

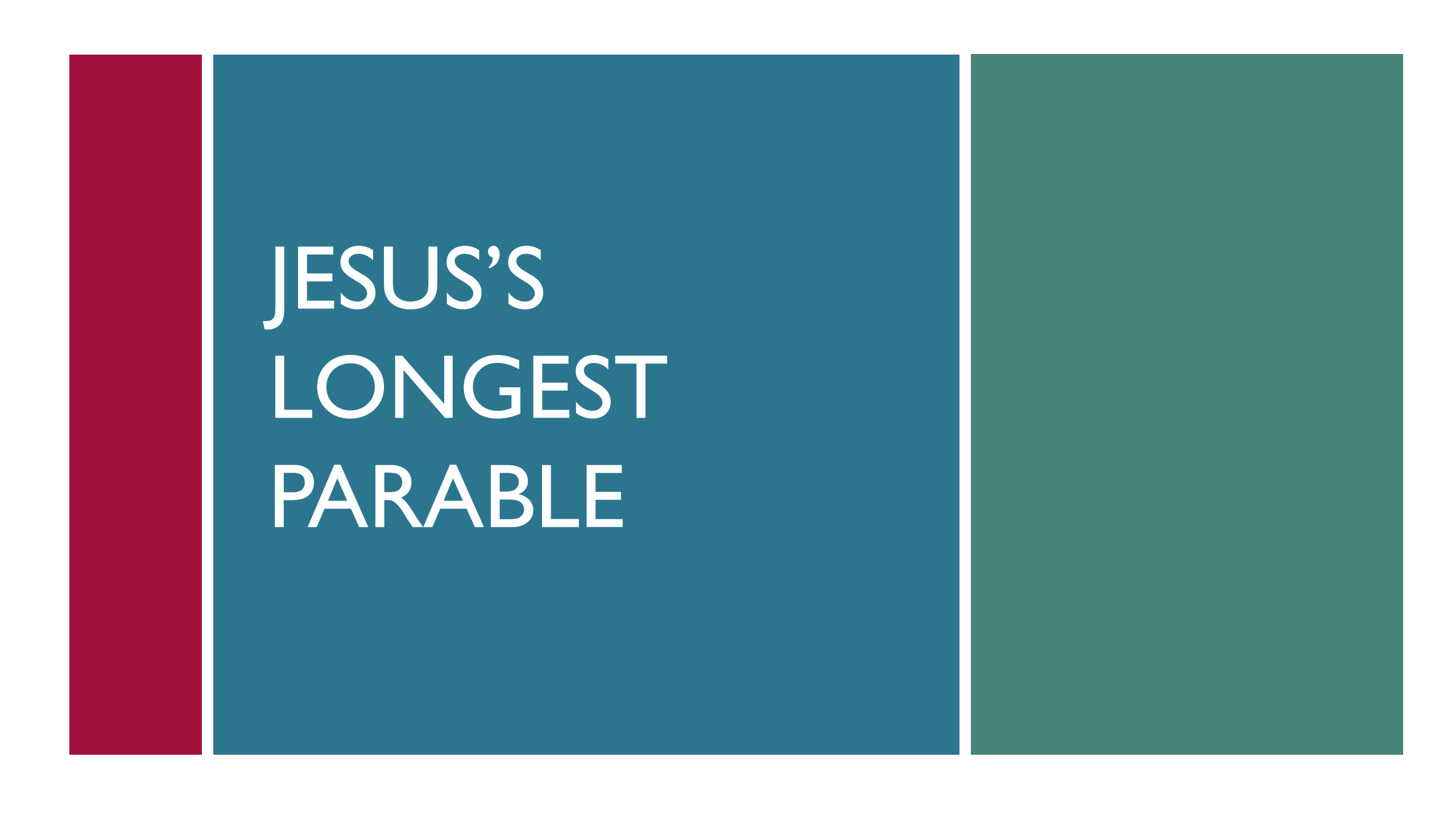


# THE SURPRISING GENIUS OF JESUS

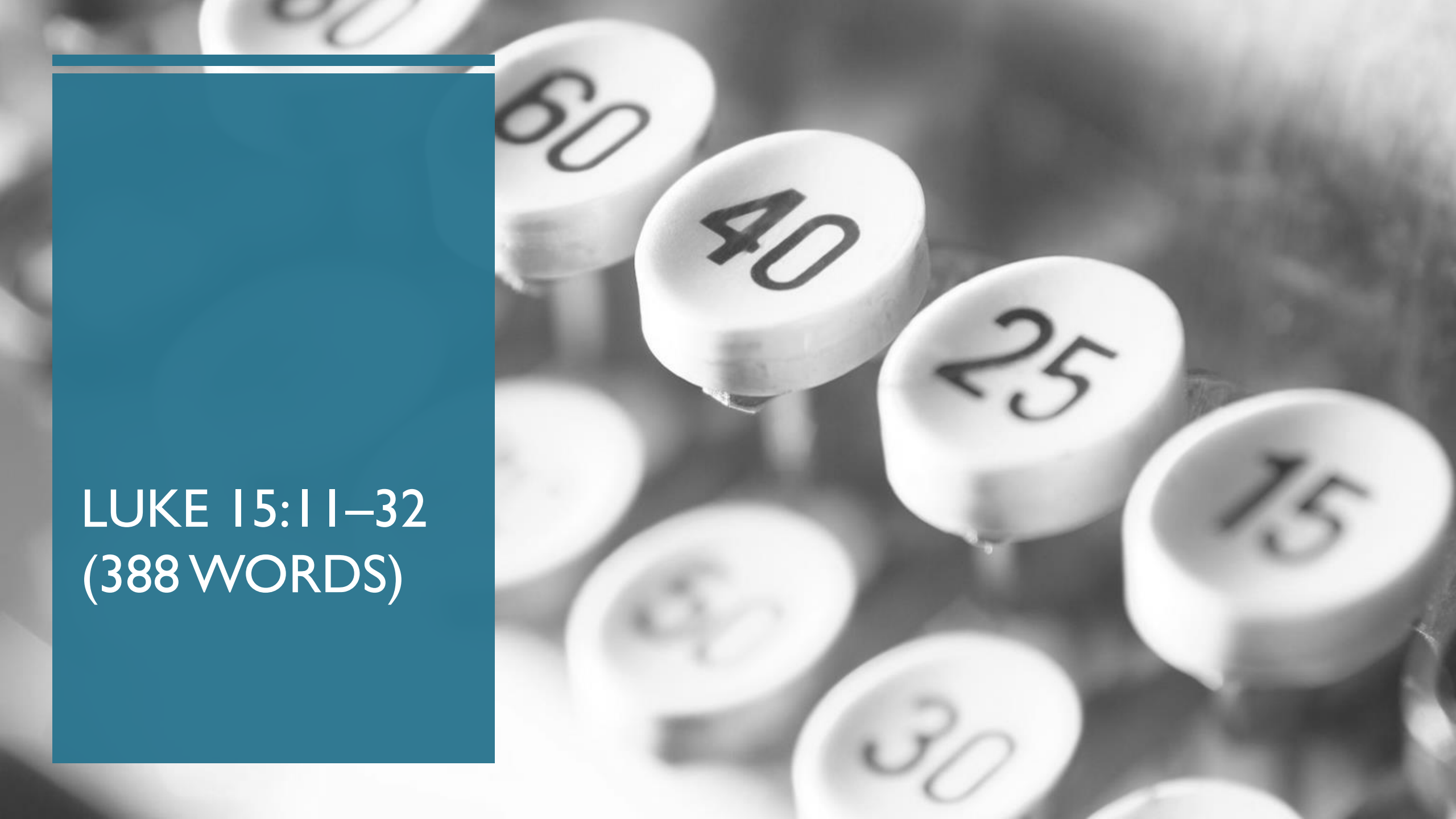
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JESUS'S  
LONGEST  
PARABLE



LUKE 15:11–32  
(388 WORDS)

## AUDIENCE: 2 + 2

- Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” (Luke 15:1–2 ESV)
  - Tax collectors + sinners
  - Pharisees + scribes
  - Scribes count words and distinguish similar phrases

# THREE STORIES

- 1/100 sheep lost going away
  - framed as question
- 1/10 coins lost at home
  - framed as question
- Two sons, one lost going away, the other lost at home
  - not framed as question

# THE OPENING

- Luke 15:11–12 There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.” And he divided his property between them.
- Legal side:
  - Younger son gets share of moveable property
  - Older son now owns farm

# OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

- Younger son moves away and “wastes” property
- He also said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions.” (Luke 16:1 ESV)

# WHY DOES YOUNGER SON END UP FEEDING PIGS?

- “And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need” (Luke 15:14 ESV)
- (1) Because he wasted his money (his own fault)
- (2) Because a famine hit the one land he chose to go to (his bad luck)



# SAYING A LOT WITH A FEW WORDS

- 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the **citizens** of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs.
- 24 And they **began to** celebrate.
- 25 Now his older son **was in the field**, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.
- 29 “**Look**, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet **you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends.**”
- The **missing ending**



# STRETCHING THE SCRIBES

# OT BACKGROUND: JACOB AND ESAU

- Luke 15:11 There was a man who had two sons.
- Who had two and only two sons?
- Isaac: Jacob (younger) cheats Esau (elder) out of inheritance
- Older brother is angry

**Contrast:** Younger brother goes into far country with nothing, comes back with lots

# JACOB AND ESAU

- 27 When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a **man of the field**, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. . . .
- 30 And Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!” (Therefore his name was called Edom.) 31 Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright now.” 32 Esau said, “**I am about to die**; of what use is a **birthright** to me?” (Genesis 25:27–32 ESV)

# JACOB AND ESAU

- But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and **ran and embraced him and kissed him.** (Luke 15:20)
- But Esau **ran** to meet him and **embraced him** and fell on his neck and **kissed him**, and they wept. (Genesis 33:4)

# EVERY SCRIBE KNEW GENESIS 33:4

וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ אֶרְצָה שָׁבַע לֵל  
פְּעָמַיִם עַד־נִשְׁתַּחֲוּ עַד־אֲהוּ  
וַיִּכְרַץ עֵשָׂו לִקְרֹאתוֹ לֵל  
וַיַּחֲבֹקְהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל־עַמְצוֹ  
וַיִּשְׁקְחוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת  
עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־חֻנְשׁוֹ וְאֶת  
חֵילָדָיו וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֵלֶיךָ

פסוק  
ג'  
מנע  
בטור  
ל  
ג'  
בטור  
בטור

וַיַּחֲבֹקְהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל־עַמְצוֹ  
וַיִּשְׁקְחוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת  
עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־חֻנְשׁוֹ וְאֶת

צואר  
ק  
נקוד  
כבו

Left: Leningrad Codex; Right: British Library Or. 4445

# SOFTER CONNECTIONS

- (1) a man with two sons
- (2) an older brother coming in from a field
- (3) someone saying they are dying of hunger
- (4) cheating out of inheritance
- (5) young goats
- (6) best robes
- (7) Older Brother “drew near” (Luke 15:25); cf. “draw near” 6x (Gen. 27:21–7)
- (8) Father who sees far away vs father who can’t see up close

# ESAU

- At first stayed at home waiting for his father to die.
  - Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.” (Genesis 27:41 ESV)
- Later
  - Forgave his little brother, who had cheated him out of his inheritance.



# LABAN (7 VERSE CLUSTER)

Luke 15	Genesis 31
Older Brother “heard music and dancing.” (15:25)	Laban wanted to mark Jacob’s departure “with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre” (31:27)
Older Brother “was angry and refused to go in.” (15:28)	“Then Jacob became angry” (31:36)
Older Brother “These many years I have served you” (15:29)	Jacob: “These twenty years I have been in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock” (31:41; compare 31:38)
Older Brother: “But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes ...” (15:30)	Rachel & Leah claim Laban “has indeed <i>devoured</i> our money” (31:15)
Father: “all that is mine is yours” (15:31)	Laban: “all that you see is mine” (31:43)

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# JOSEPH

- Then Pharaoh took his **signet ring** from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in **garments of fine linen** and put a gold chain about his neck. (Genesis 41:42 ESV)
- “Quick! Bring the **best robe**, and put it on him, and put a **ring** on his hand.” (Luke 15:22)
- Great famines
- The only two instant rags to riches stories in the Bible

**Contrast:** No one gave food to Prodigal / Joseph gave food to everyone

# JOSEPH

- Went to a far country
- Was thought dead
  - Genesis 37:33 And he [Jacob] identified it [Joseph's robe] and said, "It is my son's robe. An evil animal has devoured him."
  - Genesis 45:28 And Israel said, "Enough! Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."
  - Luke 15:24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. (Also, 15:32)

**Contrast:** Joseph forgave / Older Brother doesn't

# FRIEND, GOAT AND PROSTITUTE

- Luke 15:29–30 I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a **young goat**, that I might celebrate with my **friends**. 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with **prostitutes**, you killed the fattened calf for him!’
- Genesis 38:20–21 When Judah sent the **young goat** by his **friend** the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. 21 And he asked the men of the place, “Where is the cult **prostitute** who was at Enaim at the roadside?” And they said, “No cult prostitute has been here.”

# JUDAH VS JOSEPH

- Joseph is in distant country resisting sexual temptation.
- While his older brother Judah, from whom Jews tended to trace their descent, was in the land of Canaan falling into sexual temptation.



Rembrandt 1635

# ABRAHAM

“A MAN HAD TWO SONS”

# ABRAHAM

- Archetypal father (mentioned 3x in Luke 16)
- Also begins speech with “Quick!” (like Luke 15:22)
- And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “**Quick! Three seahs of fine flour!** Knead it, and make cakes.” And Abraham **ran** to the herd and took a **calf**, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. (Genesis 18:6–7 ESV)



# FIRST OCCURRENCES IN BIBLE

- 1<sup>st</sup> Running
- 1<sup>st</sup> Hospitality
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quick
- 1<sup>st</sup> Fatted calf

# LINKS WITH ABRAHAM

- Only other old person in Bible to run
- “Quick”, beginning speech
- Leading to fatted calf
- We know Jesus thought about “3 seahs”

# THREE SEAHS

- “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in **three seahs of flour**, till it was all leavened.” (Matthew 13:33 ESV adapted)
- And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “**Quick! Three seahs of fine flour!** Knead it, and make cakes.” (Genesis 18:6 ESV)

# ABRAHAM

- Younger son inherits everything
- Abraham is the only father to give away inheritance while still alive
- “Abraham gave all he had to Isaac. But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, and while he was still living he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country.” (Genesis 25:5–6 ESV)

# OLDER BROTHER WON'T CELEBRATE YOUNGER BROTHER

- But he was angry and refused to go in. (Luke 15:28 ESV)
- 8 And the child [Isaac] grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. 9 But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. 10 So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.” (Genesis 21:8–10 ESV)
- Ishmael lost inheritance through despising younger brother

# CONTRAST

- Abraham didn't allow Isaac to go to a far country
- Abraham to his servant: "See to it that you do not take my son back there." (Genesis 24:6 ESV)

# CAIN AND ABEL (GENESIS 4)

- Bible's first brothers
- First family conflict
- Older brother associated with field; younger brother with care of animals
- Cain "very angry" when Abel accepted by God
- Bible's first recorded anger is envy of younger brother
- God (father figure) engages graciously with angry older brother (Genesis 4:7)

# SUMMARY

- Clearest connections
  - Joseph: rings + robe (Genesis 41:42)
  - Esau: run, embrace, kiss (Genesis 33:4)
  - Jacob: I've worked all these years (Genesis 31:38)
  - Abraham: "Quick" + fatted calf (Genesis 18:7)
- Dozens of others throughout Genesis



# PEOPLE WITH MORE REASON FOR ANGER

- Esau, who lost out on his inheritance
- Laban, who lost all his property
- Joseph, whose brothers had sold him
- Ishmael, whose brother inherited everything

# LESSONS FOR SCRIBES

- Joseph was sold by older brothers and forgave them and preserved their inheritance
- Esau was cheated out of inheritance by younger brother and forgave him
- Laban lost his property to Jacob and made a peace treaty
- Ishmael lost any inheritance through despising his younger brother
- Abraham was welcoming
- And many more

# CONCLUSIONS

- Unified simple story, composed by person who knows OT very well
- Handed down with integrity
- OT allusions are not superfluous, but are making powerful points
- It's as if Genesis were designed to make building blocks of this story



# THE LESSON ON THE MOUNT

# WHAT LANGUAGES DID JESUS SPEAK?

- Aramaic to a 12-year old girl (*talitha qum*) or to deaf-mute man (*epphatha*), in prayer (*Abba*), on cross (misunderstood)
- 16<sup>th</sup> century age of discovery emphasized Aramaic as language of Jesus
- 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century Romantic Movement emphasized Aramaic as language of Jesus
- Sceptics like Bart Ehrman emphasize Aramaic as language of Jesus

# EVIDENCE FOR GREEK SPEAKING

- Greek gospels
- Parents in Egypt
- Itinerant preaching
- Andrew, Philip
- Nicodemus, Timaeus, Sanhedrin
- Hypocrite, Hades, Paraclete
- “Is he going to go to the Greek diaspora and teach the Greeks?” (John 7:35)

## MATTHEW 4:24–25

- So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains those oppressed by demons epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. 25 And great crowds followed him from Galilee and **the Decapolis**, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

# THE LESSON ON THE MOUNT (MATTHEW 5:1–2 ESV)

- Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.
- And he opened his mouth and **taught** them, saying:



## BEATITUDES BEGIN WITH Π (MATTHEW 5:3–10)

3 μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.

5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.

6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.

7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.

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9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.

10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

# REPEATED BEGINNINGS

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# FOR THEY / FOR THEIRS

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# REPEATED VERB ENDING

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# PLURAL TYPES GROUPED

3 μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

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# HYPOCRITES / THEATRE ACTORS

- Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. (6:2)
- And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. (6:5)
- And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites... (6:16)
- You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (7:5)

## MATTHEW 7:15

- Beware (*prosechete*) from false prophets (*pseudoprophetōn*), who come to you in clothing of sheep (*probatōn*)
- προσέχετε ἀπὸ τῶν ψευδοπροφητῶν οἵτινες ἔρχονται πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ἐνδύμασι προβάτων



# ALLITERATION IN MARK

- fishers of people (ἄλλεῖς ἀνθρώπων Mark 1:17)
- Those who are well don't need a doctor (ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ Mark 2:17)
- Can the sons of the bridechamber (νυμφῶνος) fast (νηστεύειν) while the bridegroom (νυμφίος) is with them? (Mark 2:19)
- With the measure you measure, it will be measured (μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται) to you. (Mark 4:24)

# ALLITERATION IN MARK

- And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected (ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι) by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed (ἀποκτανθῆναι), and after three days rise again (ἀναστῆναι). (Mark 8:31)
- If anyone would follow (ἀκολουθεῖν) me, let him deny (ἀπαρνησάσθω) himself and take up (ἀράτω) his cross and follow (ἀκολουθεῖτω) me. (Mark 8:34)
- What does it profit a man to gain (κερδῆσαι) the whole world (κόσμον) and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return (ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα) for his soul? (Mark 8:36–37)

# SUMMARY

- Jesus could teach in Greek
- There's no need to think there's a big gap between his words and what we have in the Gospels
- Jesus crafted his words and taught memorably

# FOR MORE ON JESUS SPEAKING GREEK

- [tyndalehouse.com/magazine](https://tyndalehouse.com/magazine)
- <https://tyndalehouse.com/ink-magazine/ink-issue-7-winter-2020/>



QUESTIONS?

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