

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 19 – January 19th – Matthew 12:46-13:23

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Matthew

- Hagner, Donald A *Word Biblical Commentary Vols.33a & 33b: Matthew 1-13 & Matthew 14-28*, Word Books, Dallas, 1993 & 1995
- Morris, Leon *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1992

Verses 46-50

Cf. Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21. On the attitude of Jesus' family towards him and his ministry, cf. John 7:5 and Mark 3:20,21.

Verse 46

Ἔτι δὲ αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος τοῖς ὄχλοις ἰδοὺ ἡ μήτηρ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ εἰστήκεισαν ἔξω ζητοῦντες αὐτῷ λαλήσαι.

ἐτι still, yet

λαλεω speak, talk

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude

ἀδελφος, ου m brother

εἰστήκεισαν Verb, pluperfect act indic, 3 pl
ἵστημι stand, stop

ἔξω adv. out, outside

ζητοῦντες Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s ζητεω
seek, search for

"The impression Matthew gives is that the family felt that they had prior rights; they could interrupt him in the middle of a teaching session, and he should stop what he was doing and come to them." Morris. Mark 3:21 implies that Jesus' family were critical of his ministry (cf. Jn 7:5).

Verse 47

εἶπεν δὲ τις αὐτῷ· Ἴδοὺ ἡ μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου ἔξω ἐστήκασιν, ζητοῦντές σοι λαλήσαι.

ἐστήκασιν Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl ἵστημι

Some significant MSS (κ* B L Γ ff¹ k sy^{s,c} sa) omit this verse. Morris suggests that it may well have been omitted by the eye passing from the last word in verse 46 to the identical word at the end of verse 47 (i.e. homoioteleuton, so also Metzger).

Verse 48

ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν τῷ λέγοντι αὐτῷ· Τίς ἐστὶν ἡ μήτηρ μου, καὶ τίνας εἰσὶν οἱ ἀδελφοί μου;

ἀποκριθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s
ἀποκρῖνομαι answer, reply

Verse 49

καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν· Ἴδοὺ ἡ μήτηρ μου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί μου·

ἐκτείνω stretch out, extend

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

μαθητης, ου m disciple, follower

Verse 50

ὅστις γὰρ ἂν ποιήσῃ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς, αὐτός μου ἀδελφός καὶ ἀδελφή καὶ μήτηρ ἐστίν.

ὅστις, ἡτις, ὅ τι who, which, whoever,
whichever

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

οὐρανος, ου m heaven

ἀδελφη, ης f sister, female believer

Of ἀδελφη Hagner writes, "This is a particularly important modification by Jesus of the formula 'mother and brothers' of the preceding verses. It stands in noticeable tension with the contemporary Jewish perspective, in which women had no equal rights in the study of Torah or in the life of the religious community, and is consonant with the progressiveness of Jesus on the issue of women seen elsewhere in the Gospels."

"Jesus is not saying that earthly familial ties are unimportant, only that they are not all-important. Doing the will of God is all-important." Morris.

"The kingdom of God and its demands ... take priority over human relationships, even of the most intimate kind." Hagner.

Matthew 13:1-58

Cf. Mark 4:1-34. Concluding a brief section on the interpretation of parables Hagner writes, "Acceptance of valid insights of the newer trends in parable interpretation can be used to supplement and refine the importance and valuable work of Julicher, Dodd, and Jeremias, but need not cancel it out altogether. It is still useful to look for a single main point of a parable, without necessarily denying supporting allegorical elements. It is still mandatory to understand a parable in its historical contexts (both of Jesus and the evangelists), but without reducing the parable to historical information controlled by the interpreter. As the parables grabbed their initial hearers and readers, so must contemporary readers experience their power, understanding with the heart as well as with the head, responding not so much to historical information but to the call of God upon their lives."

Verses 1-9

Cf. Mark 4:1-9; Luke 8:4-8.

Verse 1

Ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐξεληθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῆς οἰκίας ἐκάθητο παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν·

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο see 12:45

ἐξεληθων Verb, aor act ptc, nom m s

ἐξερχομαι

καθημαι sit, sit down

θαλασσα, ης f sea

Verse 2

καὶ συνήχθησαν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὄχλοι πολλοί, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς πλοῖον ἐμβάντα καθῆσθαι, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν εἰστήκει.

συνήχθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

συναγω gather, gather together

ὄχλος, ου m see 12:46

ὥστε so that, with the result that

πλοῖον, ου n boat, ship

ἐμβάντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s ἐμβαινω

get into, embark

αἰγιαλος, ου m beach, shore

εἰστήκει Verb, pluperf act indic, 3 s ἵστημι

stand

Spurgeon quaintly comments, "The teacher sat and the people stood: we should have less sleeping in congregations if this arrangement still prevailed."

Verse 3

καὶ ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς πολλὰ ἐν παραβολαῖς λέγων· Ἰδοὺ ἐξῆλθεν ὁ σπείρων τοῦ σπείρειν.

σπειρω sow

Verse 4

καὶ ἐν τῷ σπείρειν αὐτὸν ἃ μὲν ἔπεσεν παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν, καὶ ἐλθόντα τὰ πετεινὰ κατέφαγεν αὐτά.

ἔπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πιπτω fall
ὁδος, ου f way, path, road

"It remains unclear ... whether the field would have been plowed before the sowing or *after*, which was apparently done on occasion... If the plowing in this instance is understood to have been done afterwards, then the sowing of seed upon the path and upon rocky ground (v 5) becomes perhaps a little easier to understand. The seed on the path becomes easy food for the birds and is thus prevented from producing fruit." Hagner.

ἐλθόντα Verb, aor act ptc, n nom/acc pl

ἐρχομαι

πετεινον, ου n bird

κατέφαγεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s κατεσθω

and κατεσθω eat up, devour

"If truth does not enter the heart, evil influences will soon remove it." Spurgeon.

Verse 5

ἄλλα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὰ πετρώδη ὅπου οὐκ εἶχεν γῆν πολλήν, καὶ εὐθέως ἐξανέτειλεν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν βάθος γῆς.

πετρωδη Noun, nom/acc pl πετρωδες, ους n
rocky ground

ὅπου where

εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἔχω

γῆ, γης f earth

ἐξανέτειλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

ἐξανατελλω sprout, spring up

δια το with the infinitive expresses cause.

βαθος, ους n depth, greatness

"The shallow soil would have warmed quickly and encouraged rapid growth." Morris.

Verse 6

ἡλίου δὲ ἀνατείλαντος ἐκαυματίσθη καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ρίζαν ἐξηράνθη.

ἡλιος, ου m the sun

ἀνατείλαντος Verb, aor act ptc, m gen s

ἀνατελλω rise, dawn, shine

ἐκαυματίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

καυματιζω scorch, burn

ρίζα, ης f root

ἐξηράνθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ξηραῖνω

dry up, scorch; pass wither

Verse 7

ἄλλα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀκάνθας, καὶ ἀνέβησαν αὐαὶ ἄκανθαι καὶ ἐπνίζαν αὐτά.

ἄκανθα, ης f thorn-plant

ἀναβαινω go up, come up, ascend,
embark
ἐπιζαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιγω
choke

Cf. Job 31:40,

Verse 8

ἄλλα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν τὴν καλὴν καὶ
ἐδίδου καρπὸν, ὃ μὲν ἑκατὸν ὃ δὲ ἐξήκοντα ὃ
δὲ τριάκοντα.

καλος, η, ον good, right, proper, fine
ἐδίδου Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s διδωμι

Note the continuous force of the imperfect.

καρπος, ου m fruit, grain, harvest
ἑκατον one hundred
ἐξηκοντα sixty
τριακοντα thirty

A normal yield in those days would have been
about tenfold.

Verse 9

ὁ ἔχων ὄτα ἀκουέτω.

οὖς, ὠτος n ear, hearing

Some MSS (κ² C D W Z Θ f^{1,13} TR lat sy^{c,p,h}
co) insert ἀκουειν, probably because of the
influence of the parallel in Mark 4:9. Cf. v 43
and 11:15.

Verse 10

Καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Διὰ
τί ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς;

προσερχομαι come or go to
μαθητης, ου m disciple, pupil, follower

"Commentators differ as to whether parables
were meant to make the truth plain and simple
or whether they were a way of making a veiled
witness to the truth. Paradoxically there is truth
in both suggestions... If someone does not
know the great basic truth of the kingdom,
what is he to make of the parables that set it
forth or indeed of other parables? Commitment
to Jesus is the prerequisite for a true
understanding of his parabolic teaching."
Morris.

Verse 11

ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Ὅτι ὑμῖν δέδοται
γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν
οὐρανῶν, ἐκείνοις δὲ οὐ δέδοται.

ἀποκριθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s
ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply, say
δέδοται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s διδωμι

"The doctrine of election lies behind these
words." Morris.

γινῶναι Verb, aor act infin γινωσκω

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery (of
something formerly unknown but now
revealed)

οὐρανός, ου m heaven

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο that, those

"The expression 'the mysteries of the kingdom
of heaven' refers to the meaning of Jesus'
teaching ... about the kingdom, i.e., particularly
its reality, yet its veiled existence in the present
as well as its future manifestation (cf. 'word of
the kingdom' in v 19)." Hagner.

Verse 12

ὅστις γὰρ ἔχει, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ καὶ
περισσευθήσεται· ὅστις δὲ οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ὃ ἔχει
ἀρθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

Cf. 25:29; Mk 4:25; Lk 8:18; 19:26.

ὅστις, ἦτις, ὅ τι who, whoever
δοθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s διδωμι
περισσευθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s
περισσευω be more than enough,
abound, excel

ἀρθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s αἰρω
take, take up, take away

"The problem of the apparent injustice of God
giving to those who have and taking away
from those who have not is alleviated when it
is realised that Jesus refers simply to
receptivity and unreceptivity. The one who
'has' (ἔχει) is the one who has welcomed the
message of the kingdom and has responded in
the appropriate commitment, i.e., who has
become a disciple of Jesus. It is this person
who has the key to further understanding of the
purpose and plan of God in the presently
dawning kingdom... The one who 'does not
have' (οὐκ ἔχει) is the person who has not
received or responded in commitment to the
proclamation of Jesus and the disciples. Of that
person it is said that καὶ ὃ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπ'
αὐτοῦ, 'even what that person has will be taken
away.' Having rejected the message of the
kingdom from the start, that person is unable to
penetrate to the truth of the parables of Jesus.
But even what such a person is inclined to fall
back on – say, trust in Jewishness and Judaism
– that too will be taken away (cf. 8:12;
21:43)." Hagner.

Verse 13

διὰ τοῦτο ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λαλῶ, ὅτι
βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ
ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνίουσιν·

"The allusion to Isa 6:9 in this verse and the
full quotation that follows presuppose the
hardheartedness (cf. Mark 8:17b-18) and
culpability of the people being described."
Hagner. Cf. Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2.

Some MSS (D Θ I^{1,13} it sy^{s,c}), apparently influenced by the parallel in Mark 4:12, have ἵνα in place of ὅτι and then have the following finite verbs in the subjunctive mood, down to and including μηποτε ἐπιστρέψωσιν.

βλεπω see, be able to see
 συνιουσιν Verb, pres act indic, 3 pl συνιημι
 understand, comprehend

"They [the disciples] could understand the parables because of the insight that God gave them, but God did not give this insight to those who rejected Jesus. The word of God is always effective: it brings enlightenment or judgment – enlightenment to the disciples, judgment to those who rejected Jesus. It was in this sense that it was the divine purpose that they should not understand. If people rejected Christ and set themselves in opposition to God, how could they understand the teaching that came from God through Christ?" Morris.

Gutzwiller draws attention to Augustine's remarks about a man who looks at beautiful writing in a foreign tongue; he may admire the calligraphy, but the meaning he cannot appreciate. So when a person who rejects Jesus hears parables, he may find in them things he can appreciate and admire, but he cannot understand their essential meaning.

Verse 14

καὶ ἀναπληροῦται αὐτοῖς ἡ προφητεία Ἡσαΐου ἢ λέγουσα· Ἀκοῆ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε, καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε.

ἀναπληρωω complete the full measure of;
 occupy, fill

"The only occurrence of ἀναπληροῦν in Matthew; perhaps ἀνα gives the connotation of 'completely fulfilled'." Hagner.

Cf. Isa 6:9-10, also similar language is found in Jer 5:21. See also Acts 28:26-27; John 12:39-40 as well as the parallels in Mark 4:12 and Luke 8:10b.

ἀκοη, ης f report, news, hearing
 συνῆτε Verb, aor subj, 2 pl συνιημι
 ἴδητε Verb, aor act subj ὄραω see,
 observe, perceive, recognise

Matthew's quotation is in almost verbatim agreement with the LXX. "The syntax of the LXX here and in the following lines is rather different from that of the Hebrew text of Isa 6:9 with its imperatives, 'do not understand,' 'do not perceive.' Similarly in the opening lines of v 15, more scope is given to the responsibility of the Jews than is done in the Hebrew text. Thus the LXX avoids the Hebrew imperatives of Isa 6:10: 'make the heart of this people fat, and their eyes heavy, and shut their eyes.' Instead, the LXX describes conditions for which the people are responsible: 'the heart of this people has grown thick, with their ears they hear poorly, and they have shut their eyes.' It is the unbelieving people who have shut their own eyes. The reference to their heart growing thick indicates their insensitivity and their lack of understanding (cf. 15b)." Hagner.

Verse 15

ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν βαρέως ἤκουσαν, καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν· μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν, καὶ ἰάσονται αὐτούς.

ἐπαχύνθη Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 s
 παχνομαι grow dull or insensitive
 καρδια, ας f heart
 λαος, ου m people, a people
 οὖς, ὠτος n ear, hearing
 βαρεως with difficulty
 καμμυω close (of eyes)
 μηποτε lest, otherwise

A conjunction denoting a negative purpose: "in order that ... not".

"They do not understand what God is saying, partly, at least, because they do not want to hear. They are comfortable in their selfishness and do not want to be disturbed by the kind of thing God would say about them." Morris.

ἴδωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl ὄραω
 συνῶσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl συνιημι see
 v.14

ἐπιστρέφω turn back, turn round, turn
 ἰάσονται Verb, aor midd dep subj, 1 s ἰαομαι
 heal, cure, restore

"It remains true that Matthew emphasises the responsibility of those who reject the message. He provides an excellent example of the asymmetrical argument typical of the biblical writers: the understanding of the disciple is due to the grace of God; the failure to understand of the non-disciple is due to that person's rejection of the message. (That still leaves the deep mystery concerning why God does not by his grace make known the truth to all.) ... His immediate concern is the culpable unbelief of Israel, but as a good Jew he can do nothing other than at the same time accept the sovereign action of God behind that unbelief. The asymmetry of his argument ultimately explains Matthew's paradoxical explanation concerning the reason that Jesus taught in parables." Hagner.

Verse 16

ὕμῶν δὲ μακάριοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ὅτι βλέπουσιν, καὶ τὰ ὄντα ὑμῶν ὅτι ἀκούουσιν.

μακαριος, α, ον blessed, fortunate, happy

Verse 17

ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ προφηταὶ καὶ δίκαιοι ἐπεθύμησαν ἰδεῖν ἃ βλέπετε καὶ οὐκ εἶδαν, καὶ ἀκοῦσαι ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσαν.

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

ἐπιθυμῶ long for, desire

ἰδεῖν Verb, aor act infin ὄραω

εἶδαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ὄραω

"Jesus is saying that his mission in the world is the culmination of the purpose of God made clear in prophecies from of old. The servants of God in olden time may have looked for these days and desired to be involved in them. But that was not their privilege." Morris. Cf. Luke 10:24; Heb 11:13; 1 Peter 1:10.

Verses 18-23

Cf. Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15.

Verse 18

Ἐμεῖς οὖν ἀκούσατε τὴν παραβολὴν τοῦ σπειραντοῦ.

The initial ὑμεῖς "is emphatic and reinforces the privilege of the disciples alone to know the 'mysteries of the kingdom' (cf. 11, 16)." Hagner.

σπειρῶ see v.3

"The title of the parable, τὴν παραβολὴν τοῦ σπειραντοῦ ... does not point to the main subject of the parable but is an allusion to the opening words of the parable (the usual way of identifying passages and writings in the ancient world)." Hagner.

Verse 19

παντὸς ἀκούοντος τὸν λόγον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ μὴ συνιέντος, ἔρχεται ὁ πονηρὸς καὶ ἀρπάξει τὸ ἐσπαρμένον ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν σπαρεῖς.

What is sown by the sower is τὸν λόγον τῆς βασιλείας (cf. the note on v 11).

συνιέντος Verb, pres act ptc, m gen s συνιημι see v.13

Contrast verse 23 where the seed that falls into good soil represents those who *understand* the word. This *spiritual* understanding involves an appreciation of the meaning of God's word, and particularly of the Gospel, and its impact and demand on our lives.

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

ἀρπάζω take by force, take away, carry off

ἐσπαρμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n nom/acc s σπειρῶ

ὁδος, ου f see v.4

σπαρεῖς Verb, aor pass ptc (irreg) m nom s σπειρῶ

Verse 20

ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὰ πετρώδη σπαρεῖς, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τὸν λόγον ἀκούων καὶ εὐθὺς μετὰ χαρᾶς λαμβάνων αὐτόν,

πετρωδη Noun, nom/acc pl πετρωδες, ους n see v.5

εὐθὺς straightway, immediately, at once

χαρα, ας f joy, gladness

Happy but shallow enthusiasm.

Verse 21

οὐκ ἔχει δὲ ρίζαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἀλλὰ πρόσκαιρός ἐστιν, γενομένης δὲ θλίψεως ἢ διωγμοῦ διὰ τὸν λόγον εὐθὺς σκανδαλίζεται.

ρίζα, ης f see v.6

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

πρόσκαιρος, ον temporary, not lasting

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

ἢ οἱ

διωγμος, ου m persecution

σκανδαλιζῶ cause (someone) to sin, cause (someone) to give up the faith

"The expectation of persecution has already been an important theme in Matthew (see esp. 5:11-12; 10:16-25). The follower of Jesus must be prepared for this eventuality and must endure through it to the end (cf. 23:34-36; 24:9-13)." Hagner.

Verse 22

ὁ δὲ εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας σπαρείς, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τὸν λόγον ἀκούων, καὶ ἡ μέριμνα τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου καὶ ἡ ἀπάτη τοῦ πλούτου συμπνίγει τὸν λόγον, καὶ ἄκαρπος γίνεται.

ἀκανθα, ης f see v.7

μεριμνα, ης f care, concern, anxiety

αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order, eternity

ἀπατη, ης f deception

πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth

Cf. 6:19-34 also 19:23-24 and 1 Tim 6:10,17.

συμπνιγω choke, crowd around, crush

ἀκαρπος, ον barren, unfruitful

"The man who leads a double life – religion on Sunday and an irreligious life during the week – will soon discover that the 'worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desire for other things' take over, so that his faith becomes worthless." Kistemaker.

Verse 23

ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν καλὴν γῆν σπαρείς, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τὸν λόγον ἀκούων καὶ συνιείς, ὃς δὴ καρποφορεῖ καὶ ποιεῖ ὁ μὲν ἑκατὸν ὁ δὲ ἐξήκοντα ὁ δὲ τριάκοντα.

καλος, η, ον see v.8

"No heart of man is good by nature; the good Lord had made the plot into good ground." Spurgeon.

συνιείς Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s συνιημι
understand, comprehend

"The person receives the word with intelligent appreciation and acts upon it." Morris.

δη indeed, then, therefore, now

καρποφορεω bear fruit, be productive

"The fruit is probably to be understood as the pattern of conduct described in the Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5-7), i.e., the living out of the kingdom of God here and now (cf. 5:13-16; 21:43)." Hagner.