sup> But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail." (Luke 16:10-17)

Some teach that in *Luke 16:16* Yeshua taught that "the Law and the Prophets" — the *TaNaKh* — ended with Yokhanan, replaced by "the gospel" — the "New Testament." Yet in the next verse, Yeshua said the "Torah" won't pass away before "heaven and earth" will, which is foretold to happen after the Day of the LORD (*Isaiah 66; Revelation 22*). By connecting this statement with the proclamation of "the gospel," Yeshua taught that the good news of the arrival of the kingdom of God as flesh in Yeshua is built and dependent upon the lasting teachings and promises of the *TaNaKh*.

### Symbols of *Luke 15* parables<sup>4</sup>

Lost sheep	Lost coin	Rebellious son	Symbolizes
shepherd	woman	father	God (Son of God as the agent)
flock	coin	sons	Israel (God's representatives to the nations)
lost sheep	lost coin	rebellious son	rebellious of Israel (don't follow God's teaching)
99 sheep	nine coins	loyal son	righteous of Israel (follow God's instructions)
return of the lost sheep	discovery of the lost coin	return of the rebellious son	repentance
rejoicing	rejoicing	rejoicing	Heaven rejoices when rebels pursue <i>teshuvah</i> .
<b>The point:</b> Yeshua came to save the "lost," the "dead," those "far off" from God (Eph. 2:13), the source of life. God wants those to be truly be "alive" and "near," having a view of the way things work best (God's "ways") and the ultimate end of way things don't work best or become miserable ("ways" of the world, of rebellion against God).			

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Lancaster, p. 876.