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Fresh Perspectives on Matthean Theology

A Review Article

FREDERICK W. DANKER

The author is professor of exegetical theology (New Testament) at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

IN HIS BOOK *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13* JACK KINGSBURY ARGUES THAT chapter 13 marks the great turning point in Matthew's theological interpretation of Jesus' life. After 13, Jesus no longer tries to teach the people of Israel, but instead concentrates on the disciples, the true people of God. But Kingsbury's analysis of λαλεῖν overlooks important evidence concerning the use of λαλεῖν and διδάσκειν. The author then presents a new interpretation of the difficult statement by Jesus concerning why He spoke in parables.

Among the more stimulating studies recently published on the theology of Matthew's Gospel is Jack Kingsbury's *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13*.¹ According to Kingsbury, Matthew 13 marks the "great turning-point" within the "ground plan of Matthew's gospel," in which Jesus turns away from the people of Israel as a whole to the disciples, the true people of God. Like the Lord, the disciples in their ministry have experienced rebuff, and Pharisaic Judaism and the church at the time of Matthew's Gospel are at odds.

The formal and material characteristics of Matthew 13, Kingsbury argues, endorse the conclusion that Matthew 13 is first of all apologetic in character; that is, the chapter accounts for Jesus' apparent failure among the Jews—they are "obdurate" (p. 49). This is supported (a) by the fact that in chapter 13 Jesus is said not, as in Mark, to teach but to "speak" (λαλεῖν) and (b) by the reference to the Jews as "they" (He spoke to *them*, αὐτοῖς). For Matthew the use of parables is an indication that

Jesus resorts to a form of speech incomprehensible to the Jews, but comprehensible to the disciples. The fact that the word παραβολή is used here in chapter 13 for the first time is evidence of theological design. Editorial traces left by the evangelist indicate that the entire chapter is carefully worked out in terms of a "grand parable speech," with "knowing and doing God's will" as the "unifying thought" (p. 131). The Jews do not know and do the will of God, but the disciples do. Thus the chapter divides into two major parts: apology (vv. 1-35) and parenetic, or exhortation, addressed to the disciples (vv. 36 to 52), yet with the apology serving also as a parenetic to the church or to the disciples. Christologically understood, Matthew 13 presents Jesus as the Kyrios and Son of Man, corresponding to Jesus' present activity and His future role as judge; but overlapping in the roles is not excluded. The parenetic relevance of the voice of Jesus Kyrios is displayed by Matthew through adaptation of the parables to the situation of the church of his time. Thus instead of propounding "a formal theory of parables," Matthew is guided by "pragmatic interests." (P. 50)

¹ Jack D. Kingsbury, *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13: A Study in Redaction-Criticism* (London: SPCK, 1969).

Not the least of Kingsbury's contributions to the understanding of Matthew 13 are his analysis of Matthew's editorial technique and the fresh lines of interpretation he offers for understanding the parables included in this chapter, especially the duo recitation of the parable of the tares. But of primary consequence is the encouragement his study gives for more detailed examination of the linguistic data and the place of Matthew 13 in the argument of the gospel.

I

Central to Kingsbury's thesis is the conclusion that Matthew 13 represents the pivotal stage in Jesus' method of communication, for the affirmation of which much weight is attached to Matthew's use of the verbs *ἰσχυροῦσθαι* and *διδάσκειν* and cognates. *ἰσχυροῦσθαι*, he says, is "systematically" used (p. 28) in preference to Mark's *διδάσκειν* in Matthew 13, since this chapter marks the great turning point in the ground plan of the gospel. Henceforth "teaching and preaching, as defined above [presumably on page 29, top] cease as far as the Jews are concerned after the conflict-discourses of chapter 12" (p. 29). This statement is true insofar as it concerns the verb *κηρύσσειν*, which appears after 11:1 only in 24:14 and 26:13, and in these two passages "in connection with the Church's universal missionary assignment" (p. 29). However, the statement is questionable in the light of the frequent occurrence of *διδάσκειν* and cognates after chapter 13, and Kingsbury is sensitive to the threat that comes to his demonstration from this direction. He writes:

As for teaching, even though the word itself occurs in several instances where Jesus is engaged in discussion with Jews, it is

never used positively in the sense that Matthew provides us with an elaboration of the message of Jesus (cf. 5:2; 7:28f), nor does it ever appear in a situation where the Jews seem receptive to him. On the contrary, this term either finds its place in the scenic framework of a pericope (13:54; 21:23; 22:16; 26:55), or is employed negatively in a denunciation of Jewish doctrine (15:9; cf. 16:12), or occurs where there is debate with Jews who are manifestly obdurate already (13:54; 22:16), or merely demonstrates that Jesus has had the last word over his opponents (22:33). (P. 29)

In reply to the first sentence it should be observed that the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5—7) is in fact the sole example of explicitly denominated instruction cited in the first 12 chapters, and it is by no means certain, as suggested by Kingsbury's citation of 5:2 alongside 4:23 (p. 27), that Matthew views this sermon as instruction for the crowds. On the contrary, Matthew explicitly distinguishes the disciples from the crowds (5:1-2) in wording that is parallel to 13:10-11a, of which Kingsbury says: "In vv. 10-11a, Matthew constructs a scene in which Jesus speaks to the disciples apart from the crowds" (p. 39). Were it not for the wording of 7:28 f., one would never have inferred that the Sermon on the Mount was also designed for the crowds. But does 7:28 f. even require such an interpretation? The manuscript tradition is ambiguous. Eus. and 998 read πάντες. Δ Θ Λ Origen read πάντες οἱ ὄγλοι. The Sahidic has no specific subject for the verb² and may well represent the original text. Aside from a scribal desire to supply a sub-

² Other Matthean usage of ἐκπλήσσεισθαι (13:54; 19:25; 22:33) does not contribute to the solution of the problem in 7:28.

ject for the verb, the demonstrative αὐτῶν (v.29)³ might well have suggested a broader range of audience. The reading πάντες suggests a similar interest in a specific subject and at least implies a textual tradition that did not include the word ὄχλοι. The variant πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι is of course a conflation. In any case, the textual uncertainty, together with the express distinction made in 5:1-2, does not admit the use of chapters 5—7 as a foil for the understanding, so defined by Kingsbury, of Matthew's view of Jesus' instruction in chapters 14 ff.

Kingsbury dismisses other references as part of "the scenic framework of a pericope." Of the passages cited, 13:54 and 26:55 (a clear echo of 21:23, which is followed by specific instruction, including parables) are no more part of the "scenic framework" of a pericope than is 9:35 or 11:1. Moreover, reference to Jesus as a teacher *does* appear in a context where a representative of the Jews outside the apostolic circle is receptive to Jesus (19:16). Similarly the indictment in 15:9 is paralleled by the denunciation of Pharisaic doctrine in 5:19-20. To say that 22:33 "merely demonstrates that Jesus has had the last word over his opponents" is to wipe out evidence of the prior verses (16, 24, 36) for specific instruction to specific audiences in Israel.

MARK AND MATTHEW

Matthew's editing of his Markan source also raises doubts about the thematic strategy alleged by Kingsbury. If chapters 14 to 28 offer a contrast to chapters 1—12 in

the teaching activity of Jesus, Matthew could be expected to alter Markan data in the interests of the alleged programmatic presentation, but the evidence is scarcely confirmatory. In his treatment of Mark 2:13 (cf. Matt. 9:8-9) Matthew had an excellent opportunity to include the stress on instruction; instead he deletes Mark's observation. More important for him is the juxtaposition of the paralytic and Matthew the publican. On the other side of chapter 13, Matthew adds to Mark's recital (11:27) a reference to instruction (21:23) that takes place in the temple, with the chief priests and elders carefully distinguished from the audience.

In fairness to the data, it is necessary also to supplement any consideration of Matthew's treatment of Mark 4 with his subsequent omission or rephrasing of Markan reference to instruction. Except for the brief observation that "in 23:1, Matthew utilizes λαλέω to introduce his 'apology of woes'" (p. 30), Kingsbury does not enter into an examination of the varied editorial intentions that prompted Matthew to modify such Markan material. And even in the case of Matthew's alteration in 23:1 of Mark 12:38 (ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ), the choice of λαλεῖν in place of a reference to instruction may well be due to an entirely different factor than congruence with a "ground plan" that "no longer allows for preaching and teaching to apply to the Jews after 11:1 . . ." (pp. 29—30). As is shown below, an evaluation of Matthew's editorial modifications must take into account his approach to Jesus as a wisdom-figure. The wise man not only knows parables (cf. Sir. 39:3; 47:15), but his pronouncements may include woes (cf. Eccl. 4:10; 10:16; Sir.

³ In 11:1 αὐτῶν is used after specific reference to the Twelve.

2:14; 41:8).⁴ Beyond question, the woes in Matt. 23:15 ff. parallel the teaching (note the verb in 5:2!) in the Sermon on the Mount, including especially 5:33-37; 6:1-6, and are part of an address to "the crowds and the disciples" (23:1). As for the parallelism between chapters 13 and 23, against Kingsbury's common denominator of apology minus teaching it should be noted that in chapter 13 the crowds and the disciples are at points distinguished and there is no overt attack on the teaching establishment of Israel. That critique had been made in 3:7 (cf. 23:33!); 6:1 ff.; 7:15 ff.; 10:17 ff.; 12:25-45. In chapter 23 the hearers are specifically warned against the scribes and Pharisees, with stress on Jesus as their *teacher* (23:8). Thus the function of Jesus as teacher to Jews *is* emphasized after chapter 13, but with the concurrent emphasis on His role as a wisdom-figure. Hence the choice of the verb *λαλεῖν*.

A brief glance at each of the remaining Markan passages and Matthew's editorial treatment of them confirms the conclusion that there is after chapter 13 no discernible pattern of reluctance on Matthew's part to describe Jesus in His teaching capacity to the Jews. Were the contrary the case, one might have expected Matthew to retain Markan use of the verb *διδάσκειν* in contexts where the disciples are privileged recipients of instruction. But in 16:21 the verb *δεικνύειν* replaces *διδάσκειν* (Mark 8:31). Similarly Matt. 14:12-13 deletes Mark's reference to teaching done by the disciples (6:30), perhaps owing to Mat-

thew's inclusion of Mark's recital in chapter 10 and his omission of any reference to the return of the disciples.⁵ The further omission at 14:14 of Mark's reference (6:34) to the teaching of Jesus is due to the fact that Matthew (9:35) has already cited Mark's statement, but not in order to get the statement out of the post-chapter 13 material. Mark 10:1 speaks of instruction, to which Matthew (19:2) makes no allusion, perhaps because of Matthew's greater interest at this point in Jesus' healings; the fact that He healed many crowds also in Judea (ἐκεῖ) is here stressed by Matthew.⁶ Mark 11:17-18 contains two references to teaching, both of which are omitted at Matt. 21:12-13, but introduced respectively at 21:23 and 22:33.⁷ Matthew's treatment of Mark 12:28, 35 points in a related direction, with Mark's reference to instruction (v.35) worked into a preceding recital at Matt. 22:36, for which Mark 12:28 has no parallel reference to Jesus as teacher. In Matthew the entire passage runs smoothly and in place of Mark's reference to teaching, which is accounted for at Matt. 22:36, Matthew has Jesus simply put a question (v.42). Thus it is again not true to say that 22:33 merely demonstrates that Jesus "has had the last

⁵ Note also that in this passage dealing with the dispatch of the Twelve Matthew uses the verbs *παραγγέλλειν* (10:5) and *διατάσσειν* (11:1), not *διδάσκειν*, in reference to instructions given the disciples.

⁶ Healing is a favorite motif in Matthew's Gospel; cf. 4:23-24; 8:7, 16; 9:35; 10:1, 8; 12:10, 15, 22; 14:14; 15:30; 17:16, 18; 19:2; 21:14, and note the purpose announced in 8:17.

⁷ Luke also uses the Markan passage but shifts the reference to teaching to 19:47 and, as is the case in Matt. 21:12, preserves the pronouncement of Mark 11:17 as a prophetic logion. Note also that Matt. 21:14 accents the healing ministry of Jesus.

⁴ The terms *αἰνιγμα* and *παραβολή* occur as synonyms in Deut. 28:37; Sir. 39:3; 47:15. In Num. 21:27-30 οἱ αἰνιγματισταὶ pronounce a woeful dirge.

word over his opponents" (p.29). Like Mark, Matthew gives examples of Jesus' public instruction. This conclusion is reinforced by Matthew's use (26:55) of Mark 14:49. Here Matthew omits the words *πρὸς ὑμᾶς* in order to clarify the fact that Jesus did not instruct the authorities exclusively but directed His teaching to the public. Once more this is not a matter of the verb *διδάσκειν* finding its place in the "scenic framework of a pericope"; rather the alteration is symptomatic of Matthew's concern to display Jesus as public teacher in the very temple of the holy city, for apart from Him the temple loses all significance for Israel.⁸ Like the miracles (Matt. 19:2), the instruction given at Jerusalem parallels the instruction given in Galilee. Chapter 13 had exposed a basic problem of unbelief in Galilee; the parables in chapters 20—21 uncover the same malady in Judea, but with emphasis on the inadequacy of Israel's pedagogical leadership. Jesus, the true Teacher of Israel, encounters the false teachers, and they are responsible for the unbelief in Israel. Provisionally, it may be asserted that the disciples are Jesus' chosen instruments to continue the valid teaching ministry of Jesus to Israel and to the world. This basic rationale in Matthew's presentation, to be explored in more detail below, would be obscured by suggestion of a shift in Jesus' mode of communication.

Related to the discussion of the function of *διδάσκειν* and cognates in the Matthean argument is the investigation of the verb *λαλεῖν*. Kingsbury attaches much significance to the use of *λαλεῖν* in Matthew 13 as a studious avoidance of Mark's reference to teaching (cf. Mark 4:1-2a) with special

emphasis on the incomprehensible character of the utterance. But is this Matthew's intention? It is true that Matthew does not use the word *παραβολή* until chapter 13, but he does use *λαλεῖν* (9:18) in a recital that is parabolic in form (vv. 15-17), and here his lack of use of the word *παραβολή* parallels the Markan recital (cf. 2:18-22), which does not mention parables until 3:23.

Similarly, Matt. 10:19-20 uses *λαλεῖν* in a Q-passage, and comparison with Luke's corresponding diction reveals that Matthew has applied a free editorial hand in his fourfold use of the verb at this point prior to the parabolic discourse. This passage in fact provides a clue for the understanding of Matthew's exchange of *λαλεῖν* for *διδάσκειν* in chapter 13.

In the New Testament *λαλεῖν* outnumbers *διδάσκειν* three to one and is frequently used of communications involving expression of the Spirit's intentions or application of divine wisdom to the community. 1 Corinthians contains the largest percentage of occurrences in Paul's correspondence. This is what one might expect in view of the peculiar problems relating to the expression of wisdom at Corinth. The term is not, however, confined to utterance beyond ordinary comprehension, such as that which takes place in "tongues" (see 1 Corinthians 14), but to normal edifying discourse (cf. 14:19) and especially to expression of God's purpose in relation to Jesus Christ. Thus in 1 Cor. 2:6-16 *λαλεῖν* is associated with wisdom and the exposition of God's mystery revealed in Jesus Christ.⁹

In the Septuagint (LXX) the proportion

⁸ See *infra*, n. 24.

⁹ See also Eph. 5:19; Col. 4:3; James 5:10; 1 Peter 4:11.

of usage is almost 8 to 1 in favor of λαλεῖν, the normal term for prophetic speech. Isaiah displays a comparatively minuscule interest in διδάσκειν (9:14; 29:13; 55:12), but his use of λαλεῖν does not suggest esoteric communication. Indeed, the verb is singularly lacking at 6:9, where it would have been especially appropriate if its function were to veil the truth. Frequently, however, the term is used in association with ἀκούειν. In such cases ἀκούειν connotes "to understand" (as in Is. 30:9-10; 36:11; 66:4).¹⁰

This association of terminology appears to be one of the reasons for Matthew's preference for λαλεῖν¹¹ in chapter 13, for the issue is one of understanding a prophetic type of utterance. That Matthew views Jesus as a prophetic figure is clear from the immediate context. Jesus is greater than Jonah (12:41) and in the recital immediately following the parabolic discourse applies the prophetic function to Himself (13:57).¹² The false teachers in

Israel cannot speak (λαλεῖν) good things, for they are evil (12:34). Jesus, as a true prophet in Israel, speaks (λαλεῖν) parables to Israel and displays the fact that He speaks out of the abundance of a good heart (cf. 12:34-37). That He is not understood is another matter and must not be permitted to obscure other aspects of Matthew's picture of Jesus.

That Jesus is a prophetic speaker is also supported by the evangelist's method of appropriation of the parables found in Mark 4. Little or no attention has been paid to the fact that the parable of the sower and its interpretation bears a formal resemblance to the recitation in Ezekiel 17. Ezekiel is told by the Lord to speak a parable to the house of Israel. The parable is about a seed that sprouted and put forth branches, only to wither away. Then follows the directive to expound the parable to the rebellious house of Israel, introduced by the question, "Do you not know what these things mean?" The fact that in Mark the parable of the mustard seed with its striking parallel in Ezek. 17:22-24 follows the double-parable, suggests that already prior to Matthew and Mark, Jesus' parabolic utterances were associated with the prophetic activity of Ezekiel. Matthew's sensitivity to the fact is displayed by his accent on the person of the Son of Man (12:32, 40; 13:37, 41), a phrase applied to Ezekiel,¹³ and his use of a second double-

¹⁰ Is. 36:11 is especially pertinent; the speakers ask that they be addressed (λαλεῖν) in Syrian and not in Hebrew, for they understand (ἀκούειν) the former; cf. Acts 22:9 (contrasting with the simple act of hearing, 9:7 [cf. Deut. 4:12 LXX]) and 26:14, where the phrase τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ emphasizes that Paul was in full possession of his faculties and "understood" well what the voice said.

¹¹ On the complex problem of Matthew's use of Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old Testament, see Robert H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel, With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope* ("Supplements to Novum Testamentum," 18 [Leiden, 1967]), especially pp. 147-50. See also Wilhelm Rothfuchs, *Die Erfüllungszitate des Matthäus-Evangeliums: Eine biblisch-theologische Untersuchung* ("Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament," 5. Folge, Heft 8 [Stuttgart, 1969]), pp. 104-109.

¹² 16:14 does not deny a prophetic role to Jesus, but negates the view that an earlier

prophet reappears in the person of Jesus. See also 14:5; 21:11, 46.

¹³ Documentation of complexities in the tradition of Son-of-Man sayings ought to include, in addition to awareness of apocalyptic overtones, recognition of occasional prophetic association. Edwin A. Abbott, *The Message of the Son of Man* (London, 1909), was resurrected by Pierson Parker, "The Meaning of 'Son of Man,'" *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LX

parable (that of the tares and its explanation, 13:24-30; 37-43),¹⁴ chosen to reinforce the picture of Jesus as a prophet. In line with the imagery of Ezekiel 17, Matthew concludes his presentation of Jesus' parabolic discourse with the parable of the dragnet, apparently an amplification of the thought expressed in Ezek. 17:20.

Assessment of the prophetic perspective would not, however, be complete without consideration of the role played by Moses in Matthew's interpretation of the ministry of Jesus. That Matthew views Jesus in association with Moses is suggested in 13:1-3 through choice of phrasing that echoes Pentateuchal diction in the Septuagint. According to Ex. 19:9, God speaks (*λαλεῖν*) to Moses within the people's hearing (*ἀκούειν*). Subsequently, in 20:1, occurs the phrase: *καὶ ἐλάλησεν κύριος πάντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους λέγων*.¹⁵ Matthew sketches a scene similar to that of Moses in confrontation with the people of Israel. The crowd (*πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος* replacing the plural *ὄχλοι*) stands on the shore (13:2). Jesus withdraws from the people and sits in a boat. Similarly the *πᾶς ὁ λαός* (Ex. 20:18) stands afar off (20:21; cf. 33:8). The fact that Matthew displays Jesus sitting is due to his emphasis on Jesus as

a replacement for the scribes who sit in Moses' seat (cf. 23:2).¹⁶ Here at Matt. 13:1-3 Jesus sits in Moses' seat and at the end of the parabolic discourse qualifies His disciples as His own colleagues in scribal instruction. (V.52)

WISDOM-FIGURE

Besides the accent on Jesus' prophetic stance, Matthew draws attention to Jesus' role as a wise teacher in Israel. According to III Kgd. 5:12, Solomon recited many parables: *καὶ ἐλάλησεν Σαλωμων τρισχίλιας παραβολάς*. This picture of Solomon is redrawn in Sir. 47:15-17: *ἐν-ἐπλησας ἐν παραβολαῖς αἰνιγμάτων . . . ἐν ὧδαῖς καὶ παροιμίαις καὶ παραβολαῖς καὶ ἐν ἐρμηνείαις ἀπεθαύμασάν σε ᾤοντες*.

A comparison of these passages with data in Matthew's Gospel suggests that the evangelist aims to reveal Jesus as a successor to Solomon, but even greater in display of wisdom. First, Matt. 12:42 explicitly asserts: *ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Σολομῶνος ὧδε* (per contra III Kgd. 3:12). Second, Matthew emphasizes the international reputation for wisdom enjoyed by Solomon. In keeping with this theme Matthew had already related the story of the magi who came to worship Jesus. As Daniel 2 indicates, magi are representatives of lofty wisdom. Through this particular infancy recital Matthew drew attention to the superiority of Jesus. Like the kings and the Queen of Sheba who brought gifts to Solo-

(1941), 151-57; see also Josephine Ford, "The Son of Man—a Euphemism?" *ibid.*, LXXXVII (1968), 257-66.

¹⁴ It should be observed in this connection that just as Ezekiel 17 is followed by a discussion of *ἀνομία* in chapter 18, so Matthew 13 is followed immediately with a description of a celebrated case of *ἀνομία*—Herod's illicit marriage. Matt. 25:31-46, which echoes Ezekiel 18, carries out the theme of judgment displayed in the parable of the tares. Crucial for both Ezekiel and Matthew is the new heart (cf. Ezek. 18:31 and Matt. 12:33-35; 15:1-20).

¹⁵ Cf. Deut. 4:45; 5:1 (with Moses as subject).

¹⁶ Kingsbury, pp. 17 ff., correctly assesses the picture of Jesus as Kyrios (cf. 25:31), but his conclusion that "the express pattern Matthew is following in his use of *κάθημαι* in our text is apocalyptic" (p. 23, citing in support Rev. 7:9 to 12 and 20:11 f.) detracts from the primary conception of Jesus as a successor to Moses.

mon, they share their bounty with Jesus. (Cf. 2 Chron. 9:9-24)

Third, Solomon was noted for his parables. The coincidence of λαλεῖν used in connection with both Solomon's utterances and those of Jesus in Matthew 13, as well as the reservation of the word παραβολή for chapter 13, points to Matthew's interest in presenting Jesus as a successor to Solomon and as the inheritor of his throne. A similar display of parabolic wisdom is cited after the story of the entry into Jerusalem. (Cf. 21:28—22:14)¹⁷

II

THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES

In the light of Matthew's presentation of Jesus as a prophetic and a Solomon-wisdom figure it should be possible to render a fresh judgment concerning Matthew's alteration of Mark's statement on the purpose of parables as well as to account for other substantive and formal features in chapter 13.

Kingsbury reaches the conclusion that a redactor "after the time of the evangelist" (p. 38) was responsible for the inclusion

of the citation from Is. 6:9-10. He cites as his first argument that "Matthew, in following Mark, makes an allusion to Isaiah 6:9 already in v. 13. It is strange, then, that he should repeat the same quotation a second time" (pp. 38—39). Whatever judgment is made about the integrity of the text,¹⁸ this particular observation obscures an important feature in Matthew's presentation, namely, the Mosaic orientation of vv. 11-13. Deut. 29:3 observes: καὶ οὐκ ἔδωκεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν καρδίαν εἰδέναι καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς βλέπειν καὶ ὦτα ἀκοῦειν ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης. The significant word here is ἔδωκεν, echoed in Matthew's emphasis on donation of knowledge (v. 11). Jesus' experience with Israel parallels that of Moses' encounter with his generation. In both cases theological account is taken of the blindness of Israel.¹⁹ The quotation of Is. 6:9-10 in Matt. 13: 14-15 goes on to amplify the thought expressed in v. 13 and is in harmony with Matthew's intention to display Jesus' message as one in agreement with the prophetic ministry to Israel. In this sense vv. 10 to 15 are the central element in what Kingsbury terms the "apology" of Jesus.

But we have yet to account for the peculiar wording of the disciples' query in 13:10: διὰ τί ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς; The stress here is on the fact that Jesus speaks to *them* (the crowds). Why this particular twist of Mark's statement: "those about Him, together with the Twelve, made inquiry about the parables"? If Matthew had wished to display a radical distinction between the disciples and unbelieving

¹⁷ Not without significance is the identification of Jesus as the Son of David (21:9), who comes to Jerusalem sitting on an ass (v. 5). The latter observation is expressed in words from Zech. 9:9, but the picture is that of Solomon riding a beast of burden for his coronation (1 Kings 1:33) and ascending his throne amid great rejoicing (v. 40). The non-Markan feature, ἐσεῖσθαι πᾶσα ἡ πόλις (Matt. 21:10) similarly echoes the hyperbole of 1 Kings 1:40, "all the earth was split by their noise" (RSV). As Messianic successor to Solomon, who built a house for the Lord, Jesus claims the temple as His own, with emphasis on its function as a house of prayer (Matt. 21:13; cf. 2 Chron. 6:18-21). The affirmation in Matt. 22:41-45 of the Messiah's transcendence of popular Messianic views reinforces Matthew's picture of Jesus as one greater even than Solomon.

¹⁸ See the detailed discussion by Gundry, pp. 116—18, in defense of the genuineness of the citation; contra, Rothfuchs, pp. 23—24.

¹⁹ See also John 6.

Israel, he would have done well to retain Mark's phrasing about "those outside," τοῖς ἔξω (4:11). Since he did not do so, an answer must be sought in another direction. As it stands in Matthew, the query suggests a number of questions that might have been raised in Matthew's community. Could Jesus really have been a teacher of wisdom? For according to wisdom tradition a wise man ought not talk to fools (cf. Sir. 22:13), for they do not understand mysteries (Sap. 2:22; Sir. 6:22). Or did Jesus perhaps fail to speak clearly enough? Or if the apostles are the privileged recipients of the truth and the authoritative guides for the new community, why did Jesus speak in parables to the general public? May not others outside the apostolic circle be authentic interpreters of the mind of Jesus? The citation from Is. 6:9-10, in concert with the express or implied data from Deut. 29:3, affirms that the lack of response to Jesus' public instruction does not invalidate His credentials as a teacher of wisdom. Precisely because they neither see nor understand, He speaks to them in parables. But this does not mean that His parables lacked clarity.²⁰ According to Deut. 29:28, Israel recognizes that the secret things belong to God, but acknowledges God's openness in announcing precepts for obedience. Similarly Is. 48:16 declares that God has not spoken in secret to Israel (cf. 45:18-19). That Matthew consciously counteracts the view that Jesus failed to speak clearly is indicated by his second appeal to prophecy at 13:35.²¹

²⁰ Kingsbury, pp. 49—50, concedes clarity in some; cf. 21:28-32, 33-46.

²¹ Is. 45:19 and 48:16 offer the theological perspective from which Matthew's intention in the use of Psalm 78 is to be interpreted. On the

Not only did Jesus not fail to share openly all the parables recorded previously in the chapter, but He continued to say nothing (οὐδὲν ἔλάλει) without parabolic form. Thus He went even beyond the experience of Israel recorded at Deut. 29:28 and revealed things "hidden from the foundation of the world." The fault was not with the message but with the hearers, and this in accord with the experience of teachers of wisdom. Prudent hearers will understand parables (Sir. 3:29; cf. Prov. 1:6; Sir. 39:1-3). Wicked listeners fail to grasp the mysteries (Sap. 2:22). Yet this division of hearers in Matthew 13 is not so much designed to pronounce judgment on Israel as to endorse Matthew's Christological doctrine.²²

In answer to the third possible query Matthew says that Jesus' public instruction does not invalidate the disciple's special prerogative as the secondary source, after Jesus Himself, for communication of the mysteries of God. The οὔτι-phrase observes that this right is not taken from them through Jesus' public instruction. However, this statement of privilege is to be understood in the light of Matthew's total view of the function of the disciples within the life of Israel. It is not his intention to suggest that Israel is shut off from understanding of the mysteries.²³ And it is pre-

text-form of Ps. 78:2 LXX, see Gundry, pp. 118 to 119; Rothfuchs, pp. 78—80.

²² Understanding or the lack of it is not due to Jesus' lack of credentials but to God's action (in addition to Is. 6:9-10, cited in Matt. 13:14 to 15, cf. Ex. 4:11; Is. 35:5). Since God is the source of wisdom (cf. Sap. 7:9; 8:21; 9:17; Prov. 2:6), Matthew uses the passive δέδοται, with God understood as donor (cf. Blass-Debrunner-Funk § 130, 1; 313; 342, 1).

²³ Kingsbury, pp. 25—28, notes Matthew's differentiation between the crowds and their

cisely at this point that Kingsbury's observation of the distinction between the apostles and the traditional interpreters of the Law within Israel, namely, the scribes and Pharisees, is most helpful. Who is ultimately to blame for Israel's failure to understand the parables of Jesus, so clearly uttered that even the opposition knew He had spoken too closely to the point (cf. 21:45 and see Kingsbury, pp. 49—50)? Matthew answers: the scribes. The disciples, however, have been given understanding of the mysteries precisely for the reason that Israel through them might learn to understand God's purpose in Jesus Christ.

Again the citation of Is. 6:9-10 is extremely pertinent. This prophetic passage is taken from a context in which the question is asked: "How long?" (v. 11). The answer: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant . . ." (vv. 11-12). Matthew's emphasis on the destruction of Jerusalem as a sign of the culmination of God's purposes and the moment of recognition for the extension of the Gospel to all nations (cf. 24:14, 31; 28:19) is in conformity with the prophetic perspective (cf. Is. 2:2-4). For Matthew, writing after the destruction of the city, the issue is settled. There is no hope for Israel from traditional sources of instruction (cf. Is. 3:12-15). The Sermon on the Mount emphasizes that fact, and the context preceding chapter 13 contrasts the self-styled wise and prudent with *νήπιοι* (cf. 11:25), who are the recipients of the Father's revelation. Whereas the crowds acknowledge Jesus to be the Son of David (12:23), the Pharisees ac-

cuse Him of being possessed by Beelzebul (v. 24) and together with the scribes demand a sign (v. 38). In contrast to these inadequate teachers, Jesus speaks good things (vv. 34-35) and at the end of chapter 12 is pictured speaking to the crowds and pronouncing His disciples blessed (vv. 46-50). Then follows the chapter on parables. In the context it is certainly Matthew's purpose to declare that Israel's rejection of Jesus' instruction is due to the leadership, and the leadership, not Jesus, must take the blame for this failure. But through the apostolic ministry there is hope for Israel. Out of the mass of Israel that failed to understand He selected a remnant, and they are to share the revelation of the Kingdom with Israel and ultimately the world. Again, chapter 13 is not so much a pronouncement on Israel as a statement on the legitimacy of the apostolate. Emphasis in this chapter on the "obdurate" crowds does not mark a turning point in mode of communication but is a means of calling attention to the failure of traditional sources of instruction.²⁴

²⁴ Jesus, as the legitimate source of instruction for Israel, makes the temple and all teaching associated with it obsolete. He, as Immanuel (which means "God with us," 1:23), is the divine representative who finally deserts the temple and the city (cf. 23:38-39; Jer. 12:7; Enoch 89:56; A. H. McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* [London, 1957], p. 342). The cry of dereliction (27:46) suggests that the opposite has happened—God has deserted Jesus instead of Israel. But Jesus has His credentials ratified in the apocalyptic developments recorded in 27:51-54, and the temple falls under judgment (v. 51; cf. 24:15; Amos 9:2). The larger Israel, composed of all nations (28:19) and assured of Immanuel's presence in association with the apostolic mission (*καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μετ' ὑμῶν*, v. 20) has as its cultic center (cf. 18:20) the One who declared that He was able to destroy the temple of God (the genitive *τοῦ θεοῦ* in

leaders, but his approach to the linguistic data relative to *διδάσκειν* and *λαλεῖν* does not permit him to exploit the point.

In furtherance of his Christological emphasis Matthew shifts Mark's recitation of the murder of John the Baptist to a point (14:1-12) immediately after the display of hostility in Nazareth (13:53-58). The death of John the Baptist suggests the fate that is in store for Jesus, but the apostles are to carry on after the removal of His visible presence.²⁵ In keeping with the expectation of Is. 40:11, He feeds the people in the desert (Matt. 14:13-21), but through the disciples, who *give* to the *crowds* what He *gives* them for distribution. In contrast to the disciples are the Pharisees and scribes (15:1), who come under the indictment of Is. 29:13 (Matt. 15:8-9). In language reminiscent of the parable of the tares, the disciples are reminded, in clear reference to the Pharisees, that any plant not planted by the Father will be uprooted (15:13). And 15:13-20 goes on to explain that bad growth has to do not with cultic but moral uncleanness. The story of the Syrophenician woman underwrites the theme of the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15:24, cf. Jer. 50:6 and Ezek. 34) and suggests that non-Israelites are to share in the bread fed to Israel, but without disclaiming Israel's prerogatives. Then follows Jesus' ascent to a mountain, where many crowds come to Him, in language reminiscent of 5:1-2. Here they *see* (βλέπειν) the dumb speaking and the blind seeing, and once again they are the recipients of bread given through the disciples.

26:61 contrasts significantly with its absence in 27:40) and build it on the third day.

²⁵ 13:58 becomes the link between the interpretation of Jesus as a wisdom-prophetic figure and the foreshadowing of His death through the description of John's fate.

In contrast to these crowds, the Pharisees and Sadducees come and request a sign (16:1-4). The disciples make inquiry about bread after Jesus' warning concerning the Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus reminds them that He was talking about the teaching of these leaders (16:11-12). Thus He clarifies for His readers the function of the disciples as replacements for the official teachers in Israel and through his allusion to the miracles of feeding indicates that the intention of these accounts was to demonstrate that the disciples are the authentic distributors of what Jesus had announced to all through His parables but without general success. The incident at Caesarea Philippi is the climax of this demonstration. Peter (with the other disciples, cf. 18:18) is given the keys (16:19) that are improperly used by the traditional leaders of Israel (cf. 23:14). In this sense the kingdom is taken from the leadership and given to an ἔθνος (that is, first of all the disciples as the new leadership) that produces its fruits. (21:43)²⁶

IDENTITY OF αὐτοῖς (13:24, 31, 33)

In the light of the preceding analysis special account must be taken of the identity of the recipients of Jesus' parables at 13:24, 31, and 33. Kingsbury shares the common view that αὐτοῖς refers to the crowds. But it is not in Matthew's manner to use this dative with verbs of saying and then direct the reader past the normally

²⁶ The expression ἔθνη κ. τ. λ., as Ernst Lohmeyer observed, is not part of an opposition pair, Israel-Gentiles (cf. *Das Evangelium des Matthäus, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* [Göttingen, 1956], p. 314). But more pertinent than his citation of 1 Peter 2:9 (= Ex. 19:6) is the series of contrasting terms in Is. 1:4.

anticipated antecedent, in this case the disciples mentioned in vv. 10-18. Still, v. 34 seems to demand the traditional interpretation. A helpful clue to the solution of the difficulty is offered by Kingsbury, who observes that the introductory formulae, including the verb παρατίθεσθαι, are an indication of Matthew's editorial work. But he uses this datum, without further philological investigation, to endorse his thesis of Jesus' apologetic use of parables in address to the Jews. If, however, Matthew's Moses-Jesus typology is kept in mind, the use of παρατίθεσθαι (found in Matthew only in 13:24, 31) is precisely the term one would expect if the disciples are to be the mediators of the mysteries of God. In the LXX version of the Pentateuch it is the term used to describe Moses' delivery to the presbyters of all the words that God had spoken to him (Ex. 19:7; cf. 21:1 and Deut. 4:44). In anticipation of the corresponding chapter on parables (Matthew 21), with its indictment of the leaders and presbyters who are the opposition and fail to deliver the fruits, the disciples are in chapter 13 made recipients of the mysteries of the Kingdom, and in the light of Matthew's total presentation the reader is to understand that they will give back the fruits at the appropriate time. Thus in 13:24-33 the disciples are in fact singled out for special instruction, as also in 13:44-50, but at the same time Matthew, anxious to protect the church against the charge that its instruction is an innovation, indicates that Jesus spoke all these things in parables to the crowds. Thus the question previously asked: "Why do you speak in parables to *them*?" is further clarified. The crowds

received ample instruction, but the disciples are the recipients of further instruction that goes into their treasury of the mysteries of the Kingdom, to be communicated in due course. Hence they have both old things (all that was communicated to the crowds) as well as new things (special revelations) (v. 52).²⁷ They are the true scribes, replacing Israel's official teachers. As scribes they are initiates to wisdom, and the wise man is one who is willing to risk all for the purchase of wisdom. (13:44-46, cf. Sir. 20:32-33; 51:29)

In conclusion, Kingsbury's discussion has succeeded well in exposing the basic opposition between Matthew's ecclesiastical community and the official teachers of Israel, but not without some loss of perspective on other features of Matthew's narrative. To offer some correctives and at the same time invite further exploration of the carefully planned structure of Matthew's Gospel has been the purpose of this study. Nor are the results without consequence for contemporary institutionalized Christianity for it, too, needs to consider whether the divine Teacher may turn away. The warning about a kingdom being taken away and given to a nation that would produce the fruits thereof is as valid today as it was then. The powers of darkness shall not prevail against the congregation of the end-time, but let the power structures of this aeon who seek their own aggrandize-

²⁷ A numismatic metaphor may be intended in v. 52. PGrenf II, 74, 9 (A. D. 302) refers to Diocletian's new coinage: καινοῦ Σεβαστῶν νομισμ[ατος]; 77, 7-8 (3d to 4th cent. A. D.), to the prior coinage: παλαιῶν νομισμ[ατος] (= lines 30-31). The figure as used by Matthew would then reinforce the thought of a new reign under Jesus Kyrios.

ment know that there is no refuge for them from the wrath of God under the umbrella of that consolation. Jesus Christ is on the side of those who "heed all his instructions" (Matt. 28:20). These are spelled

out especially in Matthew 5—7, and 25: 31-46 pulls the rug out from under all false cultic security. There are none so blind as those who grope with 20-20 vision.

St. Louis, Mo.