
Introduction


43ος ἄρα ἐστιν ὁ ἅπατος δοῦλος [καὶ] φρόνμοις ἐν κατάστασι τὸ κόρης ἐπὶ τής χειροτεχίας αὐτοῦ τῷ δόθην [στειχή], ἐκ τῆς καθί συναρπάζεται αὐτῶν, ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐν τῇ καθί συναρπάζεται. θαύμας ἐκ τῆς καθί συναρπάζεται τῷ δόθην, διότι ἐκ τῆς καθί συναρπάζεται αὐτῶν, ὃς ἐλθὼν ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἡ ὁμοίῳ ἀποκρίνεται αὐτῶν ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἡ ὁμοίῳ ἀποκρίνεται αὐτῶν ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἡ ὁμοίῳ ἀποκρίνεται αὐτῶν ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἡ ὁμοίῳ ἀποκρίνεται αὐτῶν ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἡ ὁμοίῳ ἀποκρίνεται αὐτῶν ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἡ ὁμοίῳ ἀποκρίνεται αὐτῶν ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἡ ὁμοίῳ ἀποκρίνεται αὐτῶν ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἡ ὁμοίῳ ἀποκρίνεται αὐτῶν ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἡ ὁμοίῳ ἀποκρίνεται αὐτῶν ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἡ ὁμοίῳ ἀποκρί

Exposing the seam

Even from a superficial reading of the parable it is immediately evident that, on the one hand, verses 42–44 belong together, and on the other, verses 45–46 belong together. A closer look at the text supports such an intuitive observation. There are a number of textual indications that betray a redactional seam between verses 44 and 45.

A double ending

The first and most obvious indication of a redactional seam between Q 12:42–44 and Q 12:45–46 is the parable’s idiosyncratic double ending. The parable of the loyal and wise slave is distinctive in featuring two possible outcomes: one positive and one negative (cf. Allison 2004:439; Donahue 1988:98; Etchells 1998:110; Taylor 1989:141; Valantasis 2005:168). Without attempting to address redactional development, Fleddermann (2005:628, 633, 635) tellingly labels verses 45–46 ‘the negative half of the parable’. The only other parable of Jesus to also feature both a positive and a negative outcome is the parable of the wedding feast in Luke 12:35–38 (Kirk 1998:234). With both parables, featuring a double ending is evidence of redactional development (cf. Funk 2006:30). It is only logical to assume that the second ending represents redactional elaboration, not the first ending. In addition, the artificiality of featuring the same character for two opposite endings supports not only the proposal of a seam between verses 44 and 45, but also the claim that the second ending is most probably secondary (cf. Blomberg 1990:191; Bock 1996:1180; Crossan 1974:22; Jeremias [1958] 1963:55–56; Luz 2005:221, 222; Marshall 1978:542; see Funk 1974:53–54). In being disloyal rather than loyal, and reckless rather than prudent, the second character does...
not fit the criteria established by the opening question, but
contradicts them by veering off in a different direction (cf.
Nolland 2005:998). As Valantasis (2005:169) correctly notes:
‘A switch has taken place in the narrative.’

Small forms
One cannot help but notice that the first half of the parable
is made up of a series of small forms. Each of the first three
verses qualifies technically as a separate literary small form
Verse 42 introduces the parable with a rhetorical question
a macarism or beatitude (Bock 1996:1179; Crossan 1983:59;
Luz 2005:221; Nolland 2005:998; Scott 1989:211). Verse 44 is
an amen saying that functions both to buttress the beatitude
in the previous verse, and to conclude the train of thought
obvious contradiction to Q 12:42–44, verses 45 and 46 harbour
no literary small forms whatsoever. The lack of small form
indicators in Q 12:45–46 is certainly suggestive of redactional
invention. What is more, this shortage strongly suggests that
Q 12:45–46 was added to Q 12:42–44, as opposed to the other
way around.

Literary emphasis
That the pericope should be dissected between verses 44 and
45 is further suggested by the fact that verse 44 features no less
than two literary emphases, namely the exclamation ‘amen’
(αμὴν) and the phrase ‘I tell you’ (λέγω ὑμῖν). The combination
of these two exclamations strongly suggests that verse 44
was the original ending of Q 12:42–44 (cf. Allison 2004:440).
The phrase ‘I tell you’ is particularly telling, since it is often
used in Q to conclude a pericope.3 Although intended more
as a synchronic than a diachronic observation, Fleddermann
(2005:636) agrees that the latter phrase ‘brings the first half of
the parable to a close.’ If Q 12:42–44 originally ended at verse
44, it is justified to regard Q 12:45–46 as a secondary addition.

Narrative mode
If emphatic exclamations betray verse 44 as the original
conclusion of Q 12:42–44, a shift in narrative mode reveals
a new beginning at verse 45 (cf. Allison 2004:441). Whereas
verses 42–44 are narrated by an omniscient, third-person
narrator, verse 45 introduces the protagonist’s internal dialogue
through first-person narration (Scott 1989:211). The phrase
‘says in his heart’ (ἐὰν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ) represents a
familiar Semitic idiom that qualifies whatever follows as

internal dialogue (Allison 2004:441; Bock 1996:1181; Marshall
1978:542). The change in narrative mode is therefore quite
deliberate.

Redundant re-identification of character
The re-identification of characters in verses 45–46 is also
fairly incriminating. The opening question introduces the
main characters as a ‘master’ (κύριος) and an appointed
‘slave’ (δοῦλος). In order to link the subsequent logion
with the preceding question, these characters are once
again identified specifically as ‘that slave’ (ὁ δοῦλος ἐκείνος)
and ‘his master’ (ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ) in verse 43 (Fleddermann
2005:636). Such linkage is necessary to indicate continuation
of the narrative and argument, although it might also be
an indication of redactional development at an earlier
between verses 42 and 43 established, and the characters
appropriately identified, the author is free to reference both
main characters in verse 44 through a verb suffix (καταστήσει
and two personal pronouns (καταστήσει & αὐτόν) (Fleddermann
2005:636). There is no longer any need to identify the
characters specifically as ‘master’ (κύριος) or ‘slave’ (δοῦλος).
One would therefore expect the author to continue using
only verb suffixes and personal pronouns when referencing
these characters in the rest of the parable. Yet, verse 45 re-
identifies the servile character unnecessarily as ‘that slave’
(ὁ δοῦλος ἐκείνος), and verse 46 re-identifies the slaveholder
unnecessarily as ‘the master of that slave’ (ὁ κύριος τοῦ δοῦλο
ἐκείνου) (cf. Fleddermann 2005:637). These re-identifications
seem like a deliberate, albeit artificial, literary attempt to
connect these characters with the ones in verses 42–44, and
to prevent confusion between the two individual characters
themselves. Particularly noticeable is the repeated use of the
demonstrative pronoun (ἐκείνος) and the wordiness of the
phrase ‘the master of that slave’ (ὁ κύριος τοῦ δοῦλο ἐκείνου)
(cf. Taylor 1989:140). Besides illuminating the seam between
verses 44 and 45, these features of Q 12:45–46 betray an
obsession with literary exactitude and lucidity. Such fixation
strongly suggests that a redactor was responsible for these
two verses.

On one condition
Verse 45 begins with both the contrastive conjunction
‘but’ (δὲ) and the conditional conjunction ‘if’ (ἐὰν), thereby
introducing Q 12:45–46 with a contrastive conditional clause
(cf. Fleddermann 2005:628, 633, 635). Semantically, this
beginning to verse 45 serves to indicate that the appointed
slave also has a second option, which is in some way
opposite to the first one (Bock 1996:1180–1181; cf. Crossan
1974:22). It is strange, however, that the preceding verses
do not also feature a conditional sentence, introduced by ‘if’
(ἐὰν). Whenever a narrative or argument features a choice
with two options, each with its own consequences, it is
customary to present the first option as ‘if ... then’, and the
second option as ‘but if ... then’. The lack of a conditional
clause in the first half of the parable therefore suggests that
the author of Q 12:42–44 did not wish to introduce a choice
with two options at all, even though the existence of such a choice is implied (cf., however, Luz 2005:222; Marshall 1978:540). The author of verses 42–44 wanted to focus solely on a singular positive action with its consequences, and had no intention of explicitly mentioning or describing a second option or its consequences. It is therefore safe to assume that the material introduced by ‘but if’ (τὸν δὲ), meaning verses 45–46, comprise a secondary expansion of the parable.

**The doubling of narrative elements**

Not only the existence of a redactional seam between Q 12:44 and Q 12:45, but also the probability that Q 12:45–46 represents redactional elaboration, are further suggested by the fact that verses 45–46 double the elements of verses 42–44. The singular action in verse 42 of feeding the slaves is paralleled by the two actions in verse 45 of keeping improper company and beating fellow slaves. Similarly, the single reward in verse 44 of being appointed over everything is mirrored by the two punishments in verse 46 of being ‘cut in two’ (διστροφήμαι) and receiving an inheritance with the faithless. The text-critical principle according to which the shorter reading is more likely to be original (lectio brevior) could here be applied to the redaction of Q 12:42–46 (cf. Brotzman 1994:128).

The redactional acts of multiplying the desired conduct of verse 42 into two separate accusations in verse 45, and doubling the single reward into two separate forms of punishment, were likely intended to shift the parable’s emphasis, and reallocate its focus, to the second half (cf. Blomberg 1990:192; Hunter 1971:12; Taylor 1989:146, 149, 150; see Donahue 1988:98–99). In the process, the spotlight was moved away from encouragement and motivation towards accusation and condemnation (cf. Blomberg 1990:191; Kloppenborg 2000:141). This tactic was highly effective, convincing not only ancient authors (like Matthew), but also modern scholars (like Jacobson 1992:197; Taylor 1989:146, 149, 150) that the parable’s emphasis and meaning are both to be found in the parable’s second half (cf. Allison 2004:441; Blomberg 1990:192; Hunter 1971:12; see Donahue 1988:98–99).

**An interpolation**

The reference in verse 43 to the master’s return with the phrase ‘upon coming’ (ἐλθὼν) is both syntactically awkward and semantically unnecessary in the context of the statement as a whole (cf. Kloppenborg 1995:293–294). It is possible, if not likely, that the main redactor was responsible for adding the word ‘upon coming’ (ἐλθὼν) into verse 43 in order to link the master’s return in the first ending with the master’s return in the second ending. It might be relevant to the present discussion that Luke added the exact same lexis in verse 45 (Bock 1996:1182; Feddermann 2005:628; Marshall 1978:542; Nolland 2005:998). That ἐλθὼν is a secondary intrusion into verse 43 is not a given, though, since the presence of this word is explicable (albeit somewhat redundant) on the literal level of the narrative (cf. Dodd [1935] 1958:159). Even so, the presence of ἐλθὼν in verse 43 does seem to advance the agenda of the main redactor. If ἐλθὼν were indeed introduced into Q 12:42–44 by the same hand that authored Q 12:45–46, it would provide strong evidence that the first half of the parable preceded the second half in the literary evolution of this pericope.

**Technical style**

A related indication of the disunity between Q 12:42–44 and Q 12:45–46 is the technical style of each. Whereas Q 12:42–44 is syntactically succinct and compressed, Q 12:45–46 is syntactically elaborate and convoluted (see Feddermann 2005:635–636). The former is reminiscent of not only Semitic style and syntax, but also the general style of the historical Jesus. Conversely, the latter is characteristic of not only Greek style and syntax, but also scribal activity in general. Like the aforementioned doubling of narrative elements, the syntactical disparity between the two halves of the parable tenders for a redactional application of the text-critical principle of lectio brevior. To be clear, the foregoing argumentation is not a claim that the first half of the parable reaches back to the historical Jesus, but rather that the first half of the parable is much more likely to form part of Q’s inherited tradition than the second half. On the one hand, the authenticity of Q 12:42–44 is neither advocated nor denied. On the other hand, it is being argued that Q 12:45–46 is highly unlikely to be authentic.

**Parallelism**

In its final form, the formal arrangement of Q 12:45–46 is highly suggestive of redactional intent. Verse 45 forms an antithetic parallelism with verse 43 by describing the opposite behaviour, and verse 46 forms an antithetic parallelism with verse 44 by spelling out the opposite consequences (Bock 1996:1181; Crossan 1974:22; 1983:59–60; Scott 1989:211; cf. Allison 2004:439; Luz 2005:221; see Taylor 1989:141–144). Such literary arrangement seems like a deliberate attempt to unify a pericope that is intrinsically multipart.

**Tone**

A change in tone is noticeable when the two halves of the parable are compared. We already saw that Feddermann (2005:628, 633, 635) divides the parable into a ‘positive’ and a ‘negative’ half. Q 12:42–44 is wholly and highly positive, not only in its ultimate conclusion of a significant reward, but also in its descriptions of the characters and their conduct. The appointed slave is described as ‘wise’, ‘loyal’ and ‘blessed’. His main task to feed fellow slaves on time is also decidedly positive. The latter would have been particularly true in the estimation of ancient audiences from lower socio-economic strata. By contrast, the tone of Q 12:45–46 is intrinsically negative. The slave is imagined as keeping questionable...
company and resorting to physical violence against his fellow slaves. His double punishment is extremely severe. To be sure, the tone of Q 12:45–46 is more than just ‘negative’; it is manifestly threatening. On the level of interpretation, verse 45 was probably intended as an accusation, while verse 46 was probably intended as a threat. This explains why some scholars have described the whole parable as threatening in tone (see e.g. Kloppenborg 1987:148–154). It would seem, though, that this description applies only to the second half of the parable. The accusation of verse 45 reveals the conditions under which the threat of verse 46 would be applicable. The rest of the parable is wholly and intrinsically unthreatening.

An imperfect analogy
Few scholars would disagree that Q 12:45–46 references the final judgement. Despite the apparentness of the parable’s apocalyptic application, its artificial nature protrudes beneath the surface. In the process of adding verses 45–46 to the parable, the redactor created an imperfect analogy for apocalyptic judgement, especially if compared to the rest of Q. Regarding both reward and punishment, life carries on as normal for everyone except the appointed slave. This eventuality indicates that the parable does not imagine a dramatic cessation of the space-time continuum. In both the cases of reward and punishment, the consequences take place within the narrative world of the story. The narrative world is not discontinued or drastically changed. This feature differs entirely from the descriptions of apocalyptic cessation and finality in other Q texts, like Q 3:7 and Q 17:27. The parable does not seem to imagine a ‘next world’, whether this-worldly or other-worldly, but rather a change occurring within this world for the Jewish leaders only (cf. Funk 2006:46, 71). Such a description of the apocalyptic end is fundamentally at odds with the rest of Q.

Additional clues of elaboration
Five additional clues point to the secondary nature of verses 45–46. The first is the general tendency of textual redactors in the early church to affix the most extensive and significant expansions to the end of Jesus’ parables, generally making only smaller and lesser alterations to the beginning and middle of these parables (Jeremias [1958] 1963:103; 1966:81; cf. Crossan 1979:31; Funk 2006:30). The second is the fact that verses 42–44 are semantically independent, meaning that they could stand alone without any loss of meaning, whereas verses 45–46 are dependent upon the preceding material for the generation of its meaning. The third is the intertextual parallel with the story of Joseph in Genesis 39 (see Allison 2000:87–92; Luz 2005:223–224), which coheres perfectly with verses 42–44, but is diametrically contradicted by verses 45–46, since Joseph was neither guilty of the misdeeds described in verse 45, nor punished in any way after becoming the Pharaoh’s personal slave. The fourth is the near-perfect fit of the parable to the situation of the early church, which, upon closer inspection, relates solely to verses 45–46 (e.g. Marshall 1978:534; cf. Funk & Hoover 1993:253, 342; Scott 1989:211; see Bock 1996:1171). Finally, a number of scholars have noticed the verbal and conceptual similarities between the Son of Man saying in Q 12:40 and the second ending of the parable in Q 12:46 (e.g. Kloppenborg 1987:150; 1995:293; Luz 2005:223). Either the wording of verse 40 was modified to match the parable’s second ending, or the wording of verse 46 was modified to fit the content of the Son of Man logion. A third possibility is that both verses were constructed at the same time to correspond to each other. Whatever the case, the similarity in wording between these two verses is suggestive of editorial activity and organisation (cf. Kloppenborg 1995:293).

Findings
A rather strong case has been made for the existence of a redactional seam between verses 44 and 45 of the parable in Q 12:42–46. In the process, an equally strong case has been made for viewing the second half of this parable (Q 12:45–46) as a redactional addition to its first half (Q 12:42–44). The parable’s second half is extremely unlikely to be authentic, since it cannot possibly stand on its own and remain comprehensible, amongst other reasons. The authenticity of the parable’s first half is an open question, depending to a large extent on how one interprets this earlier version of the parable. It remains now to determine the implications of these findings for our understanding of Q’s redaction.

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5Verse 40: ‘the Son of Man comes at an hour you do not expect’ (ἵνα ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχεται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ᾗ οὐ δοκεῖτε ὥρᾳ ἐρχεται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου); verse 46: ‘the master of that slave will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know’ (ὅτε ὁ κύριος τοῦ δούλου ἐκείνου ἐκείνῳ ἐρχεται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ᾗ οὐ δοκεῖτε καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ᾗ οὐ γινώσκετε).


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