

Kingdom Parables

The Parable of the Wise Householder

IX. The Parable of Wise Householder - Matthew 13:51-52

A. The Central Point of the Parable

Anyone who understands the mysteries of the Kingdom will be able to draw on all of scripture to meet spiritual needs.

B. Significant Elements of the Parable

1. The Householder

Jesus uses the Greek word *oikodespotes* which means "house despot." This term was used to define those who had complete control over a household. It was also often used to refer to the owner of a house. This same word appears in verse 27 of this chapter as well as in Matthew 10:25, Luke 13:25, and Luke 14:21.

The householder in those days had complete control over the resources of that house. They were the ones that dispensed the necessary things from the household stores to meet every need of the household.

2. The Things

This refers to the goods that were distributed by the householder. Just as in a modern home, there were undoubtedly items in the store that were new, and items that were old. However, when there was a need, the item that would best meet that need would be dispensed, whether it was new or old.

C. Insignificant Elements of the Parable

None

D. Interpretation of the Parable

1. The Householder

Jesus specifically identifies the householder as representing a scribe (Greek *grammateus*) who is instructed in the things of the Kingdom (verse 52).

The reference to scribe makes no sense if Christ is referring only to those who had the title of scribe. What he is really saying is something along the lines of "any scholar." The scribes of Christ's day were the intellectual keepers of the law. They were the ones who interpreted and defined the law.

Another way to see this term is in its generic sense and not in its specific sense. It does not refer to the "office", but to the "person".

2. The Things

Although not specifically stated, it appears obvious that the “old” and “new” things refer to the Old Testament Scriptures and the teaching of the Kingdom. This is supported by the following reasons:

- Christ has just asked the disciples whether they understood the things he has just told them about the Kingdom. As a result, either the “old” or “new” things must refer to these teachings or else the context becomes meaningless.
- The teachings of the Kingdom cannot be “old.” The very fact that they were seen as a “mystery”, that is as something that was previously unknown, clearly seems to indicate that they are the “new” things.
- The use of the term “scribe” would immediately bring to mind the “scholars” that dedicated themselves to the study and application of the law. Therefore, it seems clear that the best interpretation of “old” would be that information which was previously available, i.e. the law.

E. Application of the Parable

1. We need to be good householders in the sense that we need to be able to understand and apply all of the Scripture, not just the Old Testament, and not just the New Testament.
2. We clearly see that Christ placed great emphasis on the Old Testament. In fact, the word translated “treasure” is *thesauron* from which we get “thesaurus.”