

Paleozoic and Cenozoic  
Rev. George M. Schwab, Ph.D.  
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Matt 13:52

(NA 27<sup>th</sup> ed.)

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς·  
διὰ τοῦτο πᾶς γραμματεὺς  
μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν  
ὅμοιος ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδεσπότῃ,  
ὅστις ἐκβάλλει ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ  
καινὰ καὶ παλαιά.

(NKJV)

Then He said to them,  
“Therefore every scribe  
instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven  
is like a householder  
who brings out of his treasure  
things new and old.”

“Scribe” relates to English “grammarian.” In line 3, see “Matthew” in the verb “instructed.” It relates to discipline, or being a disciple. The planet Uranus is a Latinized rendition of the Greek *ouranos*, “heaven.” Line 4, “is like,” see the combining form *homo-*, as in homogenous or homonym. NKJV skips *anthropos* because it is redundant. “Householder” is *oiko-despotes*, the despot of a house. Line 5 has *ekballō*, which combines “out of” with *ballō*, “to throw,” as in ball or ballistic, thus “cast out,” or “bring out.” See “thesaurus” in Greek “treasury.” Finally in line 6, *kainos* means “new,” as in the combining form *ceno-*, Cenozoic (“new life”). *Palaios* is “old” (like Paleozoic, “old life”). Whew!

Like everyone, I have passed through a number of stages in my life, and through my adult years I have usually been able to identify some passage of Scripture that is particularly relevant to supply me with meaning and definition. In my old life, after graduating Drexel with an engineering degree, getting a job, and married, my wife conceived our first child. I began to think of child-rearing as the ultimate discipleship, the great calling of God to me. Psalm 127 was particularly definitive: God builds the household (marriage isn’t just between husband and wife) and also it was obviously God’s will that we had children. In the words of Mal 2:15, “What does God desire but godly offspring,

so take heed to yourselves and let none of you prove faithless.” I was in the business of raising up godly offspring unto God, as he built my house.

But I had little job satisfaction at work. I found myself wanting to know the things that seminarians knew. I was in a spiritual rut, and hungered and thirsted for meatier stuff than the sermons at church, Sunday school, or the books written for a popular audience. So I became a student once again.

For ten years my theme verse gradually transitioned from focus on raising godly offspring to using my gifts and talents and education in God’s church and for his people. In John 14:2, Jesus promised that our Father’s business had many job opportunities and he had gone to prepare a career for me. Eventually, the new life that Jesus readied for me turned out to be Erskine Theological Seminary. For 19 years, this is where the Lord has wanted me.

Since it has become clear that I have found where I am supposed to be, the promise that Jesus would give me a role in his kingdom is not as pressing and urgent anymore. More and more, the theme verse for my new life has become Matt 13:52. The Bible is a treasure chest, and a good teacher of the Word is adept at bringing out of that chest treasures both new and old.

I try in my lectures to accomplish both. I seek to affirm the age-old gospel and paleo-traditions of the church, while at the same time I try to surprise my students with ceno-freshness and newness throughout the Bible. This is an exciting task, and if I were to frame a verse and hang it up in my office (in Greek of course) today it would be Matt 13:52.

I wonder in what ways has the Bible been definitive for you? What have been your key verses? Do you have one now?

Something to think about for the new year.