

None of these translations carries the correct nuance to express Paul's thought as reflected in the Greek text. They all imply that all along Paul intended to give a command from the Lord. Murphy-O'Connor correctly perceives that "the dominical logion does not control Paul's thought in 7.1-11; it is brought in as an afterthought because of its pastoral utility".<sup>9</sup> It is this element of an "afterthought" which is missing from the four translations cited above. Each has smoothed out Paul's style, but at the expense of hiding from the reader an insight into Paul's thought. He was going to give the command on his own authority as in 1 Corinthians 7: 12, and only as an afterthought added "not I, but the Lord" as he recalled the dominical saying. A translation more faithful would be, "I give the order; no, not I, Christ gives it".<sup>10</sup>

In summary, I have argued that the broken syntax in 1 Corinthians 9.15 reflects Paul's intense emotions as he wrote or dictated that passage. By "improving" his style, we risk losing the emotion, which is an aspect of the meaning. In 1 Corinthians 7.10 the words "not I, but the Lord" are an afterthought on Paul's part, and to translate this verse as if Paul planned from the outset to exhort the readers with the authority of a teaching of Jesus is to alter subtly the meaning by masking the train of Paul's thought.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 606.

<sup>10</sup> A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914), 140-141.

BARCLAY M. NEWMAN

## TO TEACH OR NOT TO TEACH (A COMMENT ON MATTHEW 13.1-3)

The Rev. Dr. Barclay M. Newman is a UBS Translation consultant based in Springfield, Missouri, USA.

Matthew does not explicitly inform his readers of the reason *why* Jesus "sat" beside Lake Galilee. In many cultures the use of the verb "sit" without qualification would normally imply some degree of tiredness on the part of the person performing the action, though readers of more pious inclination might conclude that Jesus sat beside the lake to meditate.

To avoid either of these misunderstandings, the *Good News Bible* translates 13.1b as "where he sat down to teach".<sup>1</sup> So does the Italian common language translation *Parola del Signore*. *Die Gute Nachricht* does not supply the verb "teach" as a complement to "sit", though its rendering of 13.3 implies similar exegesis: "and he explained to them his message with the help of parables".

<sup>1</sup> It would also be helpful to make Luke 4.20 explicit, where "sat down" is immediately followed by "All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him" (TEV). For many readers the implication is that by "sitting down" immediately following the reading of scripture, Jesus had done something unusual, which explains the reason that everyone fixed their eyes on him. Some languages may even require a cultural note, indicating that sitting was the customary practice.

Ernst Lohmeyer supports this interpretation of the text,<sup>2</sup> as does Walter Grundmann, who sees here a situation parallel to that of 5.1.<sup>3</sup>

However, for at least three reasons Jack Dean Kingsbury dogmatically denies a teaching context for the Matthean chapter on parables. His first objection is based upon what he terms the “express pattern” which Matthew follows in his employment of the verb *kathēmai* (“sit”) in 13.2. He believes its background to be apocalyptic, an example of which is found in Revelation 7.9-12, where God sits (*kathēmai*) upon his throne with a crowd (*ochlos*) of worshippers standing—(*histēmi*)—before him. Accordingly Kingsbury concludes: “It would seem, then, that Matthew’s intention in v. 2 is to fashion a setting that will in itself attribute honour to Jesus and underline, not merely a Rabbinic, but even a divine dignity”.<sup>4</sup>

Kingsbury’s second argument is found in part upon Günther Bornkamm’s judgment that the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew is always associated with the exposition of the Jewish Law. In the words of Bornkamm:

The parallels to the Markan passages which have been mentioned show that *didaskein* is used *only* where Jesus is clearly designated Rabbi (teacher of the law), thus in Matt. 7.29 (= Mark 1.22); 13.54 (= Mark 6.2); 22.16 (= Mark 12.14); 26.55 (= Mark 14.49; notice in Matthew the addition of the word *ekathezomēn!*) In such passages Matthew can even go beyond Mark in speaking of Jesus’ ‘teaching’ (4.23; 9.35; 11.1; 21.23, and above all in the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount, 5.2). On the other hand, he consistently avoids the word in passages where the subject is not specifically Jesus’ teaching on the law, for example in the introduction to the parables on the kingdom of heaven (cf. Matt. 13.3 and Mark 4.2), similarly in connexion with the instructing of the disciples about the destiny of the Son of Man (cf. Matt. 16.21 and Mark 8.31; Matt. 17.22 and Mark 9.31); the expression is also lacking in 21.13 (cf. Mark 11.17) and 22.41 (cf. Mark 12.35). Likewise the parallels to Mark 2.13; 10.1, are wanting in Matthew.<sup>5</sup>

The third argument which Kingsbury fashions is stated succinctly: “. . . *within the ground plan* of Matthew’s Gospel teaching and preaching . . . cease as far as the Jews are concerned after the conflict-discourses of chapter 12”.<sup>6</sup>

But may one legitimately argue that *of themselves* the verb *kathēmai* and its companion *kathizō* ever suggest Jesus’ “divine dignity”? May it be assumed that Matthew’s original readers would have drawn such a conclusion from *their* reading of the Gospel? Upon an examination of the passages where these

<sup>2</sup> *Das Evangelium des Matthäus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1958), 192. Lohmeyer in fact uses both “proclaim” and “teach” of the event, without any evident attempt to distinguish between the two. “Jesus sits by the sea, for it is customary to ‘proclaim’ sitting. This means that the purpose of his going out and sitting down is to ‘proclaim’. He does not teach because hearers are there; the people gather because He is teaching. Thus the place for teaching is consciously chosen”. (English translations from German by the editor).

<sup>3</sup> *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1971) 338: “Jesus’ sitting down by the sea does not only make a parallel picture to 5.1; it makes it clear that he wants to teach, for the teacher sits”. (Trans.)

<sup>4</sup> *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13. A Study in Redaction-Criticism* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1969), 23.

<sup>5</sup> “End-expectation and church in Matthew”, in Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*. Translated by Percy Scott. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 38, note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, 29.

verbs occur, one discovers that they are *always accompanied by a qualifying phrase* when used to attribute honor to Jesus (or to anyone else): “on his glorious throne . . . on twelve thrones” (19.28), “at my right hand” (22.44), “at your right and at your left . . . at my right and at my left” (20.21, 23), “on Moses’ seat” (23.2), “the throne of God . . . upon it” (23.22), “at the right hand of the power” (26.64), and “on the judgment seat” (27.19). Moreover, the verb *kathēzomai* in its sole occurrence in the Gospel is joined with the verb “teach” (“Day after day I sat in the temple teaching”, 26.55).<sup>7</sup>

This suggests that the three verbs used of sitting in the First Gospel signify nothing beyond the ordinary *unless the context is clearly marked*. To assume otherwise is to exceed the limits of the evidence. Jesus’ departure from the house to sit beside Lake Galilee is primarily transitional: by this action Jesus takes the initiative to make himself available to the crowds so that he might “tell them many things in parables”. Accordingly 13.1 functions similarly to 5.1-2 (Jesus “sits” that his disciples might come to him for instruction), 15.29 (Jesus “sit” that the crowds might bring their sick to him for healing), and 24.3 (Jesus “sits” that his disciples might gather for the apocalyptic discourse).

It cannot be demonstrated that the teaching ministry of Jesus is consistently associated with the exposition of the Jewish Law, for in at least three editorial passages (4.23; 9.35; 11.1) Matthew summarizes Jesus’ verbal activity as *didaskō* and *kērussō*, without in any way distinguishing between the two. The most that may be concluded at this stage is that *in certain contexts* Matthew may prefer *didaskō* of Jesus’ exposition of the Law and *kērussō* of Jesus’ proclamation. But, as Georg Strecker correctly observes, Matthew does *not* maintain a consistent distinction between his usage of the two verbs, either with regard to form or content. Strecker in fact sees an essential oneness between Jesus’ teaching of the Law and his proclamation of the Kingdom: *kērussō* functions as a call to decision, but so does *didaskō* (see 7.24-27), while on the other hand the proclamation of the Kingdom carries with it ethical demands, which may account for the stereotyped summation of Jesus’ message as *didaskō* and *kērussō*. Strecker also concludes that it is not by chance that the commission to “preach” the Gospel to all people (24.14; 26.13) is followed by the command to “teach” all people (28.19-20). Though Matthew may not use the two verbs synonymously, as does Mark (compare Mark 3.14 and 6.30), he nevertheless employs them with striking similarities.<sup>8</sup>

But is there any hint that in Matthew’s Gospel the parables of Jesus may also be included within the scope of his teaching activity? Perhaps 21.23 (conspicuously omitted from discussion by both Bornkamm and Kingsbury) is just such a verse. There Matthew informs us that the chief priests and the elders of the people approached Jesus while he was “teaching” in the temple. This is to be compared with the Markan account which reads: “And as he was *walking* in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him”

<sup>7</sup> Such also is the case with Rev 7.9-12, where *kathēmai* is accompanied by “upon his throne”. See further Rev 4.2, 4, 9, 10; 5.1, 7, 13; 6.16; 7.15; 11.16; 14.14, 15, 16; 19.4; 20.11; 21.5. For *kathizō* see Rev 3.21 (twice); 20.4.

<sup>8</sup> *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit. Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1971), 126-128.

(11.27). Lohmeyer is of the opinion that “teaching” was interjected as an after-thought into a traditional text, perhaps by the evangelist himself, as a reference to the “teaching” contained in 21.28-22.22.<sup>9</sup> If this judgment is correct, then at least three parables (21.28-32; 33-44; 22.1-14) are automatically included as a part of Jesus’ teaching ministry.

But it is difficult to understand how the participle “teaching” may be used solely of events or teachings yet to take place. Surely it must be at least in part anaphoric, referring either to something Jesus had already done or else was in the process of doing at the time that he was accused. Moreover, the question arises concerning the relationship between “teaching” and “these things” in the accusation of Jesus’ opponents: “By what authority are you doing these things?” Lohmeyer distinguishes sharply between the two, assign Jesus’ total activity in the temple as the antecedent of “these things”,<sup>10</sup> while other scholars tend either to limit the reference to the cleansing of the temple<sup>11</sup> or to enlarge it to include both Jesus’ entrance into the city and his cleansing of the temple.<sup>12</sup> Though these opinions may be valid for the Markan sequence of events, it is not the case with Matthew, for whom Jesus’ teaching in the temple provides the occasion for the hostile question. As Eduard Schweizer avers: “It is Jesus’ authority to teach that is now expressly questioned”.<sup>13</sup>

In 21.27, which brings to a close the brief section begun with 21.23, all three of the Synoptics employ the present tense of the verb “do” in Jesus’ reply to his opponents: “Neither am I telling you by what authority I *am doing* these things” (Mark 11.33; Luke 20.8). And this usage balances with the manner in which all three also recount the accusation made against Jesus by the Jewish

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, 305, note 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*: “*Tauta* cannot refer to the teaching, for anyone had the right to teach in the temple court . . . , nor can it relate to the cleansing of the temple, or to the teachings which took place there, because that would have to be *epoiēsa(s)*. The word must signify Jesus’ whole presence and activity in the temple . . .” (Trans.) Howard Clark Kee, *Matthew. The Interpreter’s One Volume Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1971) 636, believes the accusation refers to “the source of the authority by which he acts and teaches”.

<sup>11</sup> A. W. Argyle, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 160; Sherman E. Johnson, *Matthew. The Interpreter’s Bible* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), 508; John L. McKenzie, *The Gospel According to Matthew. The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 98; Theodore H. Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Limited, 1951), 175.

<sup>12</sup> Julius Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus. Das Neue Testament Deutsch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1971), 215: “Our discourse takes up the questions raised by the story of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem and his cleansing of the temple”. (Trans.) Krister Stendahl, *Matthew. Peake’s Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1972), 791, differentiates between the meaning “these things” held for the Jerusalem authorities and for the evangelists: “. . . ‘these things’ (23, 24, 27) refers rather to the cleansing of the Temple, the arrangement of the entry (and, to the evangelists, also to the prophetic cursing of the fig tree)”. Neither Willoughby C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1951) nor W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1971) comments on the problem.

<sup>13</sup> *The Good News according to Matthew*. Translated by David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 409.

leaders: "By what authority *are* you *doing* these things?" (Matt. 21.23; Mark 11.28; Luke 20.2).<sup>14</sup> The most obvious and logical conclusions are: (1) "These things" of verse 23 must be understood of something that Jesus was in the process of doing at the time of the accusation, and in the context of Matthew's Gospel it most naturally refers to Jesus' teaching activity. (2) With verse 28 Jesus *continues* what he had been doing when the question was put to him—he *teaches*, and in so doing he uses three *parables* (21.28-32; 33-44; 22.1-14).

Thus it is impossible to substantiate Kingsbury's supposition that with the conflict-dialogue of chapter 12 Jesus' teaching and preaching ministry to the Jews comes to an end. For in this last week of his public ministry we discover another "apology in parables" such as Kingsbury proposes for 13.1-35, and it is defined by Matthew as *teaching* (21.23). Moreover, the scope of Jesus' "teaching" in the First Gospel is much broader than Bornkamm and Kingsbury are willing to concede, as is intimated by the variety of content found in what Strecker terms the "*didaskalos-Anrede*" (compare 9.11; 12.38; 19.16; 22.16, 24, 36).<sup>15</sup>

Why then does Matthew avoid using *didaskō* of parables in 13.1-3? Actually the question needs to be more inclusive: Why do *both* Matthew and Luke (8.4) shift away from the use of this verb in their parallels to Mark 4.2? Perhaps the answer is purely stylistic: the collocation *didaskō (en) parabolais* seemed unnatural. Indeed, as far as I have been able to determine, Mark 4.2 is the *only* passage in the New Testament, the Septuagint, or in early Christian literature outside the New Testament where this particular combination occurs. The usual pattern apparently is to use either *laleō* or *legō* of parables. But in any case it seems improbable that Matthew would have felt himself at a disadvantage in his avoidance of *didaskō* at this juncture in his Gospel. He would have had in his favor that elsewhere in the Gospel when Jesus "sits" he does so in order to teach, except in contexts that are clearly marked otherwise. Moreover, Jewish readers would have expected of a rabbi that he would "sit" when teaching. All in all, the most natural assumption is that in Matthew 13.1-3 Jesus "sits" as a sign that he will now begin to *teach*.

<sup>14</sup> *Die Gute Nachricht* effectively translates the question in 21.23: "Who has given you the right to appear here like this? Who has commissioned you?" (Trans.) Jesus' reply in 21.27 is then made to balance with the question: "Good; so neither will I tell you who has commissioned me" (Trans.) (The translation in the full German common language Bible, *Die Bibel in heutigen Deutsch* [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1982] is different in detail: "From where do you take the right to appear here like this? Who has given you the authority for it?"; 21.27 "Good . . . ; so neither will I tell you who has authorised me"). Some languages will require a complement after a verb such as *beauftragen* (commissioned), indicating precisely what it was that Jesus had been authorised to do. Assuming that the proposed exegesis of the passage is correct, one may then translate the question and Jesus' reply as follows: "By what authority are you doing this teaching? Who authorised you to do it?" (21.23) and "Very well. Then I will not tell you by what authority I am doing this teaching".

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, 127, note 8 and 124, note 2.