



# The Power of Parable: How Fiction by Jesus Became Fiction about Jesus

*John Dominic Crossan*

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In 1969, I was teaching at two seminaries in the Chicago area. One of my courses was on the parables by Jesus and the other was on the resurrection stories about Jesus. I had observed that the parabolic stories by Jesus seemed remarkably similar to the resurrection stories about Jesus. Were the latter intended as parables just as much as the former? Had we been reading parable, presuming history, and misunderstanding both? —from *The Power of Parable*

So begins the quest of renowned Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan as he unlocks the true meanings and purposes of parable in the Bible so that modern Christians can respond genuinely to Jesus's call to fully participate in the kingdom of God. In *The Power of Parable*, Crossan examines Jesus's parables and identifies what he calls the "challenge parable" as Jesus's chosen teaching tool for gently urging his followers to probe, question, and debate the ideological absolutes of religious faith and the presuppositions of social, political, and economic traditions.

Moving from parables *by* Jesus to parables *about* Jesus, Crossan then presents the four gospels as "megaparables." By revealing how the gospels are not reflections of the actual biography of Jesus but rather (mis)interpretations by the gospel writers themselves, Crossan reaffirms the power of parables to challenge and enable us to co-create with God a world of justice, love, and peace.

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