

1. I first hit the word in 1935, when my Greek professor had me memorize "paradigms," inflexional models of verbs, nouns, pronouns. Next, in 1941, when my U. of Chicago science friends were spouting "paradigms," many of them using such to produce the first nuclear chain reaction. And next, that same year ['41] I hit upon the word in Dibelius' FROM TRADITION TO GOSPEL, in which "paradigms" are certain sermon illustrations in the gospels ["a short illustrative notice or story of an event," often concluded with a saying of Jesus--and thus the early Christian preacher's prime "material"]. Finally, in recent literary criticism under the influences of linguistic analysis, existential analysis, and structuralism, the term is popping up as a tool for observing patterns or forms [*Gestalten, Gattungen*] or even repeated examples in written and spoken language--and thus the closest current word "model," from the Lat. diminutive for a "small measure," as a builder's blueprint is the building in parvo and indeed may sire many identical buildings. ...imitation or guidance being the fundamental notion. [Of the two, "pattern" implies imitation and "example," guidance.] ["Ideal" heightens "example" and "exemplar."]. . . . Suggested exercise: Look up "para-" in your English dictionary, then notice, following, the English words with this Greek preposition as prefix. Reflect on the fact that the basic notion, "beside" or "alongside," is comparative: a "parable" is a story thrown "alongside" of life to illumine, judge, inspire, etc. Thus a "paradigm" is a word-image-idea set "alongside" of some person-time-idea-event-place to point up some abstraction, generalization, truth, reality. [In each case, the italic term translates the Greek syllable after "para-."] [Wd. not in NT; stem, only twice, and both negative.]

2. Now, "pointing up" something delimits attention: paying attention to somebody-something --given our spatiotemporal attention span--involves not attending to other persons or matters (setting aside, for this purpose, the phenomenon of multiple attention). [Of this, the biblical heritage makes much in monotheism and monogamy.] Some hermeneuts [interpreters] use the term "language-world" to point positively to the life-context [*Sitz in Leben*] a word-image-idea implies, and negatively to the fact that each particular language [while positively freeing us to meaning-within-language-world] (a) limits how "the world" is seen and (b) commits one to a particular way of addressing mystery: a language both helps and hinders communication (Gen.11), whereas language itself is a pure potential of self-consciousness and of communication ["the word...the Word"].

3. The simplest structure of "paradigm" is the single word or phrase, and this series of thinksheets sets out twenty of these in the biblical language-world. I hope you will find these useful for private devotion and meditation and study, and also for your ministry [teaching, preaching, counseling, writing].

4. Martin Buber is helpful here [287fJBLJune77]. In his interpretive method, the first level was style, and the essence of style was seen as the oral habit of orbiting around a sun-*Leitwort* ("lead-word" or "key-word," sometimes "catch-word"--though the solar image is mine). [Just remember a few occasions on which you did this--e.g., a sermon on "justice."] At the second level, traditions develop. Yesterday [22Aug77] I ran some water down gardens, and it branched out into streamlets: tradition becomes traditions, what Buber called "tendencies" [*Tendenzen*], each having its own development and therefore its own history. Now, when you want to speak of the tradition itself, you have to have a way to overarch the several traditions; and that's Buber's third level of interpretation, *Synthese* (synthesizing the traditions into an overall history of the faith, including a sense of the faith-process in the Bible as reflecting the living reality of the people of God through the generations and centuries down to our time and commitment).

5. Well, what twenty biblical "paradigms," in this word-or-phrase sense, do you think comprehends the breadth and depth of biblical faith and life and hope? Try a list! You'll find the exercise humiliating and exhilarating! I warrant you'll come to the paradoxical conclusion that you know both more and less about the Bible than you'd thought. Now, think of how you may check out your listing. Immediately you're up against "the problem of translations," the fact that you're groping back through a handful of English words to one Hebrew or Greek word; but you could use Young's ANALYTICAL CONCORDANCE to transcend that problem--though there you're hung with 1611 English; so go next to the brief concordance at the rear of a cheap ABS RSV; and next,....