

JESUS AND KINGDOM PARABLES:  
AN ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 13:10-17

by  
Gerald A. Baumann

Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of Master of Divinity in  
Grace Theological Seminary  
May 1980



Title: JESUS AND KINGDOM PARABLES: AN ANALYSIS OF  
MATTHEW 13:10-17  
Author: Gerald A. Baumann  
Degree: Master of Divinity  
Date: May, 1980  
Advisor: Dr. D. Wayne Knife

Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Messiah. He was the promised king of Israel and clearly presented himself as such. Yet he was rejected. It is this rejection which Jesus seeks to explain and which Matthew records in the third of five blocks of discourse/narrative material.

The rejection of Jesus as the promised Messiah by the nation of Israel is recorded by Matthew as having been explained during a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. The disciples request of Jesus an answer as to why he is teaching the multitudes through the medium of Kingdom parables. Jesus responds by answering their request from three perspectives, each leading to the same conclusion; namely, the disciples are of a privileged status while the multitudes are not.

The first response of Jesus is from the perspective of the divine plan. Here Jesus informs the disciples that they have been chosen by God to be the recipients of special knowledge. This special knowledge concerns mysteries about the Kingdom of God which had not previously been revealed by God. The multitudes, on the other hand, have been excluded by God as special recipients of this knowledge of the Kingdom of God. Thus God is seen as being both the revealer of knowledge as well as the interpreter of that knowledge.

The second response of Jesus is from the perspective of Old Testament prophecy. Here Jesus indicates to the disciples that what they are seeing happen in their day is a result of what was prophesied through Isaiah the prophet previously. Thus the prophecy in Isaiah 6:9-10 is finding its ultimate fulfillment in the judicial hardening of the nation of Israel as a result of their rejection of the Messiah.

The third response of Jesus is from the perspective of the quality of time in which the disciples are living. Here Jesus shows his disciples that they are of privileged status because their knowledge about the kingdom of God is something which Old Testament prophets and righteous men desired but did not receive. Hence, the superiority and authority of the apostolic witness is established.

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary  
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree  
Master of Divinity

D. Wayne Krife  
Advisor

To Teri,  
who consistently and unselfishly  
endorsed our seminary education.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Chapter	
I. EXEGESIS: MATTHEW 13:10-17 . . . . .	2
A. Contextual Contributions . . . . .	2
1. The Literary Structure of Matthew's Gospel . . . . .	2
a) Structure based on the grammatical phrase καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε . . . . .	4
b) Structure based on the grammatical phrase ἀπὸ τότε . . . . .	10
c) Summary of structure based on grammatical phraseology . . . . .	11
2. The Position of Chapter 13 . . . . .	13
3. The Immediate Context . . . . .	15
a) Context of chapter 13 . . . . .	16
b) Structure of chapter 13 . . . . .	18
c) Function of chapter 13 . . . . .	19
d) Summarization . . . . .	20
B. Textual Analysis . . . . .	21
C. Lexical, Philological, Grammatical, and Syntactical Observations . . . . .	22
1. The Question of the Disciples . . . . .	22
a) The Partners in the Discussion: οἱ μαθηταὶ . . . αὐτῷ . . . . .	22
b) The question stated . . . . .	25
2. The Answer of Jesus . . . . .	28
a) From the perspective of the Divine Plan . . . . .	28
b) From the perspective of the Old Testament fulfillment . . . . .	45
c) From the perspective of the quality of time in which the disciples are living . . . . .	51
D. Summarization of Exegesis . . . . .	51
II. THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS . . . . .	53
A. Does Matthew Develop a Theory of Parables? . . . . .	53

B. Preaching Matthew 13 Today . . . . .	55
III. SUMMARY-CONCLUSION . . . . .	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	59

## INTRODUCTION

Matthew 13 stands as a pivotal point in Matthew's gospel. It is a chapter which notes a distinction between Jesus' teaching to his disciples and Jesus' teaching to the multitudes.

As to the reason for this distinction, Matthew explains in the passage under consideration, by embracing two components which help us have a proper perspective of the kingdom parables in Christ's ministry.

The first component is in verse 10 and concerns the question of the disciples. The second component is in verses 11-17 and concerns the answer of Jesus given from three different vantage points.

It is the thesis of this paper that no mistake was made by Jesus in his answer, as some would have us think.<sup>1</sup> Jesus answered the question of his disciples clearly and without mistake. On his authority, therefore, it becomes necessary to respond in belief to his answer.

---

<sup>1</sup>Alexander Balmain Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in Vol. I of *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), p. 196.



## CHAPTER I

### EXEGESIS: MATTHEW 13:10-17

#### A. Contextual Contributions

Contextual considerations are for the most part boring and hard, but the most productive element of exegesis. It is a necessary, important first step. John D. Grassmick says of this first step:

This important first step is a general survey of the New Testament book which contains the passage or passages chosen for special study. The purpose of this initial exposure is to give the student a basic familiarity with the content of the book which is essential to a grasp of literary form and context.<sup>1</sup>

With this in mind there need be no apology made for a somewhat detailed study of the structure of Matthew's gospel. It is from a study such as this that Chapter 13 will be made clearer.

#### 1. The Literary Structure of Matthew's Gospel

A simple reading of Matthew's gospel will produce an awareness of careful design. This gospel has more of a careful design than any other of the Gospels and "it shows an author with an astonishingly orderly mind."<sup>2</sup> This careful design,

---

<sup>1</sup>John D. Grassmick, Principles and Practice of Greek Exegesis (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1974), p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), p. 29.

however, "does not follow the chronological order of events, but assembles these in a series of groupings."<sup>1</sup> This aspect of Matthew's gospel has caused considerable debate in both conservative and liberal circles with a number of proposals being set forth as to the precise structure of the gospel.

Due to the nature of this thesis (that it is to be an exegetical work rather than an introductory work) an analysis of the literary structure of Matthew's gospel will confine itself only to those proposals based on grammatical phraseology. Many other proposals have been set forth as to the structure of the gospel, such as structure based on numerical groupings and structure based on geographical mobility.<sup>2</sup> However, this author believes these to be merely literary characteristics of the individual writer, Matthew, and not necessarily a key to the literary structure of the gospel as a whole.

Literary structure based on grammatical phraseology confines itself to two main phrases. These will be discussed and analyzed.

---

<sup>1</sup>W. Graham Scroggie, A Guide to the Gospels (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1948), p. 255.

<sup>2</sup>These proposals can be found in most any introductory work on Matthew's Gospel. For example, for structure based on numerical phraseology see Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), pp. 32-33. For structure based on geographical mobility see Paul Feine and Johannes Behm, Introduction to the New Testament, Reedited by Werner Georg Kummel, trans. A. J. Mattill, Jr. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 75-84.

a) Structure based on the grammatical phrase καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε.

This grammatical phrase occurs five times in Matthew's gospel (7:28-29; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). It is argued from the evidence of this phrase that "the evangelist has structured his material around major discourses, preceding each with a narrative section. A fixed formula frequently concludes the discourse and the section."<sup>1</sup>

The coupling of this phrase and the corresponding structure of the entire gospel has been developed along two lines of persuasion. Some have sought to demonstrate that this phrase develops itself along a *six fold* division. Even within this development variation occurs.

D. Edmond Hiebert maintains that:

The gospel of Matthew is characterized by the systematic arrangement of its contents. The material in the first four chapters and the story of Passion Week is arranged chronologically, but the rest of the gospel is ordered thematically. Similar narratives and the sayings of Jesus are grouped together.<sup>2</sup>

Hiebert maintains that the narrative sections are not recorded in strict chronological sequence and are kept terse. He identifies the six great narrative sections in the following manner:

---

<sup>1</sup>Bastiaan Van Elderen, "The Purpose of Parables According to Matthew 13:10-17" in New Dimensions in New Testament Study, Editors Richard N. Longenecker and Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), p. 181.

<sup>2</sup>D. Edmond Hiebert, An Introduction to the New Testament, 3 Vols. (Moody Press: Chicago, 1975), 1:46.

The Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5-7), the commission to the Twelve (chap. 10), the seven parables of the Kingdom (chap. 13), the discourse on humility, offences, and forgiveness (chap. 18), the denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees (chap. 23), and the Olivet Discourse (chaps. 24-25).<sup>1</sup>

As to why Matthew has these six narrative sections, Hiebert says they present a full view of the person portrayed.<sup>2</sup> It should be made clear that Hiebert himself does not view these six narrative sections as the structural key to Matthew's gospel. He only recognizes their existence and later opts for a two-fold division centered around the grammatical phrase ἀπὸ τότε.

One who not only maintains the *six-fold* division, but also views the grammatical phrase καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε as the structural key to Matthew's gospel is W. Graham Scroggie. He holds that the phrase points to "six parts, each consisting of narrative followed by discourse, and each ending with the same formula."<sup>3</sup> These six parts are located between "the Infancy narratives at the beginning (chaps. i-ii), and the Passion narratives at the end (chaps. xxvi-xxviii)."<sup>4</sup> He identifies these six parts in a similar manner as Hiebert.<sup>5</sup>

The major criticism against the acceptance of a *six-*

---

<sup>1</sup>Hiebert, An Introduction to the New Testament, 1:46.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Scroggie, A Guide to the Gospels, p. 255.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 256.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

*fold* division is the grammatical phrase itself. It occurs not six times but five. Both Hiebert and Scroggie make chapter twenty-three a separate division identifying it as a denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees. The grammatical phrase does not occur in this so called narrative section. Scroggie knows this and seeks to justify his inclusion of it into a separate narrative section by claiming that it "has a formal ending, though not the usual formula."<sup>1</sup> However, the appearance of a formal ending does not in itself constitute a separate narrative section.

The most developed elaboration of Matthew's gospel around the grammatical phrase καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε is seen in the idea that there are five major discourses. These discourses occur in the material found between chapters 3:1-26:2. There is a Preamble consisting of chapters 1-2 and an Epilogue consisting of chapters 26:3-28:20.

The one responsible for this basic outline is B. W. Bacon. "His position is that the first Gospel contains five "books" which culminate in discourses of Jesus and are supplemented by preamble (chs. 1-2) and epilogue (chs. 26-28)."<sup>2</sup>

The phenomenon which compelled Bacon to take this view was his theory that Matthew was a converted rabbi who was a member of a church threatened by lawlessness. He met this

---

<sup>1</sup>Scroggie, A Guide to the Gospels, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup>Jack Dean Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 2.

opposition by developing the teachings of Jesus along the lines of the Mosaic Pentateuch.<sup>1</sup>

With Bacon's development of his thesis, it was not long until others followed suit. Krister Stendahl claims that Matthew is a manual of instruction which presents Jesus as the Wisdom of God.<sup>2</sup> He maintains that "when we consider what is most typically Matthaean in Matthew's treatment of the gospel material, we get the impression that the pattern which guided him in systematizing his material was that of a handbook."<sup>3</sup>

Donald Guthrie is also favorable to this development of Matthew's gospel. He points out, "the most obvious feature of Matthew's structure is the alternation of large blocks of teaching material with the narrative sections."<sup>4</sup> He proceeds to outline the entire book based on the grammatical phrase καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε. It is included here in shortened form to illustrate how Matthew is seen to have developed his gospel around the phrase with discourse/narrative alternations:

- I. The Infancy Narratives (1:1-2:23)
- II. The Preparation for the Ministry (3:1-4:11)

---

<sup>1</sup>Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom, pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Krister Stendahl, The School of St. Matthew: And Its Use of the Old Testament (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1954), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p. 29

- III. The Galilaean Ministry (4:12-25)
- IV. The First Discourse Section:  
The Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)
- V. Narrative (8:1-9:34)
- VI. The Second Discourse Section:  
The Mission Discourse (9:35-10:42)
- VII. Narrative (11:1-12:50)
- VIII. The Third Discourse Section:  
The Kingdom Parables (13:1-52)
- IX. Narrative (13:53-17:27)
- X. The Fourth Discourse Section:  
Various Sayings (18:1-35)
- XI. Narrative: The Judaeian Period (19:1-22:46)
- XII. The Fifth Discourse Section:  
Teaching on Eschatology (23:1-25:46)
- XIII. The Passion and Resurrection Narratives (26:1-28:20)<sup>1</sup>

The claim that the grammatical phrase καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε is the structural key to Matthew's gospel has not gone without its critics, among them the most notable being Jack Dean Kingsbury. He summarizes his objections under three arguments.

His first argument is against the placing of chapters 1-2 and chapters 26-28 as *preamble* and *epilogue*, respectively. He believes this places these chapters outside of the main of Matthew's gospel and hence overlooks the climactic nature of the cross and resurrection and the fact that Matthew has a concept of history.<sup>2</sup>

However, by viewing chapters 1-2 as a preamble and chapters 26-28 as an epilogue, does not necessarily mean they are of less importance. What it does mean is they are ful-

---

<sup>1</sup>Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, pp. 48-50.

<sup>2</sup>Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom, p. 2.

filling their necessary function; namely introducing and closing the book. In this sense they are important for they are doing exactly what Matthew intended them to do.

His second objection centers around the idea of the number five. He points to a change of setting between chapter 23 and chapters 24-25. This, he feels, would make six discourses and hence a "Matthaeian Hexateuch."<sup>1</sup>

A change of setting would not necessarily mean a new section. As Guthrie points out, the controversies of chapter 23 "serve as a prelude to the great eschatological discourse."<sup>2</sup>

Kingsbury's third criticism is the most valid. He points out that Bacon's idea that Matthew followed the five "books" of Moses is extremely artificial and does not follow the structure of the Pentateuch at all.<sup>3</sup> To this criticism Guthrie agrees and says, "in fact the main point of contact is the number five, which forms too slender a basis for the theory."<sup>4</sup>

It was because of the above criticisms that Kingsbury was compelled to seek a different structural key to Matthew's

---

<sup>1</sup>Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom, p. 4. Note: It was probably such a criticism that lead Hiebert and Scroggie to identify "six-divisions" and not five.

<sup>2</sup>Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p. 31.



gospel. He sought to develop a structural key which possessed a historical dimension and thus pointed to Matthew's concept of the history of salvation.<sup>1</sup> This he found in the grammatical phrase ἀπὸ τότε, and this leads to the second phrase which is used as the key to a structural analysis of Matthew's gospel.

b) Structure based on the grammatical phrase ἀπὸ τότε.

Believing that Bacon's basic outline and its implications are inaccurate, Kingsbury seeks to develop the literary structure of Matthew around the phrase ἀπὸ τότε which occurs two times in the gospel (4:17 and 16:21). At both places Kingsbury argues that it appears "as part of a fixed formula."<sup>2</sup> Its function being to "mark the beginning of a new period of time."<sup>3</sup> His thesis is "that Matthew did in fact intend that this formula should indicate the broadest divisions of the Gospel."<sup>4</sup> He identifies these divisions by saying,

Thus, 4:17 describes Jesus as publicly presenting himself to Israel and summoning it to the Kingdom of Heaven. By the same token, 16:21 describes him as revealing to his disciples that it is God's will that he go to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and be raised. If, therefore, we utilize this formula to arrange Matthew's

---

<sup>1</sup>Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Gospel according to topic, the following outline readily emerges: (I) The Person of Jesus Messiah (1:1-4:16); (II) The Proclamation of Jesus Messiah (4:17-16:20); (III) The Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Messiah (16:21-28:20).<sup>1</sup>

Kingsbury is not the only author to recognize the importance of this grammatical phrase. Everett Harrison identifies this phrase as indicating the two broad divisions of the ministry of the Lord.<sup>2</sup> Further, Hiebert arranges his outline of Matthew around the phrase and says that its occurrence "indicates that Matthew intended to divide his story of Jesus into distinct periods."<sup>3</sup>

c) Summary of structure based on grammatical phraseology.

That Matthew is a well structured gospel is identified and argued by supporters of both groups. Both seek to deal with a certain important introductory question: namely, what is the relationship between structure and purpose? Or put in a different light, what ties the gospel of Matthew together?

Scroggie sees Matthew's purpose as instructional. He says,

This grouping plan of Matthew is full of interest. His Gospel would be used for the instruction of Jewish converts

---

<sup>1</sup>Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Everett F. Harrison, Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 173.

<sup>3</sup>Hiebert, Introduction to the New Testament, 1:67.

who, no doubt, would gather in study-circles. It was eminently desirable, therefore, that the instruction should be so arranged as to be easily remembered, and this evangelist's method was well adapted to that end.<sup>1</sup>

Hiebert maintains that Matthew's thematic grouping of material "conveys a full view of the person portrayed."<sup>2</sup>

Guthrie thinks that "each formula is therefore a literary link which helps to give continuity to the whole and illustrates the author's skill."<sup>3</sup>

Each of these authors express truths about the gospel of Matthew, but they really only touch the fringes of Matthew's literary genius. Matthew presents his own specific portrait, his own unique perspective and his own distinctive theology of the person of Jesus Christ. This he does through the placement of his material into five main blocks, each consisting of a narrative element and a discourse element.

The glue, or the key which ties each block together is Matthew's desire to demonstrate "continuity between the Old Testament and the message of Jesus."<sup>4</sup> This desire of Matthew permeates the entire gospel and finds its ultimate expression in Matthew's use of Old Testament quotations and their fulfillment in the ministry of Jesus.

---

<sup>1</sup>Scroggie, A Guide to the Gospels, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup>Hiebert, Introduction to the New Testament, 1:46.

<sup>3</sup>Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>Van Elderen, "Purpose of the Parables in Matthew 13:10-17," p. 186.

Secondary themes also are developed in Matthew's gospel. These can be traced out specifically in each individual block of narrative discourse material. This thesis will deal only with one of those secondary themes as developed by Matthew in chapter 13:10-17

## 2. The Position of Chapter 13

Since Matthew does not structure his gospel around a strict chronological order of events but rather around five major discourses each ending with the phrase καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε, it is necessary to go elsewhere to determine the place in which chapter 13 falls in the ministry of the Lord. The significance of knowing this information will be seen in the actual exegesis of the text.

It is necessary here to present a conclusion which will not be demonstrated until later in the thesis. This conclusion is significant because of its place chronologically in the ministry of the Lord. The conclusion is that Jesus taught the multitudes in parables for the purpose of deliberately hiding truth. Did this action occur at the end of the Lord's ministry, after opposition had reached a pinnacle? Or, did it occur earlier in his ministry before opposition had reached a pinnacle?

These questions presuppose a relationship between the teaching method of Jesus and the reception of his message by the people in general. Logically speaking, it would seem more appropriate if the Lord had used these parables to hide

truth at the end of his ministry, after opposition had reached a pinnacle, rather than at the beginning of his ministry when opposition was not as fierce.

The block of material under consideration is 11:2-13:53. The narrative section begins in 11:2 with the previous block of material ending at 11:1. The narrative section ends at 12:50 with the discourse on parables occurring in 13:1-53. The discourse ends in 13:53 with the traditional discourse ending: καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς παραβολὰς ταύτας, μετῆρεν ἐκεῖθεν.

It is not the purpose of this section to do a detailed analysis of chronological aspects of the life of Christ. Many well-written and documented books have debated this and set forth their conclusions. What is desired is merely to place this block of material within the life of Christ to determine when it occurred. This can be done without entering into a detailed analysis of chronological aspects of Christ.

A. T. Robertson places this block of material in the Great Galilean ministry of Christ, which began about a year after his baptism.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Thomas and Stanley Gundry likewise place this block of material within the Great Galilean ministry and characterize it in the following manner:

---

<sup>1</sup>Archibald Thomas Robertson, A Harmony of the Gospels (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1922), p. 61.

Early stages of the period were marked by increasing popularity which reached its peak probably at about the time of the Sermon on the Mount. A rising opposition, beginning with a series of Sabbath controversies with Jewish leaders, is also perceived. This culminated in the first public rejection of Jesus by these leaders. At that point, toward the end of the period, Jesus inaugurated His parabolic teaching ministry so that He might reveal truth to those with receptive hearts while hiding it from the unreceptive.<sup>1</sup>

With the understanding that this particular block of material occurred during Jesus' Great Galilean ministry, one can see the importance of its position chronologically. Jesus' deliberate hiding of truth from the multitudes occurred somewhat early in his ministry, probably within the first year and a half. This means that he did not conclude his ministry by seeking to conceal truth after a period of long opposition, but started it by seeking to conceal truth. It will be seen later that this is consistent with Christ's answer to his disciples question on why he spoke to the multitudes in parables (Mt. 13:10), and also consistent with Matthew's development of secondary themes within each individual block of narrative/discourse material.

### 3. The Immediate Context

Now that the literary structure of Matthew's gospel has been identified with its contribution to the overall purpose of Matthew, and the particular block of narrative/discourse material placed in its chronological position, it

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert L. Thomas and Stanley W. Gundry, A Harmony of the Gospels with Explanations and Essays (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), p. 47.

remains to do an analysis of the block of narrative/discourse material itself. This is important because it will help us understand Matthew's development of his secondary theme.

a) Context of chapter 13

The context of chapter 13 is identified by the narrative/discourse formula found in 11:1 and 13:53. Generally speaking, the narrative section deals "with incidents which particularly illustrate growing opposition to Jesus and His method of dealing with controversies"<sup>1</sup> and in so doing "form a fitting introduction to the group of parables in xiii about the kingdom."<sup>2</sup>

The narrative/discourse block itself is made up of two major parts, the break occurring at 12:50. The major theme of the first part (11:20-12:50) is the rejection of Jesus. Matthew develops this theme along a steady evolution of thought.

The opening section (11:2-19) concerns the doubt of John the Baptist. John was concerned about whether Jesus was really the Messiah or not so he sent some of his disciples to question Jesus and report to him their conclusion. Jesus points to the fulfillment of various Old Testament passages in his ministry (Isa. 35:5; 16:1) and then gives a eulogy of John.

---

<sup>1</sup>Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

The next section contains Jesus' woes against the Galilean cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (11:20-24) because they did not repent on Jesus' demand.

A brief theological excursus occurs (11:25-30) followed by a section which pits Jesus against the scribes and Pharisees in a series of Sabbath controversies (12:1-45). The culmination of this section is that the Pharisees blaspheme and ask for a sign but Jesus only points to his future crucifixion as their sign.

In the final section (12:46-50) the theme of the Jewish rejection of Jesus is developed along the lines of reverse reasoning: namely, by focusing on the true relatives of Jesus. This final section draws the first main part of the narrative/discourse block to a close.

The second major part of the discourse is chapter 13 itself. This chapter is divided into two main sections.

The first section (vss. 1-35) centers around Jesus' address to the multitudes (ὄχλοι πολλοί). Previously Jesus had concerned himself only with particular segments of the Jewish nation. Now he turns to the Jewish nation as a whole and points out that they see but do not see and hear but do not hear (13:13).

The second section (vss. 36-52) centers around Jesus' conversation with his disciples, who are viewed as being his chosen recipients of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (13:11), and hence are blessed above even the Old Testament



prophets and righteous men (13:17).<sup>1</sup>

#### b) Structure of chapter 13

The basic elements which constitute chapter 13 itself are of interest. As previously mentioned, chapter 13 is divided into two main sections, one centering around Jesus and the multitudes, the other centering around Jesus and his disciples. Kingsbury compares each of these sections and concludes that they possess a remarkably similar structure which he summarizes as follows:

Each has its respective setting (vv. 1-3a, 36a); in each there is an "excursus" (vv. 10-23, 36b-43); in the first section there are four parables (Sower, Tares, Mustard Seed, Leaven), in the second three (Hidden Treasure, Pearl, Net...); and each section has an appropriate conclusion (vv. 34f, 51f).<sup>2</sup>

Further, there are two major Old Testament references. Isaiah 6:9 is alluded to in 13:13 and quoted fully in 13:14-15 and Psalm 78:2 is quoted in 13:35 with the standard Matthaean formula quotation.

O. Lamar Cope demonstrates by means of comparing 13:1-3a with the introductory verses of other discourses in Matthew (5:1f., 10:1f., 18:1f., 23:1, and 24:1) "that

---

<sup>1</sup>This section is indebted to the excellent analysis of Jack D. Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13 (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1969), pp. 15-16. Though not a conservative scholar, Kingsbury is probably the top, foremost scholar on Matthew's gospel and the parables specifically.

<sup>2</sup>Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, p. 12.

Matthew has no stereotyped formula for beginning a discourse."<sup>1</sup>

### c) Function of chapter 13

As stated previously, the glue which ties Matthew's gospel together is his desire to show the continuity between the Old Testament and the message of Jesus. This Matthew accomplishes through his use of Old Testament quotations and their fulfillment in the ministry of Jesus.

However, Matthew also develops secondary themes within the overall structure of his gospel. This he does by developing specific themes within each narrative/discourse block of material. The function, therefore, of chapter 13 is to identify and develop the secondary theme. This Matthew does with great literary excellence.

Apparently, in this third narrative/discourse block Matthew is seeking to "account for the rejection of Jesus by many of the Jews."<sup>2</sup> Two other passages closely related to this one and developing the same secondary theme are the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (21:33-46) and the Parable of the Talents (25:14-30). The key phrase in each instance is ἀρθῆσεται ἀπό (13:12; 21:43; 25:29). By the usage of the phrase within the passages, Matthew shows that the nation of

---

<sup>1</sup>O. Lamar Cope, Matthew: A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven, ed. by Bruce Vawter et al., In The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Van Elderen, "The Purpose of the Parables in Matthew 13:10-17," p. 186.

Israel has had the kingdom taken from them and given to a nation producing the fruit of it (21:43). In so doing, Matthew accounts "for the rejection of Jesus by many of the Jews."<sup>1</sup>

d) Summarization

It has been the thesis thus far that contextual contributions help to understand the passage under consideration. Therefore, a lengthy discussion was developed to demonstrate this thesis. It would help to briefly summarize the contribution made from this discussion.

Matthew's literary structure is that of a preamble and an epilogue with five major narrative/discourse blocks of material in between. The preamble and epilogue, respectively open and close the gospel with the material in between fulfilling the purpose of Matthew. This means there is a relationship between the structure of the gospel and the author's purpose. That relationship was identified as Matthew's attempt to show the continuity between the Old Testament and the message of Jesus.

Further, Matthew develops secondary themes within each of the individual narrative/discourse blocks. In the third discourse under consideration, Matthew is seeking to explain Israel's rejection of Jesus. This he does by contrasting Israel with the disciples, indicating their

---

<sup>1</sup>Van Elderen, "The Purpose of Parables in Matthew 13:10-17," p. 186.

privileged status.

### B. Textual Analysis

There is but one textual variant within the framework of Matthew 13:10-17 and that is verse 13. The reading inserted in the UBS text is given a [B] rating indicating that some degree of doubt exists.

For the most part, it receives a [B] rating because, as Metzger points out, "several representatives of the Western and the Caesarean types of text, influenced by the parallel passages in Mk. 4:12 and Lk. 8:10, altered the construction to ἵνα with the subjunctive mood."<sup>1</sup>

The reading placed within the framework of the UBS text is one which by far receives the majority of evidence, the earliest being in the fourth century (8 and B) and the latest being in the twelfth century (minuscule 1071).

Variant reading number two has no textual evidence until the twelfth century (minuscule 1365) and reading number four received support in versions only: Old Latin in the tenth century and the Coptic in the third through sixth century. Probably the Old Latin and Coptic found their support from one of the Caesarean minuscules which altered the reading significantly (f<sup>1</sup> and f<sup>13</sup> and uncial Θ).

The Caesarean minuscules, being influenced by Mark

---

<sup>1</sup>Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 3d ed. (United Bible Societies, 1971), pp. 32-33.

and Luke, and having altered the text, are essentially of a late date (1013 A.D. through the fifteenth century). The Western alteration (Cod. D) is of a sixth century date. This alteration influenced by Mark and Luke really poses no serious textual threat to the UBS text.

The text inserted in the UBS text has good manuscript evidences and should be accepted as read.

### C. Lexical, Philological, Grammatical, and Syntactical Observations

#### 1. The Question of the Disciples

##### a) The Partners in the Discussion: οἱ μαθηταὶ . . . αὐτῷ

The passage under consideration opens with the partners in the discussion identified. Throughout Matthew's gospel, the term οἱ μαθηταὶ, when used of Jesus' followers, is predominately synonymous with the Twelve. Here they are characterized as προσελθόντες. Kingsbury has suggested that this phrase has cultic overtones. He says "the significance of this formula lies in the cultic overtones προσέρχομαι can acquire."<sup>1</sup> His evidence for this conclusion is its usage in Hellenistic Greek literature, the Septuagint and the writings of Josephus. In each instance, he observes, it has the sense of coming before a deity for sacrifice or worship.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Kingsbury then transfers these usages to the gospel of Matthew where he seeks to demonstrate that Matthew has given the word the same cultic overtones. Of the fifty-two usages of προσέρχομαι in Matthew, Kingsbury observes that "in no less than forty-nine it signals the approach of others to Jesus."<sup>1</sup> He then points out that on three of the occasions in which Matthew uses the term, Jesus is also addressed as Κυριός (8:25; 17:14; 18:21). Other times, Matthew couples the term with verbs which themselves have cultic overtones: προσκυνέω (8:2; 9:18; 20:20), διακονέω (4:11), παρακαλέω (8:5), and γονυπετέω (17:14).<sup>2</sup> Kingsbury's conclusion to this is belief that προσέρχομαι for Matthew has cultic overtones. He concludes by saying,

Indirectly it ascribes a lordly dignity to Jesus, for people approach him with the same reverence that would be due to a king or deity. Accordingly, when Matthew states in v. 10a that "the disciples came . . . to him," he provides us with a thumbnail sketch of Jesus by portraying him as a person of royal dignity whom the disciples approach in full awareness of his majestic status.<sup>3</sup>

Kingsbury's information is of interest but is not all quite as accurate as he records. Προσέρχομαι is a word which is used extensively in Matthew: fifty-two times as Kingsbury states. However, it is not quite used as extensively of Jesus as Kingsbury states. It is used thirty-seven

---

<sup>1</sup>Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, pp. 40-41.

times of others coming to Jesus (forty-one if its usage in the parables are interpreted to refer to the Messiah.). Of those thirty-seven times, thirteen refer to the disciples coming to Jesus, and twenty-four refer to others coming to Jesus. Interestingly, of those twenty-four times of others coming to Jesus, two refer to metaphysical beings: Satan (4:3) and angels (4:11). If, as Kingsbury purports, προσέρχομαι has cultic overtones of such a nature that it refers to the deity of Jesus and, therefore, the one coming to him is thereby ascribing to Jesus a majestic status, it must be concluded that Satan was ascribing a majestic status to Jesus by coming to him. Also, of those twenty-four times of others coming to Jesus, five times it is indicated that either the scribes or Pharisees or the chief priest and elders came to Jesus. Were they by their coming giving a thumbnail sketch of the majestic status of Jesus? It could hardly be said so.

The word is also used of others coming to others, such as the disciples of John coming to pick up his dead body (14:12), as Joseph coming to Pilate (27:58). It could hardly be said that προσέρχομαι has cultic overtones in these instances.

The conclusion, then, of Matthew's usage of προσέρχομαι is that the word in itself has no cultic overtones and that its usage simply indicates the fact of someone coming to someone else.

b) The question stated

In coming to Jesus the disciples seek information to a specific question they have concerning the methodology of Jesus' teaching. They ask him, Διὰ τί ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς. The statement of this phrase is important for Matthew in the development of his secondary theme.

The words Διὰ τί begin to already indicate a contrast which is going to permeate this section; namely, that the disciples are of privileged status and the others are under divine judgment. A similar phrase occurs in verse 13 (διὰ τοῦτο) and in so doing forms a series of antithetic parallel statements intended to demonstrate the privileged status of the disciples.

A comparison of the other synoptic gospels will show that Matthew is approaching this particular incident in the life of Christ from his own particular literary framework. In Mark 4:10 it is said that the disciples along with some followers of Jesus asked him "about the parables."<sup>1</sup> In Luke 8:9 it was only the disciples and they questioned him about "what this parable might be."

As to why there is an apparent synoptic difference, Van Elderen points out,

Each evangelist must be interpreted on his own terms and in his own right; and, although all four are

---

<sup>1</sup>The Lockman Foundation, New American Standard Bible (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.). Hereinafter this translation will be used for all English Scripture quotations unless otherwise designated.



describing the life and ministry of the same person, each presents a specific portrait, a unique perspective, and a distinct "theology" of this one person, Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Keeping Van Elderen's statement in mind, Matthew is here presenting a secondary theme to his overall theme of the gospel. In this theme Matthew is accounting for the Israelite rejection of Jesus. To have the disciples phrase their question as they do is in keeping with Matthew's literary framework.

Another word in the disciple's question which shows that Matthew is keeping within his literary framework is λαλεῖς. It is significant that Matthew uses this word instead of λέγω. According to James Boyer, λαλέω emphasizes the manner of speaking while λέγω emphasizes the message or meaning.<sup>2</sup> If this is the case, the usage of λαλέω in this incident further indicates that the disciples were questioning Jesus as to his method and not as to the message and hence Matthew's literary framework is accomplished.

The use of the personal pronoun αὐτοῖς indicates those who are being contrasted with the disciples. This pronoun occurs nine times in this chapter (13:3, 10, 11, 13, 24, 31, 33, 34, 52). Eight of those times the word is used of the multitudes mentioned in verse 2. It is these

---

<sup>1</sup>Van Elderen, "The Purpose of Parables According to Matthew 13:10-17," p. 181.

<sup>2</sup>James L. Boyer, "NTG314-Greek Exegesis: Johannine Epistles," (Unpublished Class Syllabus, Grace Theological Seminary, revised 1975), p. 71.

who are seen as not possessing knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

As to what the manner (λαλεῖς) of Jesus' teaching is, the disciples center their question on Jesus' speaking ἐν παραβολαῖς. They recognize that he is speaking to the multitudes in a manner different from his previous manner and they began to question him about it.

The word παραβολή means "a placing beside, juxtaposition"<sup>1</sup> and its function is basically that of comparing one thing to another. Mickelsen says that "a parable is often an extended simile."<sup>2</sup> Arndt and Gingrich point out that in the synoptics, parables were a characteristic form of the teaching of Jesus and they supply the following definition:

A parable is a short discourse that makes a comparison; it expresses a (single) complete thought. The evangelists considered that it needed interpretation because it presented teaching in obscure fashion.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, the definition which Arndt and Gingrich purpose, incorporates the thought of obscurity of meaning within the word itself. This would mean that Jesus, by

---

<sup>1</sup>G. Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, Third Edition (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1937), p. 338.

<sup>2</sup>A. Berkeley Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), p. 212.

<sup>3</sup>William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 617.

his very choice of teaching in parables, understood that the meaning he intended to convey would be obscure. C. H. Dodd expressed a similar understanding. He said, a parable;

. . . at its simplest . . . is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to rouse it into active thought.<sup>1</sup>

If the word itself indicates a somewhat obscure message, then the question of the disciples takes on even more significance. Their question would indicate that they understood that Jesus was intentionally making his message obscure and this was apparently something he was not accustomed to doing.

## 2. The Answer of Jesus

### a) From the perspective of the Divine Plan

In verses 10-13 Jesus begins to account for Israel's rejection of him and his message. Throughout this section, as well as the entire passage, he is going to demonstrate the privileged status of the disciples and the judgemental status of Israel. Specifically, here he is going to demonstrate the privileged status of the disciples by pointing to "the quality of the revelation they have received."<sup>2</sup>

An interpretive problem exists with the ὅτι in verse

---

<sup>1</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, Third Edition (London: Nisbet and Company, Ltd., 1935), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, p. 43.

11. It may be taken as recitative, as does the UBS text, and therefore indicates direct discourse. Or, it can be taken as causal indicating the reason why Jesus is speaking in parables. Whichever one's choice, its usage here must be based on the context since both are grammatically possible.

In favor of the recitative sense is the γάρ in verse 12 and the ὅτι in verse 13. In both instances, an explanatory meaning is to be understood. Therefore, it would be unnecessary for Jesus to attribute a causal meaning to ὅτι in verse 11.

In favor of a causal sense are the parables found within the verses surrounding verse 11. This means that the ὅτι of verse 11 responds to the διὰ τί of the question posed by the disciples. The same thought is picked up again in verse 13 where διὰ τοῦτο is followed by ὅτι and here, ὅτι is clearly causal.

Whether one chooses the recitative sense or the causal sense really makes little difference. The meaning of verse 11 is not changed regardless of which usage of ὅτι is chosen. This writer has chosen the recitative usage over the causal usage, basically because the causal usage does not appear to be necessitated by the verse.

To indicate the desired contrast between the disciples and the multitudes, Jesus uses the perfect passive δέδοται of the verb δίδωμι. Of the disciples, he says, Ὑμῶν ἐδέδοται but of the multitudes he says ἐκείνοις . . . οὐ δέδοται.

The significance of this verb lies in its tense and voice. The perfect "implies a past action and affirms an existing result."<sup>1</sup> The passive voice is used to denote "the subject as *receiving the action*."<sup>2</sup> What Jesus is meaning here is that the disciples, through no action of their own, have, in the past, been chosen as recipients of certain knowledge, and now are being made aware of that action. Likewise, the multitudes, through no action of their own, have, in the past, been chosen as ones not to be recipients of certain knowledge, and now are being made aware of that action. As Hendriksen points out, "it was a matter of pure grace."<sup>3</sup>

What Jesus wants the disciples to know therefore, is that their being placed in a status of privilege is a matter of "the gracious gift of God who gives this knowledge to the disciples."<sup>4</sup> This does not mean, as will be seen later, that human responsibility is ignored (see vss. 12-13, 15), but that human responsibility is based upon the divine plan.

The most difficult phrase in the verse is the phrase

---

<sup>1</sup>Ernest De Witt Burton, Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek, Reprint of the Third Edition (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1976), p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 161.

<sup>3</sup>William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Greek According to Matthew, In the New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 553.

<sup>4</sup>Van Elderen, "The Purpose of Parables According to Matthew 13:10-17," p. 183.

γνῶναι τὸ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν. It will be analyzed along two lines of development: first, identification of its syntactical properties and second, ascertainment of its interpretive properties.

From a syntactical perspective, the phrase is a substantival clause indicating the subject of the neuter verb δέδοται. While not actually supplied in the second member of the antithetic parallelism which characterizes this verse, nevertheless, it is clearly understood as belonging to both members of the parallelism.<sup>1</sup>

The real significance of this is that it is implied that both groups have the mysteries but only one group, the disciples, has "the knowledge of τὰ μυστήρια, whereas the other does not."<sup>2</sup>

From an interpretive perspective, the phrase possesses not a few difficulties, the first beginning with the infinitive γνῶναι. The verb γινώσκω has an interesting history. Its Greek usage denotes the "intelligent comprehension of an object or matter,"<sup>3</sup> and it embraces things as they really are and has the sense of "to verify" primarily

---

<sup>1</sup>Van Elderen, "The Purpose of Parables According to Matthew 13:10-17," p. 182.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, "γινώσκω, γινῶσις, ἐπιγινώσκω, . . . ," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. I, ed. by Gerhard Friedrich, Trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 689.

by observation since to the Greeks the eye is more of a reliable witness than the ear.<sup>1</sup> Its Old Testament usage corresponds to the Hebrew  $\text{עָיַן}$  which in the Septuagint is normally rendered by  $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$  and  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha\iota$  and has the idea of "perception or comprehension."<sup>2</sup> The Greek idea of objective verification is not as prominent in the Old Testament as is verification by experience.<sup>3</sup> When used in an objective sense in the Old Testament it refers to knowledge of the requirements of the Law.<sup>4</sup>

In the New Testament  $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\omega$  has several usages. It can mean "to detect" (Mk. 5:25), or "to note" (Mk. 8:17), or "to recognize" (Mt. 12:15) or "to know" in the sense of awareness (Mt. 24:50) or acquaintance (Mt. 25:24).<sup>5</sup> Vine, in defining the word points to Matthew 13:11 as having a particularizing emphasis and says that it "signifies to be taking in knowledge, to come to know, recognize, understand, or to understand completely."<sup>6</sup>

The significance of  $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\omega$  is seen in its relationship to the rest of the clause. What has been given

---

<sup>1</sup>Bultmann, " $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\omega$ ,  $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ,  $\epsilon\pi\iota\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\omega$ , . . .," p. 691.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 697.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 701.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p. 703.

<sup>6</sup>W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (McLean: MacDonald Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 637.

by divine choice to the disciples is the ability to intelligently comprehend or perceive the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. It is precisely this ability which has not been given to the multitudes.

The object of γινώσκω is identified in the rest of the clause by the phrase, τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν. One's understanding of this phrase will indicate one's perspective concerning the parables recorded in chapter 13. The position taken by this writer is that this phrase refers to secrets, in the apocalyptic sense of Daniel, about the Old Testament Mediatorial kingdom. These secrets had not been previously revealed by God but now, through the parabolic teaching in chapter 13, the disciples are seen as being recipients of divine revelation and interpretation. That this is the proper interpretation will be seen in the following discussion.

What is the meaning of μυστήρια? In the Markan text the word is in the singular, but here in Matthew the word is in the plural. This indicates that the word refers not just to the parable preceding but is all inclusive of the parables in the entire chapter. Carlston understands this to be so when he writes, "whatever the Markan singular may have meant, the plural must imply that the disciples understand Jesus' *teaching* or his message as a whole."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Charles Carlston, The Parables of the Triple Tradition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 5



Arndt and Gingrich give as the basic meaning, the definition of "secret, secret rite, secret teaching, mystery" noting that;

Our lit. uses it to mean the secret thoughts, plans, and dispensations of God which are hidden fr. the human reason, as well as fr. all other comprehension below the divine level, and hence must be revealed to those for whom they are intended.<sup>1</sup>

Difficulty in interpretation of μυστήριον is due to the fact that the word occurs only once in Matthew and is found in the synoptics in only the same account as Matthew. It would seem that one should be able to understand its meaning in Matthew by an examination of Matthew's gospel alone. By this it is meant that Matthew does not seek to give us a definition of the word but appears to assume that the disciples already understood its meaning. Further, if this is the case, the word must have a general meaning akin to the Old Testament and have its specific meaning in the immediate context of the parables themselves.

The general meaning of the word, as used in the Septuagint, has an apocalyptic meaning. This is clearly seen in Daniel where God is seen as revealing profound and hidden things to Daniel (2:18, 19, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47; 4:9) his servant. Daniel himself declares God to be the divine revealer of mysteries:

It is He who reveals the profound  
and hidden things;

---

<sup>1</sup>BAG, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, pp. 531-532.

He knows what is in the darkness,  
And the light dwells with Him (Dan. 2:22)

There appears to be a close parallel to Matthew's use of μυστήριον in the Habakkuk Pesher at Qumran. The same phrase as in Matthew occurs: םיִרְיָעִי. Its reference is to the Torah and the Prophets. Cope says:

The general concept of divine revelation at Qumran was built upon the belief that God had hidden his plan for history and his will for men in the Torah and the Prophets.<sup>1</sup>

However, the Old Testament, while containing the plan and will of God, needs to be interpreted properly by ones who have specially been instructed by the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> This means that while the general public has the teachings, they remain hidden to all but a select few.<sup>3</sup> This understanding would certainly correspond to Jesus' usage in Matthew, for while the multitudes had the parables, as did the disciples, they never-the-less had no knowledge of their secrets. This knowledge was given only to the disciples.

The specific meaning of μυστήριον is developed by Jesus in the parables spoken in Matthew 13. This means that in order to know what Jesus meant by the phrase τα μυστήρια τηῆ βασιλείας one need only to interpret the

---

<sup>1</sup>Cope, Matthew: A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

surrounding parables.<sup>1</sup> In so doing, μυστήριον, as used by Christ, is seen to refer to secrets about the kingdom which before this time had not been revealed by God. As Hummel observes, "here is the introduction of new truth about the kingdom. The contents of the parables of this chapter clearly prove this point."<sup>2</sup> Alva J. McClain summarizes the term well when he states:

It refers to that which is hidden and secret, what can be known only to those who are specially initiated or taught. The word does not necessarily mean something incomprehensible to the human mind, but rather that which has hitherto been unrevealed.<sup>3</sup>

The specific application of μυστήριον is seen to refer to τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν. This phrase is characteristically Matthaean, occurring thirty-five times. It is used synonymously with the similar βασιλεία θεοῦ which occurs four times in Matthew. In seeking to identify what Jesus was referring to, several answers have been set forth. Ladd defines the kingdom as follows:

*The kingdom of God is the sovereign rule of God,*

---

<sup>1</sup>For an excellent discussion of the parables see George Eldon Ladd, Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), pp. 128-130. Though this writer believes Ladd identifies the Kingdom improperly, he never-the-less understands that "mystery" needs to be interpreted by Matthew's usage within ch. 13 itself.

<sup>2</sup>Donald R. Hummel, "The Significance of Christ's Use of Isaiah 6:9-10 With Reference to Israel in Matthew" (Unpublished ThM Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1965), p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>Alva J. McClain, The Greatness of the Kingdom (Winona Lake: BMH Book, 1959), p. 324.

*manifested in the person and work of Christ, creating a people over whom he reigns, and issuing in a realm or realms in which the power of his reign is realized.*<sup>1</sup>

This definition designates three elements which constitute the kingdom of God: (1) a rule of God, (2) a reign of God over his people, and (3) a realm realized. For Ladd, these were realized in the supernatural ministry of the Messiah as indicated by his defeat over Satan,<sup>2</sup> and in the salvation of believers in general.<sup>3</sup> Ladd does not believe that the Kingdom of heaven, as presented in the ministry of Jesus, was the Davidic kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament. Rather, it was a spiritual kingdom to be realized in the lives of believers here and now. He says,

But that future earthly realm was not what Jesus offered to Israel. Before the kingdom is to be thus realized on the earth or in the age to come, it must come to men as a present spiritual reality, to be realized here and now in the sphere of their own lives. God may now reign within them as it was never before possible.<sup>4</sup>

Ladd realizes that the Old Testament prophecies look forward "primarily to the earthly aspect of the kingdom"<sup>5</sup> but that Jesus, in the mystery parables, changed all of this. Thus he interprets the "mysteries of the kingdom" as Jesus teaching to the disciples that "the Old Testament prophetic

---

<sup>1</sup>Ladd, Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 94.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p. 127.

ideal was not at once to be fulfilled and that the kingdom was not immediately to be manifested in the fullness of power."<sup>1</sup> The kingdom which Jesus preached, is for Ladd, a spiritual kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

Ladd is not alone in this interpretation. William Barclay seems to reflect the same view<sup>3</sup> as does Hanko who says,

By virtue of the fact that the kingdom of heaven is spiritual, the things of the kingdom are hidden. That is, these things are not apparent to our earthly and natural senses . . . . They are hidden in the mind and heart of God, in His counsel and will, and in the heaven where He dwells.<sup>4</sup>

In all fairness to Ladd, the prime representative of the dual-kingdom idea, it appears that he has missed Matthew's understanding of the kingdom of God. As Alva J. McClain points out;

That, while the Bible does make a clear distinction between the Universal Kingdom which is everlasting and the Mediatorial Kingdom which is limited in both location and time, neither the Old Testament prophets nor our Lord knew anything about two Mediatorial Kingdoms, the one "spiritual" and the other "earthly".<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ladd, Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 131.

<sup>3</sup>William Barclay, The Gospel of Matthew, in The Daily Study Bible Series, revised edition, 2 Vols. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 2:66.

<sup>4</sup>Herman C. Hanko, The Mysteries of the Kingdom: An Exposition of the Parables (Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1975), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>McClain, The Greatness of the Kingdom, p. 275.

McClain further demonstrates beyond all doubt that the kingdom which Jesus presented to Israel, and the kingdom which is under consideration here, is none other than the Old Testament Mediatorial Kingdom as prophesied.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the "mysteries of the kingdom," McClain sees this phrase as referring to a mystery *form* which the kingdom is to take following "the arrival of the King and continue until His second coming."<sup>2</sup> Apparently, his only support for this interpretation comes from Matthew 13:36-43 in the parable of the "tares of the field." That McClain would use a parable as his only support for such a view is interesting in light of his statement eariler that "it is never safe to use either a type or parable to teach something not elsewhere taught directly and clearly in the Word of God."<sup>3</sup> It appears that Ladd is closer to the truth of the "mysteries of the Kingdom" when he writes:

The parables do not speak of the kingdom in a 'mystery form,' they speak of the mystery of the kingdom, a truth about the kingdom which has not previously been revealed.<sup>4</sup>

What has been attempted in the above discussion is the defense of a particular interpretation of the phrase τα μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν. It was said that the

---

<sup>1</sup>McClain, The Greatness of the Kingdom, pp. 276-303.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 325.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 324.

<sup>4</sup>Ladd, Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God, p. 128.

phrase referred to secrets, in the apocalyptic sense of Daniel, about the Old Testament Mediatorial kingdom. These secrets had not previously been revealed by God but now, through the parabolic teaching of chapter 13, the disciples are seen as being recipients of divine revelation and interpretation. That this is the correct interpretation was seen from the definition of *μυστήριον* in light of its general Septuagint usage and specific New Testament usage as defined by the parables in Matthew 13 themselves. Further, the Kingdom under consideration was viewed as the prophesied Old Testament Davidic kingdom.

The significance of the entire phrase is seen in the fact that God does not merely reveal a secret but that he also interprets it through vessels of his choosing.<sup>1</sup>

Why did Jesus speak in parables to the multitudes? According to verse 11 it was because the disciples were of privileged status and had been chosen by God to be receptors of secrets never before revealed about the kingdom of heaven. The multitudes, on the other hand, were not receptors of this secret knowledge but were under judgment because of their unbelief.<sup>2</sup> Cope sums up the verse by saying:

---

<sup>1</sup>G. Bornkamm, "μυστήριον, μύεω," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. IV. ed. by Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 814-815.

<sup>2</sup>Stanley D. Toussaint, "The Introductory and Concluding Parables of Matthew Thirteen," Bibliotheca Sacra, 121:484, (October-December, 1964), pp. 351-355.

Matthew has now been able to develop a theory of interpretation of the parables of Jesus which coincides with the theory of peshar interpretation of the Prophets at Qumran. According to their theory, the parables contain within them 'secrets' concerning the end-time. These secrets are not open to the casual listener or reader but can only be grasped by the ones privileged to know the secrets, that is, the disciples.<sup>1</sup>

The antithetic parallelism of verse 11 is followed by another antithetically paralleled verse. This verse is further explaining the previous verse as indicated by the causal γάρ. The contrast between the disciples and the multitudes is further being explained and supported.

The passage is somewhat problematical for as Van Elderen has pointed out "if a person does not have something, how can 'that which he has' be taken away?"<sup>2</sup> This problem is somewhat diminished by remembering the apologetic purpose of this particular passage. Jesus is accounting for Israel's rejection of him and his message. Further, he is contrasting the disciples with the multitudes and is showing the disciples why they are of privileged status. In verse 12, then, he concentrates on the promise which is theirs as a consequence of being privileged.

Two important verbs occur in this passage which help to understand its meaning. Those words are δοθήσεται and ἀρθήσεται. Both of these verbs appear in 21:43 and 25:29.

---

<sup>1</sup>Cope, Matthew, A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven, pp. 20-21.

<sup>2</sup>Van Elderen, "The Purpose of Parables According to Matthew 13:10-17," p. 183.



With the help of these passages this verse becomes understandable. The verbs in each parallel passage are future passives; thus indicating an eschatological understanding.<sup>1</sup>

In 21:33-46 there is the Parable of the Landowner. This landowner planted a vineyard, placed it in the hands of vine-growers and went on a journey (21:33). At harvest the landowner sent his slaves to gather his produce but they were killed. This occurred three times and then the landowner sent his son believing that they would respect him. The vine-growers had no such respect and so they killed the son. Because of this, the landowner, when he comes, will rent the vineyard out to someone else who will pay him his dues. This parable Jesus applies to Israel's rejection of himself. The vineyard is the Kingdom of God (21:43). It is this which will be taken from them (ἀρθήσεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν) and given to a nation (ἐθνεί) producing the fruit of it. The chief priests and Pharisees understood clearly that he was speaking of them and they sought to seize him (21:45-46).

In 25:14-30 the Parable of the Talents is recounted. The same theme as in 21:33-46 and 13:10-17 is being presented. A man going on a long journey entrusted his slaves with his possessions (25:14). Each was to invest what they were given in such a way as to show a return. Two of the slaves did, but a third did not. The one who hid his talent and did not

---

<sup>1</sup>Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, p. 46.

invest it so as to show a return, had his talent taken from him and given to the others (25:28). Then the same verse as in 13:12 occurs in 25:29.

Utilizing all three passages, it becomes apparent that Jesus is developing his secondary theme and thus accounting for Israel's rejection of him and his message.

The disciples have knowledge of the mysteries. This knowledge is to increase in great abundance. The Israelites have no such knowledge of the mysteries. That which they do have, namely, knowledge of the kingdom as revealed in the Old Testament, even that is in some fashion to be taken away.

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3:13-16 gives us a possible clue as to the present status of the "sons of Israel" and their knowledge of the kingdom. Paul says that to this day the minds of the "sons of Israel" remain veiled because of the hardness of their hearts. This veil can only be lifted in Christ.

In verse 13 Matthew moves from the realm of Divine Sovereignty to that of human responsibility. He now gives the cause for his speaking in parables. The *ὅτι* of this verse is to be understood as causal. What Matthew is here doing, then, is stressing the *reason* (*ὅτι*) why Jesus is speaking in parables and not the *purpose* (*ἵνα*) of Jesus' speaking in parables (as does Mark). This does not mean that Jesus is negating his previous explanation and seeking to change the meaning of Mark's view of the parables. But

as Dan O. Via points out,

The note that the secrets of the kingdom are providentially withheld from the crowd is at least as strong in Matt. 13:11 as it is in Mark 4:11. . . . Matthew is saying, therefore, that Jesus teaches in parables because the secrets of the kingdom are to be kept from the crowd . . . and because the crowd is lacking in comprehension.<sup>1</sup>

Further evidence which points to Matthew's consistency of emphasizing the Divine choice is the verb συνίουν. By Jesus' usage of this verb, he is expressing "the concept of the contingent and paradoxical nature of revelation."<sup>2</sup> The word comes from a free rendering of Isaiah 6:9 and according to Conzelmann "one must insist that the failure to understand is God's purpose."<sup>3</sup>

Much meaning is given to this verb because of its Jewish tradition. Its usage in the Old Testament indicates that "insight is not a faculty nature to man as such. It is the gift of God."<sup>4</sup>

Thus, while Jesus indicates that he speaks in parables because (ὅτι) of the hardness of their minds, he never-the-less points out that this hardness is because of God's purpose

---

<sup>1</sup>Dan O. Via, "Matthew on the Understandability of the Parables," Journal of Biblical Literature, 84 (1965), p. 430.

<sup>2</sup>Hans Conzelmann, "συνίημι, σύνεσις, συνετός, ασύνετος," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VII, ed. by Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), p. 893.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 894.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 890.

as described in verse 11.

b) From the perspective of  
Old Testament fulfillment

Moving from the perspective of the Divine plan as expressed in 13:11-13, Jesus now seeks to account for Israel's rejection of him and his message and the privileged status of the disciples on the basis of fulfilled Old Testament prophecy (13:14-15). Verse 13, by its allusion to Isaiah 6:9, provides an easy transition to the full expression of this Old Testament fulfillment.

The difficulty surrounding this portion of scripture concerns its genuineness. Most scholars believe this quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10 to have been interpolated into the text sometime after its original composition. Kingsbury holds this view and produces several arguments against its genuineness. His main arguments are summarized below with answers which have been developed to deal with them.

First, Kingsbury believes it to be strange for Matthew, after having alluded to Isaiah 6:9 in verse 13, to repeat the same quotation a second time.<sup>1</sup> However, as stated before, the allusion in verse 13 provides Jesus with a simple transition to the full statement of the Old Testament prophecy. In verse 13 Jesus is seeking to harmonize the stubbornness of Israel's mind with the purpose of God. To do this he

---

<sup>1</sup>Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, p. 39.

relies not merely on the context but on the free rendering of συνίημι from Isaiah 6:9. In this way, neither the Divine purpose nor human responsibility is diminished.

Also, if these verses were an interpolation, as Kingsbury would have us suppose, Gundry points out the following:

We should almost have to say that an original ἵνα in verse 13 was changed to ὅτι to conform with the interpretation of the LXX. This requires too much cleverness on the part of the interpolator.<sup>1</sup>

Kingsbury's second objection centers around the idea that the antithetic parallelism between verses 13 and 16 is interrupted and obscured by the lengthy quotation,<sup>2</sup> but this does not need to be viewed in this manner.

Keeping in mind the literary structure of Matthew's gospel, one can account for the interruption of the antithetic parallelism. Matthew's gospel is the gospel about the Kingdom. Its primary function is to present Jesus as the promised Old Testament Messiah. This Matthew does by constructing his gospel around five narrative/discourse blocks of material. In each block, Matthew carefully utilizes material from the Old Testament to fulfill his primary purpose. Thus, as Toy points out:

The citations of the Evangelist are all intended to prove the Messiahship of Jesus, and they are all characterized by a mechanical literalness, especially those

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Gundry, The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), pp. 117-118.

<sup>2</sup>Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, p. 39.

that are peculiar to him.<sup>1</sup>

The passage under consideration is no different from any other Old Testament passage in Matthew. Matthew, overall seeks to show how the life, death, and ministry of Jesus was an exact fulfillment of the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup>

Weaved into this main purpose of Matthew is his development of secondary themes. In the passage under consideration he seeks to account for Israel's rejection of Jesus. This he does through antithetic parallel statements about the disciples and the multitude. Thus, by his inclusion of an Old Testament passage Matthew fulfills his primary purpose and by building around the passage the immediate context he also fulfills his secondary purpose. Actually, then, the parallelism is not broken but enhanced.

Kingsbury's third objection is the Introductory Formula introducing the quotation. It contains two hapax legomena and hence, is un-Matthaeian.<sup>3</sup>

Gundry points out that the two hapax legomena are common in the Septuagint and elsewhere in Greek literature and therefore we cannot assume that ἀναπληροῦν was foreign to

---

<sup>1</sup>Crawford Howell Toy, Quotations in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884), p. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup>James Flamming, "The New Testament Use of Isaiah," Southwestern Journal of Theology, 11:1 (Fall, 1968), p. 97.

<sup>3</sup>Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, p. 39.

Matthew's vocabulary.<sup>1</sup>

Kingsbury further states that the lengthy quotation from the Septuagint is foreign to Matthew,<sup>2</sup> but Gundry points out that in 1:23 the quotation also is wholly Septuagintal indicating that if individual phrases and entire clauses agree with the Septuagint then whole citations can also.<sup>3</sup>

The genuineness of the citation is not difficult to determine, as the evidence above indicates, and, therefore, the citation is to be considered as being part of the original text. With this problem dealt with, the interpretation of the text can proceed.

The prophecy is seen as coming from the book of Isaiah (ἡ προφητεία Ἡσαΐου). The interesting characteristic of this prophecy is its fulfillment. This is identified by the verb ἀναπληροῦται. The verb is a present passive and its significance is summarized by Kent:

It indicates that Isaiah's prediction of the blindness of Israel was not limited to one generation, but came to pass in stages. The contemporaries of Jesus provided one more instance of the truth of the prophet's words.<sup>4</sup>

The present passive is also not Matthew's usual way

---

<sup>1</sup>Gundry, The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel, pp. 116, 117.

<sup>2</sup>Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>Gundry, The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel, p. 118.

<sup>4</sup>Homer A. Kent Jr., "Matthew's Use of the Old Testament," Bibliotheca Sacra, 121:481 (January-March, 1964), p. 42.

to introduce a citation. The reason for this is seen as being that the citation is spoken by Jesus and not Matthew. The Lord was indicating himself that the culmination of Israel's unbelief was finding its fullest expression in the rejection of its Messiah.<sup>1</sup> The word Jesus uses has extensive commercial connotations and means "pay in full". He indicates, therefore, that "the prophecy of Isaiah is 'paid in full' in the case of first-century Israel."<sup>2</sup>

That Isaiah's prophecy is finding its fullest fulfillment in Jesus' own generation is further seen by the meaning of οὐ μή. This construction of two negatives joined together is very rare and emphatic and is found only thirteen times in Old Testament citations in the New Testament.<sup>3</sup> Liddell and Scott say that "in independent sentences, (οὐ μή) is used either in Denial or Prohibition."<sup>4</sup> By the joining of these two negatives, "the negative is strengthened, not

---

<sup>1</sup>Van Elderen, "The Purpose of Parables According to Matthew 13:10-17," p. 188.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick W. Danker, "Fresh Perspectives on Matthaean Theology," Concordia Theological Monthly, 42:4 (April, 1971), p. 241.

<sup>3</sup>James Hope Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, Third edition, Vol. 1, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1908), p. 188.

<sup>4</sup>Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Ninth edition (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1843), p. 1271.



destroyed, by the two negatives."<sup>1</sup>

The significance of these negatives is seen by their usage with *συνῆτε*. Remembering that it refers to the fact that insight is not a faculty native to man as such but a gift of God, its meaning becomes even clearer when coupled with *οὐ μὴ*. It means that even while seeing, Israel in no possible way could have ever understood.

Not only was this true of their understanding but was true also of their perception (*ᾶδῃτε*). "The *fact* (i.e. the Aorist tenses) of any *discernment* or *perceiving* by these people is *emphatically denied*,"<sup>2</sup>

In verse 15, the responsibility of the Israelites and the resulting judgmental action of God, are clearly expressed in chiasmic form. The first part of the chiasmus has reference to Israel's rebellion and the second part of the chiasmus has reference to God's judgmental action.

This is clearly seen in the usage of *μήποτε*. Lenski says that this word;

. . . expresses the divine judicial purpose of the *volutas consequens*, which, however, is the very purpose of this people. They are determined not to perceive, hear aright, and understand; therefore, to, God intends that they shall not.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Archibald Thomas Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament In the Light of Historical Research (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 1174.

<sup>2</sup>George Zemek Jr., "The Meaning and Theological Significance of Isaiah's Commission," (Unpublished MDiv Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, 1975), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1943), p. 514.

c) From the perspective of the quality of time in which the disciples are living.

Throughout the passage, Jesus has been seeking to show the disciples their privileged status. In verses 16-17 he calls them blessed (μακάριοι). The reason (ὅτι) for this being their receptivity to the revelation of God, described by contrasting the disciples' eyes and ears with the multitudes' eyes and ears.

Here also, Jesus indicates that their privileged position is even greater than "the many prophets and just men who had been denied the insight which the disciples now possess."<sup>1</sup>

The meaning of the phrase ἐπεθύμησαν ἰδεῖν ἃ βλέπετε . . . καὶ ἀκοῦσαι ἃ ἀκούετε must refer to the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom which had been given to the disciples. This knowledge was withheld from the Old Testament prophets and righteous men according to the divine purpose even though they wanted it. Certainly, the lesson to be learned here is that God enlightens his word according to his will.

#### D. Summarization of Exegesis

Matthew 13:10-17 stands as a pivotal point in Matthew's gospel. Its function is to explain Israel's rejection of her Messiah. This is accomplished by a dialogue

---

<sup>1</sup>Van Elderen, "The Purpose of Parables According to Matthew 13:10-17," p. 188.

between Jesus and his disciples. The disciples, recognizing the obscure way in which Jesus' message is being presented, question him as to his reason for teaching in such a manner. Jesus responds to their question by showing them their privileged status in the place of God's program.

Thus, when Jesus finishes his discourse, the disciples have been shown that the multitudes have not been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. This is in fulfillment not only of the divine purpose but also in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. In so being, the disciples are not only privileged above the multitudes, but also above the Old Testament prophets and righteous men.

## CHAPTER II

### THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### A. Does Matthew Develop A Theory of Parables?

Because of the nature of the disciples question in verse 10, some have felt it necessary to extend this question beyond its immediate context. The plural usage of παραβολαῖς, it is suggested, concerns "not only the parable of the Sower or even the parables immediately adjacent to it but also the message of the parables in general."<sup>1</sup> The suggestion, implied, therefore, is that Jesus was developing some kind of theory about parables in general. The meaning of Matthew 13:10-17 is then superimposed on each and every parable making all of Jesus' parables have the same judicary purpose as is indicated in chapter 13. That this is so is seen in Plummer's statement:

Mt. gives it the much wider significance of a question as to the purpose of parables generally.<sup>2</sup>

Some have even felt it necessary to expand the passage in even greater proportion to include all of "the Lord's teaching in general."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Carlston, The Parables of the Triple Tradition, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Alfred Plummer, An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew, reprint edition (Minneapolis: Colormaster Press, n.d.), p. 188.

<sup>3</sup>Wilfrid J. Harrington, A Key to the Parables (New York: Paulist Press Deus Books, 1964), p. 22.

In considering this view, the purpose of Matthew needs to be remembered again; both his purpose in general and his secondary theme. When this is considered one need not feel compelled to expand the passage to the parables in general nor to Jesus' teaching in general. Actually, an examination of Matthew's usage of parables indicates that he develops two traditions about parables. Kingsbury summarizes this development in the following manner:

The one tradition is found here in chapter 13, where Matthew argues that while the disciples . . . can comprehend the parables of Jesus, the Jews cannot, for they stand before them as riddles. At the same time, Matthew records elsewhere in his Gospel that the Jews are able to master parables of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

That Kingsbury's observation is correct can be seen from examining the Parable of the Landowner in 21:33-46:

And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them (21:45).

The conclusion of this writer is that Jesus' teaching in Matthew 13:10-17 concerning the instructional and disciplinary nature of the parables has reference only to those parables which are classified as containing "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (13:11)." One should not, therefore, read into this passage that Jesus was developing a theory about the nature of all parables but was only using the *mystery* parables to accomplish his intended purpose in that moment of his teaching.

---

<sup>1</sup>Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, p. 49.

### B. Preaching Matthew 13 Today

Admittedly, Matthew 13 is a difficult passage. It compounds the complex problem of the relationship between the Old Testament Mediatorial Kingdom and the existence of the Christian Church. This writer must admit that no satisfactory solution has been worked out by him to clearly define this difficult situation. Probably, the vast majority of pastors are in the same position. This does not reduce the responsibility, however, of preaching "the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:27)." With this in mind the following observations are presented.

A theme which should dominate our preaching on a continual basis is the authority of the apostolic witness. Jesus declares them to be the special recipients of both divine revelation and interpretation. This gives their message, as recorded in the New Testament, a seal of divine approval. Therefore, the apostolic writings are seen as possessing a high quality of importance, on the par with Old Testament writings (2 Peter 3:14-16). Further, divine inspiration is attributed to their writings (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Another understanding which can be deduced from this passage is the importance of not neglecting the Old Testament in preaching. Jesus did not neglect it, the New Testament writers did not neglect it, and it should not be neglected in preaching today. The Old Testament is seen as being authora-

tative and true. Its predictions are fulfilled in the actual workings of God in human history.

Finally, the ability of the unregenerate to understand the Scriptures is seen as being completely dependent upon the sovereign choice of God who is the giver of divine revelation. This means that since God is the giver of divine revelation, he is the one who must also interpret it to make it comprehensible to the unregenerate. Hence, man is a being who is totally a revelatory being: that is, he is completely dependent upon God for meaning to his existence and to his universe. For the unbeliever, therefore, no hermeneutical principle used will facilitate their understanding of divine revelation in Scripture unless God so intends.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible, p. 218.

## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY-CONCLUSION

After a careful consideration of the original words spoken by Christ in Matthew 13:10-17, the basic understanding of the passage is seen in its contribution to the development of a secondary theme within the book. This theme concerns itself with the explanation of Israel's rejection of Jesus.

The theme was developed along the lines of a question posed by the disciples and answered by Jesus along three lines of argumentation. It was seen that Israel's rejection was a result of both the judicial purpose of God and their own hardness of heart.

The disciples, on the other hand, were seen to have been the chosen receptors of both divine revelation (μυστήριον) and divine interpretation (γινῶναι). This understanding was consistent with the Septuagint usage of both γινώσκω and μυστήριον.

Even with the answer of Jesus, there remains the philosophical problem of Divine Sovereignty and Moral Responsibility.<sup>1</sup> This problem will forever remain, however, for mere finite men can never fully comprehend an infinite God. Knowing this, it is appropriate to conclude this study with

---

<sup>1</sup>McClain, The Greatness of the Kingdom, p. 320.



yet a further message from Isaiah the prophet:

For My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Neither are your ways My ways, declares the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are My ways higher than your ways,  
And My thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

## BIBIOGRAPHY

- Abbott-Smith, G. A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament. Third Edition. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1937.
- Arndt, William F., and Gingrich, F. Wilbur. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Barclay, William. The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. 2. In The Daily Study Bible Series. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975.
- Bornkamm, G. "μυστήριον, μύω." Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol. IV. Edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967.
- Bruce, Alexander Balmain. "The Synoptic Gospels." In Vol. I of The Expositor's Greek Testament. Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. Reprinted. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. "γινώσκω, γινώσις, ἐπιγινώσκω, . . .," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol. I. Edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964.
- Burton, Ernest De Witt. Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1900.
- Carlston, Charles E. The Parables of the Triple Tradition. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.
- Conzelmann, Hans. "συνήμι, σύνεσις, συνετός, ασύνετος." Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol. VII. Edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971.
- Cope, O. Lamar. Matthew: A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven. In The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976.

- Dana, H. E., and Mantey, Julius G. A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament. Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1955.
- Danker, Frederick W. "Fresh Perspectives on Matthaean Theology." Concordia Theological Monthly. 42:4 (April, 1971), 241-242.
- Dodd, C. H. The Parables of the Kingdom. London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1935.
- Elderen, Bastiaan Van. "The Purpose of Parables According to Matthew 13:10-17." In New Dimensions In New Testament Study. Editors Richard N. Longenecker and Merrill C. Tenney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974.
- Feine, Paul and Behm, Johannes. Introduction to the New Testament. Reedited by Werner Georg Kummel. Translated by A. J. Mattill Jr.. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966.
- Flamming, James. "The New Testament Use of Isaiah." Southwestern Journal of Theology, 11:1 (Fall, 1968), 89-103.
- Grassmick, John D. Principles and Practice of Greek Exegesis. Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1974.
- Gundry, Robert Horton. The Use of the Old Testament In St. Matthew's Gospel. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967.
- Guthrie, Donald. New Testament Introduction. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, Third edition revised in one volume December 1970. Sixth American Printing, December, 1976 by IV Press.
- Hanko, Herman C. The Mysteries of the Kingdom: An Exposition of the Parables. Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1975.
- Harrington, Wilfrid J. A Key to the Parables. New York: Paulist Press Deus Books, 1964.
- Harrison, Everett F. Introduction to the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964.
- Hauck, Friedrich. "παραβολή." Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol. I. Edited by Gerhard Kittel. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967.

- Hendriksen, William. Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew. In New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973.
- Hiebert, D. Edmond. An Introduction to the New Testament. Volume 1. Chicago: Moody Press, 1975.
- Hummel, Donald R. "The Significance of Christ's Use of Isaiah 6:9-10 With Reference to Israel in Matthew." Unpublished Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1965.
- Kent, Homer A. Jr. "Matthew's Use of the Old Testament." Bibliotheca Sacra, 121:481 (January-March, 1964), 34-43.
- Kingsbury, Jack Dean. The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13. St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.
- Ladd, George Eldon. Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952.
- Lenski, R. C. H. The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel. Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1943.
- Liddell, Henry George, and Scott, Robert. A Greek-English Lexicon. Revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones and Robert McKenzie. Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1968
- Metzger, Bruce M. A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament. Third Edition. United Bible Societies, 1971.
- Mickelsen, A. Berkeley. Interpreting the Bible. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963.
- Moulton, James Hope, Howard, Wilbert Francis; and Turner, Nigel. A Grammar of New Testament Greek. 3 Vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963.
- Moulton, W. F. and Geden, A. S. A Concordance to the Greek Testament. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1978.
- McClain, Alva J. The Greatness of the Kingdom. Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1959.

- Plummer, Alfred. An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910.
- Robertson, Archibald Thomas. A Harmony of the Gospels. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1922.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934.
- Scroggie, W. Graham. A Guide to the Gospels. New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1948.
- Stendahl, Krister. The School of St. Matthew: And Its Use of the Old Testament. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1954.
- Thomas, Robert L. and Gundry, Stanley. A Harmony of the Gospels with Explanations and Essays. Chicago: Moody Press, 1978.
- Toussaint, Stanley D. "The Introductory and Concluding Parables of Matthew Thirteen." Bibliotheca Sacra, 121:484 (Oct.-Dec., 1964), 351-55.
- Toy, Crawford Howell. Quotations in the New Testament. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884.
- Via, Dan O. "Matthew on the Understandability of the Parables," Journal of Biblical Literature. 84(1965), 430-432.
- Vine, W. E. An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. Mclean: MacDonald Publishing Company, n.d.
- Zemek, George J. Jr. "The Meaning and Theological Significance of Isaiah's Commission." Unpublished MDiv Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1975.



