

detail is eliminated; there are few actors and usually only one scene. Characterization and emotion are directly relevant to the plot. Vividness is provided by concrete details, direct discourse, and thoughts spoken aloud. The listener's interest is aroused by questions invoking his judgment, by advice, suspense, surprise and mystery. His memory is activated by the parable's vividness, parallelism and repetition. Because he was interesting, even Jesus' enemies listened with attention.

In this paper, we have space to examine only three features Jesus used: involvement, surprise and mystery.

## **Involvement**

Naturally, the intrinsic interest of a story tends to involve the listeners. Jesus makes use of everyday images of home life, society and agriculture with which his audiences were familiar. Yet he does so in such a way that the stories are not boring, trite or commonplace. He also makes considerable use of second person constructions to pull the listener into the story<sup>16</sup>, sometimes giving advice, sometimes asking questions, and occasionally inviting imaginative empathy.

*Advice.* In the parable of the Defendant (5), Jesus advises his audience to make friends with their accuser before their (hopeless) case comes to trial. In the Fig Tree Heralds Summer (36), he tells his disciples to learn how to recognize an approaching event by the signs which precede it. In the rather cryptic parable of Fire, Salt and Peace (43), his disciples are urged to have salt in themselves. At the end of the Good Samaritan (46), Jesus advises the lawyer to "go and do likewise." We are urged to imitate the Dishonest Steward (59) in making friends for ourselves by means of the unrighteous mammon. In general, the advice is part of the parable when the perspective involves no change of direction, and part of the application when the standpoint is changed. Other parables employing advice are (6, 7, 37, 44, 49, 51, 52 and 61), not counting a number (e.g., 10, 17) with advice in the near context.

*Questions.* To draw the audience into the parable, Jesus asks questions, sometimes rhetorical, sometimes actually seeking a verbal response.

The parable of the Son Asking Bread (8) rhetorically asks the men of the audience how they would respond to their son's request. In the Sons of the Bridechamber (11), John's disciples are asked to judge whether fasting is appropriate for wedding attendants at the festivities. In (54) Jesus asks the crowd if they would start building a tower without estimating its cost and checking their own resources. In (61) he asks the disciples how they would treat their slave at dinnertime, as guest or servant? Other examples of rhetorical questions occur in (14, 15, 19, 20, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 38, 43, 47, 55, 56, 57 and 62).

Other questions asked by Jesus actually received verbal responses. Which of the two sons (31), asks Jesus, did the will of the father? In the parable of the wicked Tenants (32), Matthew reports that some in the audience answered Jesus' question concerning what the owner will do when he learns the tenants have killed his son. Likewise, Simon the