

The parable of the
budding fig tree
theology religion
essay



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Given below in the table is the Parable of the Fig Tree from the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Also quoted in the table is the version of the parable from the Gospel of Thomas. Table 5.

5. 6 Stylistic analysis of the Parable of the Fig Tree

5. 6. 1 What is it?

Form: Similitude

The Parable of the Budding Fig Tree is a Similitude. It is based on a comparison drawn between the signs of the budding of the fig tree and the signs of the approach of the Kingdom of God. The parable of the budding fig tree is narrating a typical, recurrent event from real life (nature), The fig tree was a common and important source of food for the Jews (The parables of Jesus by Don Schwager). The fig tree bears fruit at least twice a year in early spring and in autumn. The parable is narrated in the present tense showing that it is something typical and recurrent. It prophecies the coming of the joy of God's Kingdom, the signs and indications of spring are evident for all who can see, similarly these signs have been compared to the signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

5. 6. 2 Location in the Texts

Where is it found?

The parable of the budding fig tree is part of Jesus' explanation to his disciples about the signs of coming of the Kingdom of God. He mentions many signs of destruction and then comes on to the sign of the coming of the Kingdom of heaven. The parable indicates that like the budding of the Fig Tree is a natural and sure indicator of change in season as well as bearing

fruit similarly the coming of the Kingdom of heaven too is natural and sure and the signs of this change will be visible in their due course of time.

Matthew 24: 32-35 Mark 13: 28-29 Luke 21: 29-31

5. 6. 2. a In Matthew

In the Gospel of Matthew the Parable of the Budding Fig Tree is found in chapter 24 verses 32 to 35. This parable forms part of the Olivet Discourse where Jesus tells his disciples about how the world would come to its doom before His second coming. In this discourse Jesus informs His disciples of the sure signs which indicate the end of this phase of the world and the beginning of a new beginning." 1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple...3 And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24: 1-3).

5. 6. 2. b In Mark

In the Gospel of Mark the Parable of the Budding Fig Tree occurs in chapter 13 verses 28 to 29. In this Gospel too the parable has been reported to form the part of the Olivet Discourse. Mark makes a mention of the names of the disciples who asked Jesus to tell them when the prophecies of the end will be fulfilled." 1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here...3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter, and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 Tell us when shall these things be fulfilled?" (Mark 13: 1-4).

5. 6. 2. b In Luke

In the Gospel of Mark the Parable of the Budding Fig Tree occurs in chapter 21 verses 29 to 31. In Luke's account of the parable he does not make a mention of the exact location of Jesus' being i. e. the Mount of Olives which is named by the other two Gospel writers, but the incident which the parable follows is the same." 5And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said...7And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? And what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?" (Luke 21: 5-7).

5. 6. 3 Content?

This parable is an extension of the answer to the question the disciples asked Jesus about revealing to them about the time when the world will come to an end. The context of the parable is built up by reading the preceding verses in the gospels." 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other". (Matthew 24: 31)" 27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part earth to the uttermost part of heaven to the other". (Mark 13: 27)" 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh". (Luke 21: 28)

This similitude contains the assurance that the signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God which Jesus had told His disciples are as indicative and true as the signs of the budding of the Fig tree. The budding leaves of the fig tree are used as a symbol for the second coming of Christ. Here Jesus uses a very familiar image from a common natural setting—the

budding of the Fig Tree—to emphasize the truth of His words. It emphasizes upon understanding the signs around us which reveal the truth to us. The above quoted verses in each of the gospels occur just before the parable of the Fig Tree, and indicate the intention and purpose of the parable. In Matthew and Mark the parable only indicates the signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God, but in Luke the parable contains the growth process of the fig tree which is a symbol of the Kingdom of God

5. 6. 4 Intention/Purpose

The intention or purpose of this parable is to prophesize about the second coming of Christ. Its purpose is to instruct and inform. The use of imperative verbs such as ‘ learn’ in Matthew and Mark, and ‘ Behold’ in Luke demands the attention of the listeners. It also uses concrete nouns and factual adjectives such as ‘ fig tree’, ‘ branch’, ‘ tender’, and ‘ leaves’ that help the listeners and the readers to visualize in their minds a picture, especially in Luke the word ‘ Behold’ meaning see suggests that there actually were the fig tree and other trees there which served as examples or motif for the parable. The manner which Luke has adopted in narrating this parable is such that it takes the listener in confidence and brings in their wisdom and involvement in understanding the signs which point to the coming of the Kingdom of God.

5. 6. 5 Audience

5. 6. 5. a Original audience—direct and indirect address

The original audience of this parable is the disciples of Jesus Christ. In the gospel of Mark alone the names of the disciples to whom Jesus told this

parable are mentioned. Whereas in Matthew and Luke no specific names have been mentioned, therefore the number of listeners is not certain." 1 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24: 1)" 1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here... 3And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter, and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, 4Tell us when shall these things be fulfilled?" (Mark 13: 1-4)" 5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said...7And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? And what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?" (Luke 21: 5-7)

5. 6. 5. b Modern audience/readers

In modern times we can look upon the modern reader of the parables as those Christians or non-Christians who study the Bible. The parable informs the reader that the signs of the end of this world and the coming of the Kingdom will be made known to all before the world comes to its end. So its serves to instruct and inform the believers and non-believers of the disaster and chaos that will finally lead this world to its end before the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven/God.

5. 6. 6 Figurative Language/Figures of Speech

5. 6. 6. a Simile

The parable gives a very explicit comparison between the sprouting of the fig tree announcing the approaching summer and the signs of the end of this world. The figurative term used for this kind of parable is similitude because it works like a simile. Words and phrases like, ' likewise', and ' in like manner' show the use of explicit comparison between the things being compared. In this parable/similitude the signs of nature that foretell the coming of the approaching summer season stand as a comparison to/for the signs that will indicate the coming of the Kingdom of God. The imagery is taken from nature.

5. 6. 6. b Structure

There is a logical development of the argument. Transition words such as ' now' ' when' ' so' ' likewise' ' like manner' ' verily' ' till' show the logical development of thought. The sentences are compound/complex. In two of the gospels the parable starts off by the words attributed to Jesus Christ and in the third gospel it is reported by the gospel writer that Jesus spoke to his disciples a parable. The parable begins by imperative sentences: Now learn a parable of the fig tree; And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;' Now' and ' And' both words show that the parable is not the start of a discourse but rather it's a continuation. The word ' Behold' shows the deictic nature of the text, as if the speaker is pointing out the trees to His audience. The conclusion is authoritative and has a tone of finality to it. The parable is narrated in the present tense, which also

indicates that the parable might have been spoken during the spring time or before the summer had set in.

5. 6. 6. c Internal Deep Structure?

The parable of the Budding Fig Tree is one of the Kingdom parables; it gives us a direct comparison. Jesus has compared the visual signs that announce the change of a season to the change that will announce the end of this world and the coming of the Kingdom of God/Heaven. Since it is a parable therefore it works on two levels the surface level and the internal or deep level. On the surface level the images of the fig tree and the budding leaves and the tender branch do not stand for anything in particular but Jesus is just using the imagery that when the leaves sprout, you know that something else is right around the corner -- the fruit is about to appear. The fig tree has been used as a symbol for Israel but it does not mean that in this parable too the reference is the same. It is an announcement that when you notice the signs predicted about the coming of the Kingdom of God/Heaven means that the time is not far away.

5. 6. 6. d Authorial Voice

In the first two gospels the authorial voice is subdued since there is no preliminary introductory phrase informing that Jesus spoke or told a parable. It occurs in direct speech by Jesus because the parable occurs almost at the end of a long explanation/ revelation of the signs of the end of the world and the coming of the Kingdom of God, but in Luke the reader becomes conscious of the presence of the author when Luke mentions/reports ' And he spake to them a parable'. This makes the reader conscious that the

parable is being reported by the gospel writer, it takes the form of a frame
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story. Thus we see that Matthew and Mark use first person perspective, but Luke uses second person perspective simply by noting down that He spoke to them in parable. The tone of the parable of the fig tree is conversational yet authoritative. Knowledge, surety confidence and authority are exuded through the speech.

5. 6. 7 Style

The style is formal, and the tone is authoritative, yet explanatory because the verses that contain the parable are a part of a longer discourse in which first Jesus tells about the signs of the end of the world and then reveals the signs of His second coming, the start of the new era or the kingdom of God. He employs this parable to show His audience that just like the signs of nature are indicative and true so is what He has told them about the end of the world. The archaic structure of the language lends a kind of authoritative tone to the parable. The use of words and phrases such as ' putteth forth', ' ye', ' nigh', ' so likewise ye', ' Verily I say unto you', ' come to pass' ... make it sound more serious, reliable, solid, trustworthy and convincing. The sentences are compound and use the cohesion and cohesive devices to show the unity of the text. For example the parable starts with the phrase " Now learn..." the word ' now' is a cohesive device which links the parable with what has been said before. There are several anaphoric references such as ' all these things' and ' it is near' that link the content of these verses to the previous verses which establish a context. Where it says ' Now learn the parable of the fig tree' there ' the' serves as homophoric reference in the gospels of Mk and Matt. But in the gospel of Luke it says ' Behold the fig tree and all the other trees' here we see that ' the' is serving as a deictic

reference. The language of this text of the parable is archaic according to the modern reader because these structures and some words and phrases such as 'come to pass', 'nigh at hand', which have been used are not used in modern day common or contemporary language of everyday use. The use of the archaic language lends elegance and authority to the text and contributes to the beauty of the language.

5. 6. 8 Argument

The argument of the parable is instructional. The argument is didactic in two of the three incidents of the occurrence of the parable in the synoptic gospels. The speaker instructs the audience to learn a parable. This shows that there is a definite intent or message or purpose which the speaker wants his audience to 'learn' and not just hear. So the attention of the listener is important.

5. 6. 8. a Social Issue?

The parable does not address any social issues rather its focus is towards the spiritual side.

5. 6. 8. b Textual Analysis

There are slight differences between the three accounts but they can be reconciled by looking at the parallel texts of the parable. Most of the similarities are found in the accounts of Matthew and Mark, because most of the words and phrases in Matthew and Mark are the same with a few minor differences. Whereas, in Luke the style is different from both, Matthew and Mark, most of the words and phrases differ from Mark and Matthew. The first point of similarity is that in all three Gospels the parable starts with an

imperative statement, a command. ' Now learn a parable of the fig tree...' (Matthew 24: 32, Mark 13: 28) and ' Behold the fig tree, and all the trees...' (Luke 21: 29). However, in the gospels of Mark and Matthew the parable starts off with the same imperative statement ' Now learn a parable of the fig tree' (Matthew 24: 32, Mark 13: 28) , whereas, in Luke although the parable does start with an imperative statement, Luke adds his own comment, he makes the announcement that Jesus spoke to them (his disciples) a parable. Another point to note in Luke's announcement is that he says that Jesus spoke to them a parable rather than Jesus taught a parable to his disciples, which is the case in the other two gospels. Mark and Matthew report the announcement of the parable in the direct speech of Jesus, where the instruction is to learn a new parable. Therefore the focus of the statement shifts in Luke from learning to speaking or telling ' And he spake to them a parable' (Luke 21: 29). ' Spake' suggests a conversational tone and ' Learn' suggests an instructional tone. Another point of difference is that in Luke the instruction is ' Behold' which suggests to the readers that Jesus was actually pointing out to the trees. The first verse in both Mark and Matthew is almost the same with the difference of only two words: Matthew refers to the fig tree using the masculine possessive pronoun ' his' whereas Mark uses the feminine possessive pronoun ' her'. ' When his branch is yet tender...' (Matthew 24: 32) ' When her branch is yet tender...' (Mark 13: 28) The other difference in the first verse of the parable of the fig tree in Matthew and Mark is that in Matthew the word ' nigh' is used which is the archaic form of near whereas in Mark the word ' near' is used which could probably be a difference put in by later translators. '...and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:' (Matthew 24: 32) '...and putteth forth leaves, ye know

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that summer is near:' (Mark 13: 28) On the other hand in Luke's version of the parable no gender based pronoun is used, but he uses the plural ' Behold the fig tree and all the other trees' therefore eliminating the need to use a gender. Here we also find that Luke has added ' all the other trees' and so the parable does not explicitly focus on any one kind of tree although, he does name the fig tree but also points out all the other trees. These are additions made only just in Luke which are not present in any other narration of the parable. " Behold" is a rhetorical device to gain the audience's attention; it also shows that the place where Jesus sat talking to his followers had a view of the Fig tree and other trees. It further shows that he used his surroundings to provide examples for his teachings. Most of the words and phrases in Matthew and Mark are the same with a few minor differences especially in word/syntactic order e. g." 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at your doors". (Matthew 24: 33)" 29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors". (Mark 13: 29) In Matthew the stress is on ' likewise' whereas in Mark the stress is on ' ye'. ' it' refers anaphorically to the Kingdom of God/Heaven which both Matthew and Mark hint at but don't actually say in words," 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven...and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory". (Matthew 24: 30)." 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other". (Matthew 24: 31) And ' all these things' and ' these things' are also anaphoric references. They refer to the signs of the destruction of the world and the His second coming, which, were mentioned just before the parable. The budding

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the fig tree is used as a symbol for the coming of the Kingdom of God/Heaven. Only in Luke the parable explicitly states that these signs refer to the coming of the ' Kingdom of God'" 31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand". (Luke 21: 31)

Parable no. 7

Parable of the Strong Man Bound

Stylistic Analysis

Given below in the table is the Parable of the Strong Man from the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Also quoted in the table is the version of the parable from the Gospel of Thomas. Table 5.

5. 7 Stylistic Analysis of the Parable of the Strong Man

5. 7. 1 What is it?

Form: Similitude

The text under analysis is a parable of Jesus Christ. It is commonly known as the Parable of the Strong Man. This parable is a Similitude. This parable comes as an explanation of an argument Jesus is giving to the Pharisees who accuse him of casting out demons by being in league with the Satan. The parable presents a common notion that, unless a strong man is bound his house or property cannot be overtaken. The parable is aphoristic in nature and is told in the present tense. The Parable of the Strong Man is not one of the Kingdom parables which teach about the characteristics of the Kingdom of God/Heaven. This particular parable is about the power Jesus holds over

Satan. It distinguishes Jesus as being different from and more powerful than Satan the prince of the devils.

5. 7. 2 Location in the Text

The parable of the Strong Man is reported/found in all three synoptic Gospels, as well as in the apocryphal or Gnostic Gospel of Thomas. Its location in the Gospels is as follows: Gospel of Matthew 12: 29-30 Gospel of Mark 3: 27 Gospel of Luke 11: 21-23 Gospel of Thomas 35

5. 7. 2. a In Matthew

The Parable of the Strong Man in the Gospel of Matthew comes in the second half of chapter 12 in verses 29 to 30. It is part of the long argument Jesus gives when He is accused by the plotting Pharisees for casting out the devil from a man, possessed by the evil spirit, by the power of Beelzebub. In this Gospel the exact location of Jesus when He spoke this parable is not mentioned. What is mentioned is that he was healing people who came to Him with their ailments.

5. 7. 2. b In Mark

In the Gospel of Mark the Parable of the Strong Man occurs in chapter 3 verse 27. It follows the same context and accusation but there is a difference in detail of the events. Along with that approximate location of Jesus, where He spoke this parable has been given i. e. somewhere about Tyre and Sidon.

5. 7. 2. c In Luke

According to the Gospel of Luke this parable was spoken by Jesus under the same context as Matthew and Mark but other than that the details before

and after the parable are different. It is found in chapter 11 verses 21-23 in the Gospel of Luke.

5. 7. 2. d In Thomas

The parable of the Strong Man is also found in the non-canonical gospel of Thomas verse/saying 35. In the Gospel of Thomas we do not find a context.

5. 7. 3 Content

The Parable of the Strong Man contains an argument by Jesus Christ where he is countering the accusations made by the Pharisees. The Pharisees accused Jesus that he has cast out demons from the possessed person by the power of Beelzebub the chief or prince of devils. This is commonly known as the Beelzebub Controversy:" But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils". (Matthew 12: 24)" And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils". (Mark 3: 22)" But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils". (Luke 11: 15-16)

5. 7. 4 Intention/Purpose

There seems to be a two-fold purpose to this parable. The first would be to give a clear distinction that Jesus does not perform miracles by the power of the Satan, because why would Satan give anyone the power to defeat him? The verses preceding the parable argue this point:"...Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:/ And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand". (Matthew 12: 25-26)?"...How can

Satan cast out Satan?/ And if a kingdom be divided against itself , that house cannot stand./ And if the Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end". (Mark 3: 24-26)." Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth./If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" (Luke 11: 18)And the other purpose is to tell the people that if they do not believe in Him fully then they are not with him but against him. So Jesus demands a surety in faith and 100% or nothing. Here we find him issuing a challenge:" 30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me is against me scattereth abroad". (Matthew 12: 30)" 23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth". (Luke 11: 23)So we see that the verses before and after the parable develop its context and indicate the intention or purpose of the parable. Thus the intention or purpose of the parable lies outside the parable.

5. 7. 5 Audience

5. 7. 5. a Original Audience

The original audiences of Jesus Christ according to the scriptures, when he told this parable were the Pharisees and the scribes, as well as the people gathered around Jesus Christ while he performed the miracle of casting out demons from a possessed man. This particular parable was addressed to those who had questioned Jesus' authority to perform miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit:" And all the people were amazed, and said, is this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils, And Jesus knew their

thoughts, and said unto them...". (Matthew 12: 23-25)" And the scribe which came down from Jerusalem said, he hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils casteth he out devils./ And he calleth them untohim and said unto them in parables...". (Mark 3: 22)." And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils./And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven./But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them...". (Luke 11: 14-17)

5. 7. 5. b Modern Day Audience

Since this text is from the Holy Bible therefore currently the general or the majority of the audience or readers of this parable are Christians who read the Bible, or those to whom the gospel is preached. But its intended audience is all believers who are required to have complete faith in Jesus Christ and his power which is greater than that of the Satan.

5. 7. 6 Language—Figures of Speech

5. 7. 6. a Extended Metaphor

The Parable of the Strong Man is an Extended Metaphor; all the figurative images are from the same background or field. The vehicle in this parable in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark are ' the strong man', ' the assailant', ' bind', ' house, and ' goods'; and the tenor are ' Satan', ' Jesus or those blessed by God to perform the miracle of exorcism', ' the power of Holy Spirit', and ' the body of the possessed man', and ' the evils in the heart of the pan possessed' respectively. Since this parable is metaphorical in nature

therefore the link or the ground between the vehicle and the tenor, is comparison. In Luke however, we find different images than in Matthew and Mark, e. g. the strong man is like a king guarding his palace having an armour and ready for battle. There is the strong man and the stronger man, which represent Satan and Jesus respectively. The message of a power struggle is more forceful in Luke than in the other two, because in Luke war imagery and imagery of fortification is used. The result is that of victory, defeat and plunder. Words and phrases such as 'armed', 'keepeth', 'palace', 'peace', 'shall come over', 'taketh from', 'armour', 'trusted', 'divideth his spoils' give this version of the parable in Luke its war imagery. In this version the Strong man is the vehicle for Satan, and the Stronger man is the vehicle for Jesus Christ. This assumption is based on the fact that Jesus had cured the man possessed by demons. So the demons had the power to corrupt the body but Jesus exercised greater power and strength by casting the demons out.

5. 7. 6. b Aphorism

This parable starts differently in each account but the basic thing about it is that it is based on aphorism it comes off as a short wise saying.

Logical Argument:

The parable banks on it sounding logical, therefore the example of the strong man not being able to be vanquished if he is not bound is given. The beginnings of the parable using the phrases 'Or else how can one enter...' in Matthew; 'No man can enter...' in Mark; and "But when a stronger man than he shall come upon him..." in Luke do not leave much room for a counter argument.

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Shocking element:

This parable probably has a rather more shocking impact on the reader than the other parables. The reason for this is that, an intruder or burglar or robber which usually is taken to have a negative impact is associated with or stands for the positive image i. e. Jesus. This gives rise to the questions such as ' Who is the Strong man?', ' Who is the burglar?' Satan is shown to be the strong man and Jesus to be the intruder in the strong man's home or kingdom.

5. 7. 6. c Hypophora—putting up question and then answering it

In two out of the three gospels the parable poses a question. In Matthew 12: 29 and Mark 3: 27 the rhetorical technique of Hypophora has been used where the author or speaker raises and also answers the question.

Hypophora is used to gain the attention of the audience and to make them curious.

5. 7. 6. d Indicative in Nature

This parable is indicative in nature rather than imperative. It states and clarifies a situation rather than dictate what should be done.

5. 2. 8 Characteristics of the Parable Compiled

simplicity — it presents a simple picture
Law of conciseness—it has simple uncomplicated thrust with forward action i. e., it moves ahead with the development of one image
Logical—the parable banks upon logic for its effectiveness
Aphoristic—it is aphoristic in nature as it come off as a wise saying
Shocking—it is shocking for the audience or the reader to see the

good guy in the role of the intruder and to see the Satan in the role of the Strong man

Single Point—only one plot is developed leading to a single major teaching

Allegorical—allegory is used to point out the main stress, the characters of the parable can be taken to be metaphorical equivalent for the Satan and Jesus Christ.

End stress—the stress comes in the end where it shows that once the strong man is bound only then can the other wreak havoc in his domain. i. e. it is only once Jesus overpowers Satan can He disrupt Satan's domain, just as he had done so by performing the miracle of casting out the demons from the possessed man's body.

5. 7. 9 Argument

The parable is a chastising of the Pharisees and the scribes who doubted Christ's authority and questioned it. It is an explanation that whatever Jesus does is by the hand of God rather than that of the Satan. Jesus presents a convincing argument which states that if Satan gave him the power to cast out evil spirits then he would be destroying his own house, which would be illogical. And through this parable He proves that the power which Jesus possesses is much greater than that which the Satan has. And it is due to this greater strength that Jesus is able to over power the Satan and destroy his evil doings. In this case by casting out evil spirits and healing the sick and raising the dead. And this greater power is not the power that has come to Him by the Satan but it is the power of the Holy Spirit the spirit of God which gives Him the strength to defeat Satan even though he is a strong enemy. This parable acknowledges the power of Satan but it assures that there is a power stronger and greater than his.

5. 7. 10 Focus and Style

In Matthew the parable is a continuation of Jesus' explanation about not being in league with

the devil. In Mark it is reported that ' He called them unto him in parables'(3: 27). In Luke too the parable starts off as in Matthew. In all three versions of the parable the style is argumentative and narrative. It has a reasoning tone. Logic is used to prove a point. In both Matthew and Luke the parable ends with an ultimatum that if the people are not with Jesus completely than they are considered to be on the other side i. e. Jesus considers them to be against Him. In Matthew and Mark the imagery is that of an intruder entering a strong man's house, and spoiling his house; but in Luke the imagery is more detailed, vivid and grand. The images are of a ruler, his palace, war and plunder.