

Luke's Parable of the Canny Steward

E Bruce Brooks

University of Massachusetts at Amherst

SEECR / University of North Carolina (31 Oct 2014)

In the light of the Luke A/B/C formation model introduced in a previous study,¹ I here consider what is usually called the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Lk 16:1-8), its context in Lk 15-16, and a possible, and less inscrutable, Chinese antecedent.

Text. The Parable may be notably difficult,² but its *message* is nonetheless obvious (be wise about the *next* world, just as worldlings are wise about *this* world, Lk 16:8b). There follow several comments on the parable: Lk 16:9, 10-12, and 13.³ The text goes:

Lk 16:1. And he said also unto the disciples, There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and the same was accused unto him that he was wasting his goods. [2] And he called him and said unto him, What is this that I hear of thee? Render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward. [3] And the steward said within himself, What shall I do, seeing that my lord taketh away the stewardship from me? I have not strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed. [4] I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. [5] And calling to him each one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? [6] And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bond, and sit down quickly and write fifty. [7] Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. He saith unto him, Take thy bond, and write fourscore. [8a] And his lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely; [8b] for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.

[9] And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

[10] He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much. [11] If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? [12] And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

[13] No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

I will start with the interpretations (Lk 16:9-13), and then take up the parable itself.

¹Brooks **Acts-Luke**. The model is Luke A > Matthew > Luke B / Acts I > Luke C / Acts II.

²Snodgrass 401 "notoriously difficult;" Hultgren 147 "most puzzling of all."

³Dodd 30, "We can almost see here notes for three separate sermons on the parable as text." Just so. Similar comments may be found at Jeremiah 108 and Fitzmyer 2/1104f.

Luke's Interpretations

These are curiously many:

Lk 16:1-8. Parable and Internal Summary	[Unique to Lk]
Lk 16:9. Second Summary	[Unique to Lk]
Lk 16:10-12. Faithful in Mammon	~ Lk 19:11-27 [Parable of the Minae]
Lk 16:13. God vs Mammon	= Mt 6:24 [Sermon on the Mount]

The summary internal to the story, Lk 16:8b, fits it well enough: use the present to prepare for the future. Then follow three other explanations.⁴ (1) 16:9 looks like an attempt to restate this in more familiar Lukan terms: sacrifice worldly possessions to the future Kingdom. It advises making friends by mammon. (2) 16:10-12 urges being “faithful in the *unrighteous mammon*” to deserve a higher trust; (3) 16:13 *deploras* mammon. 16:9 treats mammon expediently, whereas the last two treat it negatively. The last two have contacts elsewhere, and those contacts deserve a closer look.

The Parable of the Minae (Lk 19:11-27). This is secondary to the simpler Matthean Parable of the Talents, and is thus Luke B.⁵ It follows that Lk 16:10-12, which uses a similar argument to explain the Steward parable, is also Luke B.

God and Mammon. Mt 6:24 in its Sermon on the Mount context is:

Mt 6:22. The lamp of the body is the eye: If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. [23] But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!

[24] No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

[25] Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor for your body, what ye shall put on . . .

The dualism of 6:24 (two masters) makes a pair with that of 6:23 (light and darkness). Mt 6:25 links to 6:24 (“therefore”). There is reasonable thematic continuity⁶ Davies and Allison (1/641) note that Mt 6:24 is verbally identical with Lk 16:13, except for:

Mt 6:24 οὐδεὶς	“no one”
Lk 16:13 οὐδεὶς οἰκέτης	“no house servant”

There is no other Synoptic occurrence of οἰκέτης, but it does occur in Acts I (10:7, the conversion of Cornelius), and thus, by present hypothesis, in the same text stratum as Luke B.⁷ The most likely inference is that both Lk 16:10-12 and Lk 16:13 are secondary in Luke. Then their relevance for understanding the Parable is zero. They are apparently an attempt by Luke B to clarify the Parable as it had stood in Luke A.

⁴For the utility of separating them from the parable proper, see Fitzmyer **Luke** 2/1104f.

⁵For a hilarious overview of the way Luke B has confused and spoiled this Matthean parable, see Goulder **Luke** 2/679f, summarized at Brooks **Acts-Luke** 173.

⁶Which is not to say that they need be purely Matthean. In agreement with those who see a Lk > Mt directionality in the Beatitudes, I will argue in a future study that Luke's Sermon on the Plain, *as a whole*, is ancestral to Matthew's agglomerative Sermon on the Mount.

⁷The other NT occurrences of οἰκέτης are: Rom 14:4, Lk 16:13, Ac 10:7, 1 Pet 2:18.

Luke 15-16

Here is an outline of Lk 15-16, with passages assigned to Luke B or C indented:

Lk	Mt
15:1-2. Pharisees criticize Jesus' eating with sinners	
15:3-7. The Lost Sheep	
15:8-10. The Lost Coin	
15:11-32. The Lost Son	
16:1-8. The Canny Steward	
16:9. First explanation of above	
16:10-12. Second explanation of above [B]	~ Lk 19:11-27, Mt
16:13. Third explanation of above [B]	Mt 6:24
16:14-15. Wealth-loving Pharisees rebuked	
16:16-18. On Law and Divorce	Mt 11:12-13, 5:18, 5:32
16:19-31. The Rich Man and Lazarus	
16:27-31. Extension: The brothers will not repent [C] ⁸	

The "Lost" parables (Sheep, Coin, Son) are clearly a group. Gundry has argued that Mt 21:28-32, the Parable of the Two Sons, is Matthew's remake of Luke's Lost Son.⁹ Then the Lost Son *must have been in Luke A*. So, most likely, must the group of three.

Lk 16:9, Luke A's way of explaining the Steward parable, can be grouped with the Parable itself. Lk 16:14-15, a reproof of the Pharisees "who loved money," links the money parable of the Steward and the wealth parable of Lazarus. So does Luke's 16:9, "that they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles," since the Lazarus parable (Luke A) shows Lazarus being so received. But the legal details in Lk 16:16-18 lack thematic consistency, and their Matthean connections suggest borrowing by Luke B.¹⁰ For the rest, the continuity in Luke appears to be good, and we then have in Luke A:

15:1-2. Introduction: Pharisees criticize Jesus' eating with sinners	
┌15:1-7. The Lost Sheep	
15:8-10. The Lost Coin	
└15:11-32. The Lost Son	
┌16:1-9. The Canny Steward , with Luke A's explanation	
16:10-12. Second explanation of Steward [B]	~ Lk 19:11-27 < Mt
16:13. Third explanation of Steward [B]	< Mt 6:24
16:14-15. Wealth-loving Pharisees rebuked	
16:16-18. On Law and Divorce [B]	< Mt 11:12-13, 5:18, 5:32 ¹¹
└16:19-26. The Rich Man and Lazarus	
16:27-31. Extension: The brothers will not repent [C] ⁶	

What exactly is the problem with the Steward Parable? Probably it is the master's approval of the steward's wrongdoing that baffles commentators, ancient and modern.

This brings me to a story which has a similar outline, but lacks that difficulty.

⁸For this Lazarus extension as a Luke C addition, see Brooks **Acts-Luke** 135-136.

⁹Gundry **Matthew** 5, 466f; see now also Gundry **Parable**, Brooks **Acts-Luke** 177.

¹⁰For the logic of Luke B's placement of this later material, see Brooks **Way** 162-164.

¹¹Two of these divorce passages (Mt 5:18, 5:32), and Mt 6:24 (mentioned above) are from the Sermon on the Mount. So even in this area, the Lk/Mt relationship remains bidirectional.

Jàn-gwó Tsṽ 154 (133)

The Jàn-gwó Tsṽ 戰國策 is a collection of 497 stories,¹² assembled under that title in c022 by the Hàn bibliographer Lyóu Syàng from six named sources, none of which survives or can be equated with the material found at the c0168 Mǎwángdwēi tomb.¹³ Much of the JGT (including the exploits of the interstate persuader Sū Chín, who never existed) is evidently of early Hàn date (02c), but some stories seem to be earlier, or not to relate to the favorite Hàn idea of interstate intrigue at all.

This story centers on the Chí magnate Tyén Ẃn, the Lord of M̀ng-cháng, who as a minister in the capital maintained a private army of thousands of swordsmen. He also had a fief: Sywē, located elsewhere. F́ng Sywǎn on joining Tyén Ẃn described his skills as “nothing,” but then complained of his niggardly treatment by Tyén Ẃn, and was given food and equipment like the rest,¹⁴ plus support for his mother.¹⁵ Then:

Later, the Lord of M̀ng-cháng sent out a note, asking of his followers, “Who has experience in keeping accounts, and can collect what is due me in Sywē?” F́ng Sywǎn wrote back, “I can.” The Lord of M̀ng-cháng wondered at this, and said, “Who is this?” His assistants said, “It’s the one who was singing, Long Sword, let’s go home.” The Lord of M̀ng-cháng laughed, and said, “So our guest has some abilities after all. But I have ignored him, and not yet given him an audience.” He invited and received him, and apologized, saying, “I am wearied with affairs, and beset by worries, and have accordingly grown stupid. Being swamped by state business, I have incurred guilt with Your Honor. Does Your Honor not only not take offense, but intends to collect what is due me in Sywē?” F́ng Sywǎn said, “I should like to do so.” He readied his carriage, put his attire in order, loaded the debt tallies, and set forth. As he left, he said, “When the debts are collected, what shall I buy with them before returning?” The Lord of M̀ng-cháng said, “Whatever you see that my house has little of.”

He hastened to Sywē, and had the officers summon all the people who owed debts to come and match the tallies.¹⁶ When all the tallies had been matched, he arose and feigned an order that the debts were to be considered a gift to the people. He burned the tallies, and the people acclaimed the Lord and wished him a myriad years of life.

Driving without stop he reached Chí, and in early morning sought audience. The Lord of M̀ng-cháng wondered at his speed; he dressed and received him, saying, “Are the debts all collected? How have you come so quickly?” He said, “They are all collected.” [He said], “What did you buy to bring back?”

¹²Or so; different editions differ slightly. The 12c Bàu edition (the basis for the Crump translation) seeks to recover a pre-Lyóu Syàng arrangement. The Yáu edition (also 12c, the basis for the HK concordance) is close to Lyóu Syàng. I here cite JGT stories by Crump (Bàu) number, with the HK (Yáu) number in parentheses.

¹³For the Mǎwángdwēi JGT, see Blanford **Studies**.

¹⁴This identifies a topos: the retainer who seems to lack ability but comes through in a crisis

¹⁵Gratitude for care of a mother is a recurring motif in these stories. By the time we reach this part in the story, we know that a dramatic service to Tyén Ẃn will be its climax.

¹⁶Lender and debtor each had half a broken tally; the halves were matched on settling up.

Fvng Sywān said, The Lord had said, Whatever you see that my house has little of. As your subject reckons it, the Lord's palace is full of rarities and valuables, dogs and horses teem in his stables, and beauties fill his apartments. The only thing the Lord's house has little of is loyalty.¹⁷ He has ventured to buy loyalty for the Lord." The Lord of Mvng-cháng said, "How does one buy loyalty?" He said, "The lord possesses this insignificant little Sywē, but he does not love its people as his children, and values them only as so much profit. Your subject has ventured to feign an order from the Lord that the debts were to be considered a gift to the people, and burned the tallies. The people acclaimed the Lord, and wished him a myriad years of life. This is how your servant has bought loyalty for the Lord." The Lord of Mvng-cháng was displeased, and said, "Very well. Let Your Honor now take his rest."

A full year later, the King of Chí said to the Lord of Mvng-cháng, This Lonely One¹⁸ does not dare to make the former King's ministers his ministers." The Lord of Mvng-cháng [being dismissed] then went to his country in Sywē. He was still a hundred leagues short of arriving, when the people, supporting their aged and carrying their young, went out to meet him on the highway. The Lord of Mvng-cháng turned and said to Fvng Sywān, "That Your Honor has bought loyalty for me, today I see it."

There follows an afterstory in which Fvng Sywān prepares additional safeguards for the Lord of Mvng-cháng. This takes us into the area of international intrigue which characterizes the later Jàn-gwó Tsù stories, and is most probably a Hàn elaboration. The story up to that point might be summarized as follows:

- Magnate disprizes his seemingly useless retainer.
- Retainer gets assignment, forgives debts owed to magnate *in the magnate's interest*
- Magnate is at first displeased, but *later* praises retainer's foresight

With a little garbling, of the sort natural in tavern encounters between Silk Road merchants from different places,¹⁹ we might without difficulty get something like this:

- Magnate distrusts his regular manager.
- Manager, still in office, forgives debts owed to magnate *in his own interest*
- Magnate *at once* praises manager's foresight

And the elements which have perplexed centuries of commentators are in place. No transcripts are available, but I suggest that Lk 16:1-8 is something like that garbled version, and that 16:9 is Luke A's first attempt to adapt it to themes familiar elsewhere in his teachings: themes of disregard for money and profit.

¹⁷Yì 義, a kindness that evokes obligation ("loyalty") in return; sometimes equal to "duty" (compare δικαιοσύνη). The cornerstone of a particular kind of Chinese political philosophy.

¹⁸Conventional self-designation for a hereditary ruler, whose father has necessarily died. This ruler is the successor to the one who had previously favored the Lord of Mvng-cháng.

¹⁹Bactria. "There's this tortoise, see, and there's this fast runner, see, and the tortoise has a head start, and the fast runner sets out to catch him. Will he make it?" Other guy says, "Sure." First guy says, "No. Look here: first he has to cover half the distance, then half of that . . ." Other guy says, "Gotta be something wrong with that." But he can't figure out exactly what. Back home, he tries it on his friends, and soon it has entered the higher Chinese culture as the paradox of secability. For this "Achilles" paradox and others, see Brooks **Alexandrian**.

Once Again Luke

How did this garbled story *get* to Luke? Given Luke's sympathy with the poor, his own church, which in the opinion of some was in the vicinity of Antioch, cannot have been affluent. But Antioch was on one of the great east-west trade routes. One need not be a merchant to pick up, at some remove, stories told and puzzles exchanged between merchants in the taverns.²⁰ Like Achilles and the Tortoise,²¹ the Story of the Forgiven Debts, where seeming loss is turned to advantage, is just paradoxical enough to have circulated among a secondary audience. I here suggest that someone, perhaps Luke's church leader's brother-in-law, was part of that secondary audience.

The moral of the story in Lk 16:8b is perfectly reasonable, in terms of the Christian concern to sacrifice everything for the future Kingdom. I suspect that the story, as told by someone in Luke's church, reached Luke in something like this form. Luke A, the original Luke, added 16:9 when he included the tale in his Gospel, to link it with the Lazarus parable which, *at that time*, concluded that section of his Sermon on the Way.

Later, Luke B,²² being influenced by Matthew, added two further passages, one culled from Matthew and the other echoing the point of a borrowed Matthew parable, which seemed to him to further explain the still enigmatic Parable of the Steward. Nothing gets rid of the garbling in the story as it came to Luke A, but the efforts of Luke B to make the story work better as a Christian parable may now be clearer.

Codicil: Luke 17:1-18:14

My previous paper ended with a reconstruction of Lk 9:51-11:1, the first part of Luke's Sermon on the Way. This paper has included an analysis of Lk 15:1-16:31, toward the end of that sermon. Not to waste the textual opportunity, it may be useful to attempt a reconstruction of the rest of the final portion, Lk 17:1-18:14.

First, the two concluding parables, 18:1-8 (God will listen to prayer) and 18:9-14 (be not self-righteous), with their unique introductions explaining why Jesus *told* the parables, are evidently finishing gestures; they articulate themes evident in the parts of the Sermon previously reconstructed.²³ I will take them as a pair unto themselves, a formally distinct conclusion to a Sermon otherwise based on groups of three.

²⁰In what medium did these stories pass from one culture to another? The usual guess is, in writing, but oral contact is much more likely. Cultures in contact and interested in trading with each other tend to develop a trade language, containing only a few hundred words but capable of expressing everything that trading partners need to say. A well-known example is Chinook Jargon, a trade language of the Pacific Northwest, with a wordstock drawn from Chinook, Chehalis, English, and French. For an etymological lexicon, see Shaw **Chinook**.

²¹For the 04c west-to-east transmission of scraps of Greek lore, apparently involving oral intermediation between texts at both ends, see Brooks **Alexandrian**.

²²Either the same person as Luke A but with somewhat different views, partly derived from having seen Matthew, or a different person who was very good at replicating Luke A's style. It is not necessary to decide this question for purposes of the present paper.

²³In Aesopic terms, they feature promythium and epimythium; the moral is given at both beginning and end. See Phaedrus 1/13, the Fox and The Crow (Perry 207, also 221), a retelling in literary Latin from the reign of Tiberius: contemporary with Jesus and earlier than Luke.

Luke's three "Lost" parables (Sheep, Coin, Prodigal son; Lk 15:1-32)²⁴ seem to be a self-contained triplet, perhaps rebuking the feelings of old converts who resented the fuss made over new converts. This concludes the analysis of Lk 15, and we may pick up the previous analysis at 16:1 with the Canny Steward parable. Passages attributable to Luke B or C are so marked; any Matthew parallels are listed at the right margin:

Lk	Mt
16:1-9. The Canny Steward , with Luke A's explanation	
16:10-12 [Later added explanation][B]	
16:13 [Later added explanation][B]	
16:14-15. Wealth-loving Pharisees rebuked	
16:16. The Law was until John	11:12
16:17. Not a jot will pass from the Law	5:18
16:18. Divorcing a wife makes her an adulteress	5:32
16:19-26. The Rich Man and Lazarus	
16:27-31 Extension: The brothers will not repent [C]	
17:1-2. Woe to those by whom temptations come [relocated in Luke A]	
17:3. If a brother sins, rebuke him	18:5
17:4. Forgive him seven times	18:21-22
17:5-6. If you had faith [thematically interruptive]	17:20
17:7-10. The servant must do more than is required	
17:11-19. The Ten Lepers [C]	
17:20-21. Encouragement: The Kingdom is in the midst of you	

Lk 16:1-9 is linked to Lazarus (16:19f) by the poverty theme. Lk 16:14-15 again strikes that note; the intervening 16:10-13 are intrusive.²⁵ As Fitzmyer notes, 17:5-6 comes in "abruptly." Perhaps the "sea" in which tempters are drowned in 17:1 gave Luke B a hook to hang the "sea" into which the tree of 17:6 is moved. Lk 17:7-10 resumes the theme of 17:4, one must do more than is required. Lk 17:11-19 features one of Luke C's characteristic Samaritans. Lk 17:20-21, a general encouragement, may be accepted as concluding this segment of the Luke A material.

Then comes the apocalyptic and thematically extraneous 17:22-37:

17:22. You will desire to see the Son of Man	
17:23-24. The return of the Son of Man will be conspicuous	24:26-27
17:25. But first he must suffer many things	
17:26-27. As in the days of Noah	24:37-39
17:28-30. Or of Lot, so it will be	
17:31-32. Let those flee who can; remember Lot's wife	
17:33. Who seeks to gain his life will lose it	10:39
17:34-36. Some will escape and some will not	24:40-41
17:37. Where the body is, there will the eagles be	24:28

²⁴For this group, which occupies all of Lk 15, see Brooks **Acts-Luke** 147.

²⁵Fitzmyer 2/1114, "has almost nothing to do with [v1-15];" Nolland 2/814, "no intrinsic unity;" Bovon 2/465, "Interpreters have a hard time understanding why the Gospel writer put this saying [16:16] in this spot."

Lk 17:22-37 is extraneous because this Sermon is not theological, it is not a treatise on Jesus; it is instead all about the *believer* in Jesus. Luke B here seems to have drawn on Matthew (for Noah, see Mt 24:37-39), and continued with his own Scriptural extension (the parallel of Lot). None of this material belongs in Luke A.

This gives the following reconstruction of the Luke A original. It consists of two triplets, the second ending with a final word of encouragement:

[The Dangers of Wealth]

┌16:1-9. **The Canny Steward**, with Luke A's explanation

16:14-15. Wealth-loving Pharisees rebuked

└16:19-26. **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

[Sin and Forgiveness]

┌17:1-2. Woe to those by whom temptations come

17:3-4. Need for repeated forgiveness of a brother

└17:7-10. The servant must do more than is required

17:20-21. Encouragement: The Kingdom is in the midst of you

The theology of this is interesting. Lk 17:7-10 tells us that conventional piety, which consists in the avoidance of crime (compare Lazarus' rich man, who has not exactly broken any laws, but winds up in Hell all the same) is not enough; one must *do something* to register as virtuous. Duty (like, not killing people) is a given; one must go *beyond* one's duty to get into the heavenly account book.²⁶ One must appear on the active side of that ledger. This strenuous advice makes all the more welcome what seems to be the concluding word of encouragement in 17:20-21.

We are almost there. The message is of Christian hope and Christian striving. How will Luke bring all this to a conclusion?

[Exit Portal: Two Concluding Parables]

18:1-5. **The Unjust Judge**

18:6-8. Moral: God listens to prayer

18:9-13. **Pharisee and Publican**

18:14. Moral: The humble, who have renounced all, will be exalted

These have a common context in the act of prayer. They also recapitulate the main themes of the preceding Sermon. First, despite any appearances to the contrary, God listens to prayer and will see believers through perils and sufferings. Second, those who humble themselves now will be exalted at the end. Both counsel humility and persistence in prayer. They assure believers that humility and prayer in time of trouble will take them safe to the end of the journey.

Not only is the meaning of each of these two final Parables announced in its narrative opening, it is underlined by Jesus himself (18:6-8 and 18:14, respectively). Luke is taking no chances that his main lessons will be overlooked by his audience.

Do we not see here the practiced preacher, illustrating his message at some length, but then summarizing the heart of it at the end?

²⁶For the theology of Luke, which turns out to be entirely a matter of transactional ethics, see his Sermon on the Plain, Luke 6:20-49, easily the least read passage in the New Testament..

Here is the end of the Sermon, Lk 15:1-18:4, as so far reconstructed:

[Joy at Recovering a Sinner]

- 15:1-2. Introduction: Pharisees criticize Jesus' eating with sinners
- ┌15:3-7. The Lost Sheep
- └15:8-10. The Lost Coin
- └15:11-32. **The Lost Son**

[The Dangers of Wealth]

- ┌16:1-9. **The Canny Steward**, with Luke A's explanation
- └16:14-15. Wealth-loving Pharisees rebuked
- └16:19-26. **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

[Sin and Forgiveness]

- ┌17:1-2. Woe to those by whom temptations come
- └17:3-4. Need for repeated forgiveness of a brother
- └17:7-10. The servant must do more than is required
- 17:20-21. Encouragement: The Kingdom is in the midst of you

[Exit Portal: Two Concluding Parables in Aesopic Form]

- ┌18:1-5. **The Unjust Judge**
- └18:6-8. Moral: God listens to prayer
- ┌18:9-13. **Pharisee and Publican**
- └18:4. Moral: The humble, who have renounced all, will be exalted

For the middle of the Sermon, and for a final overview of the Sermon in its entirety, see Brooks **Way**, the third study in this series.

Works Cited

- Yumiko Fukushima Blanford. Studies of the "Zhanguo zonghengjia shu." UMI 1989
 E Bruce Brooks. Acts-Luke. Alpha v1 (2017) 143-157
 E Bruce Brooks. Alexandrian Motifs in Chinese Texts. SPP #96 (1999)
 E Bruce Brooks. Luke's Sermon on the Way. Alpha v1 (2017) 167-179
 J I Crump. Chan-kuo Ts'e. 1970, 2ed Michigan 1996
 J I Crump Jr. Intrigues. Michigan 1964
 W D Davies and Dale C Allison Jr. The Gospel According to Saint Matthew. 3v Clark
 1988, 1991, 1997
 C H Dodd. The Parables of the Kingdom. 3ed Scribner 1936
 Burton Scott Easton. Luke 17:20-21, An Exegetical Study. AJT v16 #2 (1912) 276-283
 Joseph A Fitzmyer. The Gospel According to Luke. 2v Doubleday 1970, 1985
 Michael D Goulder. Luke: A New Paradigm. 2v Sheffield 1989
 Robert H Gundry. Matthew. Eerdmans 1982
 Robert H Gundry. Matthew's Parable of the Two Sons. Alpha v1 (2017) 133-135
 Arland Hultgren. The Parables of Jesus. Eerdmans 2000
 Joachim Jeremias. The Parables of Jesus. 8ed 1970; 2rev Scribner 1972
 Ben Edwin Perry. Babrius and Phaedrus [Loeb]. Havard 1965
 B E Perry. The Origin of the Epimythium. TPAPA v71 (1940) 391-5419
 George C Shaw. The Chinook Jargon and How to Use It. 1909; Isha 2013
 Klyne R Snodgrass. Stories with Intent. Eerdmans 2008