**St Patrick's**
**Pontifical University**
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# "DO YOU SEE THIS WOMAN?" (LUKE 7:44):

# ENCOUNTERS WITH THE LUKAN JESUS AS WINDOWS ON THE NARRATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE THIRD GOSPEL

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**A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Theology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor in Theology**

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**June 2022**

For my parents and brother
in the eternal homes,
εἰς τὰς αἰνωνίους σκηνάς
(Luke 16:9)

**Acknowledgements**

Sincere thanks to my dissertation director Professor Séamus O' Connell for his support, guidance, and encouragement during the course of this work. His expertise, precision, creativity, and good humour made the undertaking enjoyable, challenging, and rewarding.

A special thanks to all in St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth for making my time there so worthwhile and pleasant.

Finally, I thank my friends (including the four-legged) for their support and encouragement during the course of this study.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AB | Anchor Bible |
| *ABD* | *Anchor Bible Dictionary.* |
| *ABR* | *Australian Biblical Review* |
| ABRL | Anchor Bible Reference Library |
| AcBib | Academia Biblica |
| ANS | Ancient Narrative Supplements |
| ANTC | Abingdon New Testament Commentary |
| AYBRL | Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library |
| BDAG | *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* |
| *BBR* | *Bulletin for Biblical Research* |
| BDF | *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* |
| BECNT | Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament |
| *Bib* | *Biblica* |
| *BibInt* | *Biblical Interpretation* |
| BibInt | Biblical Interpretation Series |
| BNTC | Black's New Testament Commentaries |
| *BTB* | *Biblical Theology Bulletin* |
| CahRB | Cahiers de la Revue Biblique |
| *CBQ* | *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* |
| *ChrCent* | *Christian Century* |
| *CurTM* | *Currents in Theology and Mission* |
| *DBSJ* | *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* |
| *EncJud* | *Encyclopedia Judaica* |
| *ExpTim* | *Expository Times* |
| FCNTECW | Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings |
| FF | Foundations and Facets |
| *Hen* | *Henoch* |
| HdO | Handbuch der Orientalistik |

| | |
|---|---|
| *HTR* | *Harvard Theological Review* |
| IBC | Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching |
| *JBL* | *Journal of Biblical Literature* |
| *JFSR* | *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* |
| *JRelS* | *Journal of Religious Studies* |
| *JRS* | *Journal of Roman Studies* |
| JSJ | *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods* |
| JSOTSup | Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series |
| *JSNT* | *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* |
| JSNTSup | Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series |
| *Int* | *Interpretation* |
| L&N | *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* |
| LCL | Loeb Classic Library |
| LNTS | The Library of New Testament Studies |
| NCB | New Century Bible |
| NICNT | New International Commentary on the New Testament |
| NIGTC | New International Greek Testament Commentary |
| *NovT* | *Novum Testamentum* |
| NETS | *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, Electronic Edition |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version |
| NTL | New Testament Library |
| *NTS* | *New Testament Studies* |
| OTM | Old Testament Message |
| *RB* | *Revue Biblique* |
| RBS | Resources for Biblical Study |
| RMet | Review of Metaphysics |
| SBT | Studies in Biblical Theology |
| SBL | Society of Biblical Literature |
| *SCE* | *Studies in Christian Ethics* |
| *Semeia* | *Semeia* |
| *SJT* | *Scottish Journal of Theology* |
| *SLJT* | *St. Luke's Journal of Theology* |

| | |
|---|---|
| SNTSMS | Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series |
| SP | Sacra Pagina |
| TPINTC | TPI New Testament Commentaries |
| *VC* | *Vigiliae Christianae* |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary |
| *WW* | *Word and World* |
| *ZNW* | *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* |

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION, REVIEW, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND METHODOLOGY

## 1.1 Introduction

This dissertation aims to explore aspects of the anthropology of Luke's Gospel, where anthropology is understood as "the study of what it means to be a human being."[1] It asks the question, What is Luke's view of the person and how does he narrate it? Given the vast possibilities of this area of research and the ongoing development of New Testament methodologies (or hermeneutics), a single dissertation can no longer provide a comprehensive account of the many aspects of anthropology. Instead, the study seeks to make a contribution to this field of inquiry by considering some of the diverse ways in which the Lukan author depicts humans (that is, the characters in the Gospel's narrative), their relationship to one another, and to the Lord Jesus, with whom they interact in the narrative world.[2] Because the

[1] Dermot A. Lane, "Anthropology in the Service of Hope," *The Furrow* 69 (2018): 8–16, here 8. There are various anthropologies: theological, philosophical, physical, biological, feminist, cultural and social, historical, cognitive, and evolutionary. See Eve-Marie Becker, Jan Dietrich, and Bo Kristian Holm, "What is Human? Theological Encounters with Anthropology: Introduction to the Volume," in *"What is Human?" Theological Encounters with Anthropology*, eds. Eve-Marie Becker, Jan Dietrich, and Bo Kristian Holm (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 11–20, here 15. Theological anthropology is the discipline "that reflects theologically on what it means to be human." See Marc Cortez and Michael P. Jensen, "Sources and Methods," in *T&T Clark Reader in Theological Anthropology*, eds. Marc Cortez and Michael P. Jensen (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 7–71, here 8. The current study is situated within the broad category of theological anthropology. This is because Luke's consideration of human existence is illuminated by his perception of the claims of the early Christian community about Christ. He, like the other evangelists, "wrote from a post-Easter perspective and interpreted the pre-Easter events" from that viewpoint. See Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 26.

[2] "Luke" is the customary name for the anonymous author of the Third Gospel. In narrative theory, he is more correctly described as the Lukan *implied author*. The implied author will be discussed at §1.4.2. There is a historical and cultural assumption that the implied author is male and will be referred to as "he" in the dissertation. The same will apply for the *narrator*. On the narrator, see §1.4.4.3.

Gospel is a narrative text, its anthropology is necessarily a narrative one; it will therefore be examined by means of a narrative-critical approach. In addition, since the Gospel of Luke is long and features many interesting characters, the focus of the study must be narrowed. The dissertation therefore undertakes a close reading of four pericopae—the Anointing Woman and Simon the Pharisee (7:36–50), Martha and Mary (10:38–42), Zacchaeus and the "Grumblers" (19:1–10), and the Two Wrongdoers (23:32, 39–43)—chosen as representative examples of Gospel encounters with Jesus where some aspects of the human—the anthropos—might be revealed.

The question of what it means to be human has shaped almost every aspect of life since ancient times.[3] Current gospel scholarship holds that, in narrating the story of Jesus, each of the evangelists was concerned to answer key human questions such as: Who are we? Where are we? Why are we here? What are we to believe? What is wrong? What is the solution? What should we do?[4] In doing so, the evangelists produced texts that are "not predominantly propositional but existential."[5] In other words, instead of "independent reflections on human nature, there are stories about human beings and their (inter-) actions."[6] Story is a medium that simultaneously "entertains, informs, involves, motivates, authenticates, and mirrors existence."[7] Reading or hearing the stories of others heightens awareness of people's own narratives, enables questioning of them, opens opportunities to embrace new stories, and to

[3] In his *Theaetetus*, written in the mid-fourth century BCE, Plato pondered, τί δέ ποτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος; a very similar query to that found in Psalm 8:5 of the Septuagint, τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος; See Becker, Dietrich, and Holm, "What is Human?" 11–12.

[4] See, among others, Eric Eve, *Writing the Gospels: Composition and Memory* (London: SPCK, 2016), 37; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "The New Testament and Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to the New Testament*, ed. Patrick Gray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 401–18, here 410.

[5] Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 148.

[6] Michael Labahn and Outi Lehtipuu, "Introduction," in *Anthropology in the New Testament and its Ancient Context*, eds. Michael Labahn and Outi Lehtipuu (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), VII–XI, here VII. As Daniel Marguerat explains, in a story or narrative, an author "does not expound his views as systematically as in an argumentative genre; ideas are transmitted indirectly through characters, or distilled in (implicit or explicit) commentaries." See Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles,'* trans. Ken McKinney, Gregory J. Laughery, and Richard Bauckham, SNTSMS 121 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 44.

[7] Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, 2018), 1. Joel B. Green notes how "Genre decisions [here story or narrative] highlight particular ways of visualizing reality, of bringing to the surface specific aspects of experience." See Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 2.

undergo transformation and renewal.[8] As Snodgrass puts it, "apart from personal experience, stories are the quickest way to learning."[9] Therefore, the gospels were written, not primarily to provide information, but to afford their audiences opportunities for personal transformation, to open before them "a world of possibility, a new way of being" that readers must "assess and either accept or reject."[10] In effect, the Jesus of the gospels—and the Lukan Jesus is no exception—invites his audiences "to embrace an alternative worldview and to live as if the reign of God had already revolutionized" the age.[11] The stakes are very high, and Luke's Gospel shows how various characters get caught up in Jesus' offer of a renewed human "effort to be."[12]

While some characters respond unequivocally (either positively or negatively), others remain open-ended, with their decisions and futures left unrecorded and unfinalized. This means that the readers often find themselves in an "in-between," grappling with an inconclusiveness that reflects, not only the uncertainty and contingency of real life, but also some of the mystery and inscrutability that exist at the human core.[13]

### 1.2 Survey of Research

Although classical (ancient) anthropology, the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint, and the characteristics of the first-century Mediterranean person have all been subject to significant research (see §1.3), little if any investigation has been conducted into the implicit anthropology of the gospels. This is the lacuna that the current study seeks to address, at least in part.

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[8] David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), xiv.

[9] Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 1.

[10] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 148.

[11] Green, *Luke*, 11. Eugene M. Boring describes how "the readers' assumed symbolic universe is challenged, indirectly and subliminally, by an alternative version of how things are and what life is about." See Eugene M. Boring, *An Introduction to the New Testament: History, Literature, Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 206.

[12] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 168, 174.

[13] "In-between:" between two clear accepted stages or states, and therefore difficult to describe or know exactly. See https://dictionary.cambridge.org.

While it is rare in the literature to find Luke's anthropology directly addressed, various commentators offer general opinions on his view of humanity. Many credit the evangelist with an optimistic outlook. Thus, Luke Timothy Johnson considers that the Gospel evinces a positive attitude towards the world, both as God's creation and as the "arena of history and human activity."[14] He believes that Luke "affirms human culture" and temporality by his carefully crafted historical narrative, where he depicts even outsiders to the Christian movement as reasonable and open-minded, capable of intelligence and kindness.[15] Daniel Marguerat agrees that Luke regards the world benignly. He mentions the evangelist's "valorization of the world," and his view of history as a constructive place "where humanity and the divine meet."[16] François Bovon also credits Luke with an "optimistic view of human nature," suggesting that the evangelist desires Christians whose identities are that of loyal, cheerful, free, uncalculating, socially aware, devout disciples of the resurrected Jesus.[17] He further considers that Luke does not share Paul's gloomy assumption of the enslavement of the human will.[18] Raymond E. Brown, writing about the events at the crucifixion, notes that, even here, Luke has a "dislike of a totally negative picture."[19] Joseph A. Fitzmyer believes that Luke's view of the human (in effect, his view of the Christian) is that she or he should reflect the qualities exhibited by Jesus, which he describes as "mercy, love, charm, joy, and delicacy," all characteristics of one whom Fitzmyer styles as "very human, dramatic, and at times even romantic."[20] In a similar vein, Donald Guthrie considers that Luke, like the other synoptic writers, portrays Jesus as *the* human being *par excellence*, a model against whom other humans may be assessed.[21]

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[14] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke,* SP 3 (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991), 21.

[15] Ibid., 21, 22.

[16] Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, 31.

[17] François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. Christine M. Thomas, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 10–11.

[18] Ibid., 11.

[19] Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: Volume Two: From Gethsemane to the Grave*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1030.

[20] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, AB 28 (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 257.

[21] Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1981), 151. Guthrie lists what he considers are the salient features of Christ's humanity found in the Synoptic Gospels: "his powerful impact on others, his concern and compassion for needy people, his kindness, especially to children, his utter selflessness and sacrifice, his evaluation of spiritual as superior to material possessions." Ibid.

Several commentators suggest that the Gospel highlights freedom, responsibility, and decision-making as core human characteristics. Noting Luke's own resolution to undertake his narrative—ἔδοξε κάμοὶ, "I decided," "it seemed good to me also" (1:3)—Loveday Alexander observes that "human choices (among other contingencies) actually matter," and that Luke's decision is "taken on his own responsibility" within a context of freedom and the "normal rational processes of the human mind."[22] Eugene M. Boring proposes that, while Luke affirms the sovereignty of God over universal history, he does not do so "in a way that diminishes human freedom and responsibility (see Luke 17:1–3; 22:22)," that is, the power of individuals to make "decisions for which they are held responsible."[23] Sharon H. Ringe discusses how even people who are depicted on the margins can take their place as "subjects," that is, "self-determining actors of their own lives and histories."[24] Wilfred J. Harrington, remarking how the Gospel portrays Jesus as a decision-maker, continues that "the emergence of Jesus, the prophet, marks a time of decision" for the Gospel audience, a "crisis in which no one can be neutral (12:49–53)."[25]

Linked with this capacity for decision-making, a facility for μετάνοια is generally identified as one of the core characteristics that Luke attributes to humans. A multivalent word that is often but not necessarily associated with sin, repentance, and forgiveness, μετάνοια may simultaneously and separately be understood as change, transformation, turning, or conversion.[26] (Μετάνοια, in turn, is frequently linked to salvation, σωτηρία, another polyvalent term of such layered and nuanced meanings that Steve Walton raises the question, "*from* what do people need to be saved and *to* what do they need to be saved?"[27])

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[22] Loveday C. A. Alexander, "What if Luke Had Never Met Theophilus?" *BibInt* 8 (2000):161–70, here 161–63.

[23] Boring, *New Testament*, 557–58.

[24] Sharon H. Ringe, *Luke* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 10.

[25] Wilfred J. Harrington, *Reading Luke for the First Time* (New York: Paulist, 2015), 51, 58.

[26] The vocabulary and the perspective of μετανοέω and μετάνοια pervades Luke-Acts, and the attainability of a fundamental change in thinking and lifestyle is one of its most notable narrative features. See Guy D. Nave, Jn., *The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts,* AcBib 4 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2002), 120, 124; Joel B. Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts: Divine Action, Human Cognition, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 49.

[27] Steve Walton, "Turning Anthropology Right Side Up: Seeing Human Life and Existence Lukewise," in *Anthropology and New Testament Theology*, eds. Jason Maston and Benjamin E. Reynolds, LNTS 529 (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 99–119, here 102.

Several critics consider that Luke's μετάνοια-as-transformation is positive and reflects autonomy. Thus, Darrell L. Bock states that "there is no doubt that the message of Jesus is one of hope and transformation" that calls for "total commitment" from his followers.[28] Brendan Byrne notes that "Luke is very interested in human transformation. The Gospel shows how people appropriate salvation, how they resist it, and the effects that reception and rejection, as the case may be, has in human lives."[29] Like most critics, Byrne recognizes that salvation is not simply "a state or destiny awaiting individuals when they die." Instead it "concerns the whole of life and it begins here and now."[30] Joel B. Green agrees that Luke portrays humans who are capable of change, and that a "theology of conversion" is one of the underlying features of the Gospel.[31] For him, μετάνοια is aimed at a transformation of day-to-day patterns of thinking, feeling, believing, and behaving.[32] Walton, too, while deeming that Luke is no "naïve optimist" about human nature, conjectures that the evangelist accepts the possibility of human transformation.[33] Robert C. Tannehill regards the Lukan view of μετάνοια as a combination of "God's saving action in a person's life and a human decision."[34]

Other commentators, possibly because of another emphasis in their theological or church traditions, identify the presence of sin as core to Luke's view of human nature. Thus, Karl Allen Kuhn theorizes that the evangelist's opinion of the human condition is of a fallen or "misaligned creation," a world gone awry, where demonic entities contribute to the "corruption of humanity."[35] As proof of this, he submits that readers "are introduced to character after character on the edge—physically, socially, culturally, economically,

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[28] Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: Volume 1:1–9:50,* BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 43, 41.

[29] Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000), 2.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts*, 17.

[32] Ibid., 2–3.

[33] Walton, "Turning Anthropology," 103–4.

[34] Robert C. Tannehill, *The Shape of Luke's Story: Essays on Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005), 97, 91.

[35] Karl Allen Kuhn, *The Kingdom According to Luke and Acts: A Social, Literary, and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 231–32.

ethnically."[36] Kuhn acknowledges, however, that Luke's Gospel is one of juxtaposition, where the extremes of which humanity is capable are constantly set before the audience: the beautiful and the ugly, the desperate and the hopeful.[37] Fernando Méndez-Moratalla also underlines "Luke's theological interest in emphasizing the universality of sin and consequently the need for repentance."[38] The human as a sinner has been explored in major studies by David Neale, Guy Nave, Dwane Adams, Fernando Méndez-Moratalla, and Sławomir Szkredka.[39]

In a different anthropological vein, Brittany Wilson and Mikeal C. Parsons respectively examine Luke's reshaping of the ideals of Greco-Roman masculinity and the evangelist's critique of ancient physiognomic assumptions that rendered a negative judgment on the physically different.[40] Another area of scholarly interest is Luke's view of women. The question under debate is whether Luke's writings silence and subordinate women, and thus reflect the standards of his time and place, or whether he is anachronistically positive towards them. Overviews of key research in this area are available in Amy-Jill Levine's *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, Robert J. Karris's "Women and Discipleship in Luke," Beverly R. Gaventa's "What Ever Happened to Those Prophesying Daughters?" and Barbara Reid's "The Gospel of Luke: Friend or Foe of Women Proclaimers of the Word?"[41] A broad consensus has formed around the opinion that Luke leaves audiences with a "double message," as Turid

[36] Ibid., 232.

[37] Ibid., 195.

[38] Fernando Méndez-Moratalla, *The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke,* JSNTSup 252 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 170.

[39] David Neale, *None But the Sinners: Religious Categories in the Gospel of Luke* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); Nave, *Role and Function of Repentance*; Dwane H. Adams, *The Sinner in Luke*, The Evangelical Theological Society Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2007); Méndez-Moratalla, *Paradigm of Conversion*; Sławomir Szkredka, *Sinners and Sinfulness in Luke: A Study of Direct and Indirect References in the Initial Episodes of Jesus' Activity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

[40] Brittany E. Wilson, *Unmanly Men: Reconfigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Mikeal C. Parsons, *Body and Character in Luke and Acts: The Subversion of Physiognomy in Early Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011).

[41] Amy Jill Levine, with Marianne Blickenstaff, eds., *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, FCNTECW 3 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Robert J. Karris, "Women and Discipleship in Luke," in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, eds. Amy-Jill Levine, with Marianne Blickenstaff, FCNTECW 3 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 23–43; Beverly R. Gaventa, "What Ever Happened to those Prophesying Daughters?" in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles*, eds. Amy-Jill Levine, with Marianne Blickenstaff, FCNTECW 9 (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 2004), 49–60, especially 50–53; Barbara E. Reid, "The Gospel of Luke: Friend or Foe of Women Proclaimers of the Word?" *CBQ* 78/1 (2016): 1–23.

Karlsen Seim argues in her major study.[42] Other, more general, aspects of first-century women and men are discussed at §1.3.3 below.

Walton, in his 2018 essay, "Turning Anthropology Right Side Up," while commenting how "Luke rarely gets a mention when anthropology is discussed," provides a synthesis of many of the aforementioned themes identified as central to the evangelist's outlook.[43] These are the transformation of sinful humanity; the portrayal of Jesus as humanity *par excellence*; the recasting of human physicality through a critique of ancient physiognomic assumptions; the human community reconfigured by reshaping the norms of masculinity; and the "double message" accorded women's roles in active discipleship.[44]

While mindful of these opinions, this dissertation engages in a detailed study of a selection of Lukan characters, because characters represent windows on the anthropology of a real or implied author. However, because Luke is writing a narrative and not a systematic treatise, the investigation cannot be comprehensive or all-inclusive. Therefore, instead of the Gospel anthropology being explicit, categorical, and didactic, it is implicit, presumed, oblique, and partial, and must be discerned from the discourse itself.

## 1.3 Ancient Anthropologies and the First-Century Person

Unlike the dearth of detailed analysis into the anthropology of the gospels, there is considerable research into how the human is presented by writers in the ancient world. Luke's narrative must be situated within this ancient context because, as a culturally embedded text, his Gospel reflects many of the values, codes, and circumstances of its time and place. There are two relevant contemporary anthropologies to be considered: the Hellenistic and the biblical.[45] It is within and against these frames of reference that Luke's anthropology may be contextualized and assessed. Critical for any understanding of the ancient Eastern Mediterranean setting is how deeply it was pervaded by Hellenism—the influence of Greek culture—in matters of

[42] Turid Karlsen Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994).

[43] Walton, "Turning Anthropology Right Side Up," 99.

[44] Ibid., 102–19.

[45] Consideration was given to including Pauline anthropology in this review, but was not deemed essential to the core of the study.

language, philosophy, and lifestyle, particularly among the upper classes and in the cities.[46] Given the extent of cultural exchange, there is a presumption in favour of similarity rather than dissimilarity among the prevailing worldviews.[47] In other words, it might be expected that much of Luke's anthropology will not differ significantly from broader first-century conventions, although reconfigured for him by the life of Jesus.

There are three caveats to be noted when situating Luke's Gospel within these anthropologies. First, it is impossible entirely to separate what is Greek from what is Jewish within the writings of the New Testament because "no invisible cultural boundary" divided one thought-world from the other.[48] Second, neither Greek nor Jewish anthropologies were consistent or monolithic, as both were subject to internal inconsistencies, and to considerable revision and development over time.[49] Finally, there was no abstract concept of a "person" for writers in the ancient world. Instead, there was an assumed or functional understanding (a "working model") of how persons are constituted and how they behave, what makes for suffering, and what makes for flourishing.[50] In this regard, modern scholarship offers suggestions of how this ancient identity differs from that of the contemporary, western person (§1.3.3 below).

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[46] Lee I. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 24; Frederick J. Murphy, *Early Judaism: The Exile to the Time of Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 97. Palestine came under Greek control in the 330s BCE during the conquests of Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE) who invaded the country on his way to Egypt. In 63 BCE, it came under a Roman rule that was itself deeply Hellenized.

[47] Philip S. Alexander, "Hellenism and Hellenization as Problematic Historiographical Categories," in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 63–80, here 79.

[48] Carolyn Osiek, *What Are They Saying About the Social Setting of the New Testament?* rev. and exp. ed. (New York: Paulist, 1992), 23; Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Introduction: Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide," in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed. *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 1–16, here 9.

[49] David E. Aune, "Human Nature and Ethics in Hellenistic Philosophical Traditions and Paul: Some Issues and Problems," in *Paul in his Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 291–312, here 291–92.

[50] Susan Grove Eastman, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul's Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 10, 33.

### 1.3.1 The Anthropologies of Hellenism

The Greek view of the human was broadly optimistic, holding that people are social beings, capable of reason and moral choice, whose highest calling is to live an ethical life.[51] The task of each person is the "shaping of the self."[52] Because the human will was deemed free, it was not imprisoned by sin, therefore humans had no need of salvation or of liberation from the darker side of their nature.[53] Although there were no sacred writings, Greek literature and art, although sometimes whimsical, generally inculcated a sense of moral responsibility.[54] While Greeks may have held some indistinct beliefs about an afterlife, they largely considered themselves to be, by definition, mortal, in contrast to the immortality of the gods.[55] The deities were held to be mostly heedless of humanity and, because they were popularly envisaged as "fully anthropomorphic"—"fickle, petty, partisan, passionate, competitive"—they set no standards for people to emulate.[56] This divine indifference generated among the classical Greek intellectual elite a sceptical, radically-rational, "human-centred approach to life's problems" that encompassed the practical, scientific, ethical, and philosophical.[57]

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[51] Richard E. Rubenstein, "Aristotle and Christianity," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 71–73, here 72. Aristotle posits "living well," εὐδαιμονία, as the fundamental goal of human life. To live well is the equivalent of living rationally, "in an examined and carefully considered way, in accordance with virtue," ἀρετή. See Edith Hall, *The Ancient Greeks: Ten Ways they Shaped the Modern World* (London: Vintage, 2015), 196.

[52] Wayne Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 42. Although the various philosophical schools differed greatly among themselves, they were united in their view that the purpose of philosophy was to teach people how to live well, εὐδαιμονία. Ethical instruction was specific about what is right and wrong, and what one's duties were in various social relationships. The philosophical moralists set forth ideals about virtue, friendship, civil concord, and responsibility for the city or state. There was underlying presumption that virtue was teachable. A virtuous life meant a certain detachment from the concerns of this life, a self-sufficiency with regard to all external circumstances, and a freedom from passion through renunciation. See Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 301–3.

[53] Rubenstein, "Aristotle and Christianity," 72.

[54] H. D. F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1951, 1957), 195. The closest the ancient Greeks came to sacred writings were the narratives of Hesiod (*Works and Days*/*Theogony*) and Homer (*Iliad*/*Odyssey*), works which were fundamental to the transmission of Greek values throughout antiquity. See Hall, *Ancient Greeks*, 52–53; Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 139–49; J. M. Roberts, *A History of the World* (London: Helicon, 1993), 139, 164.

[55] Paul Cartledge, *The Greeks*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 154.

[56] Ninian Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind* (London: Collins, 1969), 316; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity* (London: Penguin, 2009), 23.

[57] Tom Holland, *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind* (London: Abacus, 2019), 19; Hall, *Ancient Greeks*, 107. Hall notes how, by the fifth century BCE, the inquiring Greeks "had essentially formulated the great questions that underpin ancient and much modern science and philosophy: What is the nature of the world and of existence? How do we learn things and know them for certain? How do we explain human behaviour? … They articulated these questions head-on, without waiting for a god to tell them the answers." Ibid., 116.

The search for meaning reached its apex with the "paradigmatic philosophers" Plato (427–347 BCE) and Aristotle (384–322 BCE), whose divergent theories on the nature of reality and the constitution of the human underlay the Greek/Western conceptual framework through classical times and far beyond.[58] Plato, in his search for the permanent and universal, proposed a changeless, immaterial, perfect world of reality (the Forms, the Ideas, the Beautiful, the Good) that was accessible to humans, not through the fallible senses, but through the intellect, νοῦς.[59] Positing a "harsh division" between body and mind that denigrated the former and idealized the latter, Plato's human was a profoundly dualistic (or even tripartite) being whose transcendent, immortal soul, ψυχή, was imprisoned within an inferior, earthbound, material body, σῶμα.[60]

In contrast to Plato's scepticism about everyday things and his sense of their transitoriness and worthlessness, Aristotle located reality in tangible, individual, observable objects, accessed through the reliable medium of the senses.[61] An empiricist and a monist, Aristotle dismissed both Plato's theory of universal laws and his dualistic view of the human, contending instead that the person is a wholly embodied, integrated being with the capacity to attain knowledge and reality in the world of experience.[62]

Contrary to their conflicting views on the human, Plato's and Aristotle's concepts of a divine being reflect connection and continuity.[63] As the ultimate Good in the world of the

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[58] Mark Glouberman, *The Raven, the Dove, and the Owl of Minerva: The Creation of Humankind in Athens and Jerusalem* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 9.

[59] Karen Armstrong, *A History of God* (London: Vintage, 1993, 1999), 46–47; Kitto, *Greeks*, 182; MacCulloch, *History of Christianity*, 31; David Bostock, "Forms, Platonic," in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 617–18, here 617–18.

[60] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Revelatory Body: Theology as Inductive Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 131–32; Hall, *Ancient Greeks*, 156; Timothy A. Brookins, "Greco-Roman Perspectives on Anthropology: A Survey of Perspectives from 800 BCE to 200 CE," in *Anthropology and New Testament Theology*, eds. Jason Maston and Benjamin E. Reynolds, LNTS 529 (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 43–63, here 44–45; Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 120–21.

[61] Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 318–19; MacCulloch, *History of Christianity*, 39; Johnson, *Revelatory Body*, 10.

[62] Roberts, *History*, 163; Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 321.

[63] Stephen Menn, "Aristotle and Plato on God as Nous and as the Good," RMet 45 (1992): 543–73, here 543, 546.

Forms, Plato envisaged a single supreme deity that bore no resemblance to the rowdy gods of the traditional Olympian pantheon. Instead, he postulated the deity as a detached principle or mind, νοῦς, all perfect, eternal, immune to change, devoid of emotion or compassion for the human condition.[64] Aristotle's God was broadly similar—an immaterial, perfect, aloof, unchanging Unmoved Mover, a cosmic νοῦς who, being indifferent to the existence of the universe, neither guided the world nor directed the life of humanity within it.[65]

By the time of gospel writing, Cynicism, Epicureanism, and Stoicism had established themselves as the dominant philosophical schools throughout the Greco-Roman world.[66] There was a common stress on austerity and frugality, and their adherents received "an invitation to enter an alternative world and acquire a new self" based on virtue, excellence, and self-mastery.[67] Of the three, Stoicism, a practical, Aristotelian mode of thinking, was the most significant. The Stoic movement was then led by the very influential Epictetus of Hierapolis (ca. 55–135 CE).[68] His teaching that humans are capable of rational actions and are accountable for their choices, being free to make them and having the capacity to do so, made a great impression in cultured society.[69] The term προαίρεσις was fundamental to Epictetus's thinking. Signifying choice, volition, or free will, it was his favourite designation for the faculty of human identity and freedom.[70]

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[64] MacCulloch, *History of Christianity*, 31–32; Kitto, *Greeks*, 201, 203; Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 313.

[65] Armstrong, *History of God*, 50; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trans. John Raffan (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1985), 330–31; Rubenstein, "Aristotle and Christianity," 72.

[66] Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 327–56.

[67] A. A. Long, *From Epicurus to Epictetus: Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 13, 16. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 25–26.

[68] His counterpart in the Roman world was Seneca the Younger (ca. 4 BCE–ca. 65 CE).

[69] Hall, *Ancient Greeks*, 241–42. In Stoic philosophy, humans were considered capable of rational choice because they were deemed to share in the rationality of God, "on a single scale but at different ends with regard to comprehensiveness of scope." See Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 116–17.

[70] Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 36, 55; Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 112–13.

Of course, the ancient philosophers who pondered the human condition were part of a tiny elite who described their societies "from the top down."[71] For the vast majority of Greco-Roman people, a "pervasive irrationality" undoubtedly prevailed.[72] For them, is likely that superstition, oracles, mystery cults, divination, magic, and astrology were widely invoked in an effort to gain some control over the generally dismal circumstances of their lives.[73] Nevertheless, despite this tiered system, the broad thrust of Greek philosophical ideas, however diluted or distorted, permeated the population, Luke and his audiences included, because Hellenistic culture, in its broadest sense, "was the sea in which they swam."[74]

### 1.3.2 The Anthropologies of Judaism

The question whether Luke was a Jew or gentile is not settled by scholarship and is not a subject for this dissertation. However, the evangelist *is* credited with a thorough knowledge and understanding of Judaism, with its different approach and solutions to the underlying realities.[75]

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[71] Meeks, *Moral World*, 40; Brookins, "Greco-Roman Perspectives," 43.

[72] Roberts, *History*, 177.

[73] Moyer V. Hubbard, "Greek Religion," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, eds. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 105–23, here 117–20; Smart, *Religious Experience*, 319–24; Pheme Perkins, *Reading the New Testament: An Introduction*, rev. and upd. 3rd ed. (New York: Paulist, 1978), 114. On living conditions in antiquity, see Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "Introduction," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* ed. Richard L. Rohrbaugh (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 3–15, here 5–6.

[74] John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 261.

[75] Engberg-Pedersen, "Introduction," 2; Joel B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 24–25; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Luke* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2015), 7–8; Murphy, *Early Judaism*, 412; Johnson, *Luke*, 3; Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 41–47. John T. Carroll deems that "Scriptures are authoritative texts for Luke and the Gospel narrative affirms the importance of fidelity to Torah." See John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 2. Luke is further credited with familiarity "with whole narratives and stories in their Greek, Septuagintal version, not just isolated words, turns of phrases and the like." See Takamitsu Muraoka, "Luke and the Septuagint," *NovT* 54 (2012):13–15, here 13. Some also consider him to have born and educated as a member of the social elite. This view is based on the literary artistry of his work, in particular his knowledge of the literary conventions and rhetorical patterns that were an integral part of an upper-class education. See Karl Allen Kuhn, *Luke: The Elite Evangelist* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2010), 38–71. Keith A. Reich, in turn, posits that this elite evangelist, by placing "highly refined rhetorical figures of speech" on the lips of the narrative Jesus, portrays him [Jesus] as "an educated man of high status, thereby gaining a hearing for his role-reversing message." See Keith A. Reich, *Figuring Jesus: The Power of Rhetorical Figures of Speech in the Gospel of Luke*, BibInt 107 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 20. Reich investigates the various figures of speech that feature in the Lukan writings, most of which feature in the rhetorical manuals of the Latin authors Cicero and Quintilian. Ibid., 2–4, 6–7. Others are drawn from the *Progymnasmata* manuals attributed to the Greek writers Theon, Hermogenes, Aphthonius, and Nicolaus. See George A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), ix–xiii.

One strand of anthropological interpretation emerges from Torah and the Prophets, another from the wisdom tradition, and others still from apocalypticism.[76] Together they present a complex, multivalent, and often contradictory account of the human condition because, as John O'Grady says, "the Bible takes its cue from life."[77]

### *1.3.2.1 The Anthropological Perspective of Torah and the Prophets*

In contrast to the Greeks, Torah and the Prophets generally had little "abstract interest in the philosophical underpinnings of life … the pursuit of the nature of happiness or virtue for its own sake."[78] Instead, they focus "relentlessly" on human beings, and on their relationship with a God who, unlike the remote Greek deity, "reveals his identity in the context of individual human lives," and is "passionately concerned" with the human response.[79]

In the opening scenes of Genesis, God sets out what people are and how they should live. The creation of humankind at 1:27 establishes the human as a creature made in the image of God, with the implication that humanity becomes fully human by learning God's ways and adopting his characteristics.[80] Since the Jewish Scriptures constantly propose that people emulate God's kindness, mercy, justice, compassion, and his willingness to forgive, it is these traits that define the true human being, especially when dealing with the most vulnerable.[81] The same Genesis passage (1:28–30) suggests that a capacity for community and relatedness lies at

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[76] Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 20, 22.

[77] John F. O'Grady, *Christian Anthropology: A Meaning for Human Life* (New York: Paulist, 1976), 109.

[78] Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London: Penguin, 2007), 284.

[79] J. Gordon McConville, *Being Human in God's World: An Old Testament Theology of Humanity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 7; MacCulloch, *History of Christianity*, 54, 2.

[80] See J. W. Rogerson, *A Theology of the Old Testament: Cultural Memory, Communication and Being Human* (London: SPCK, 2009), 174, 187.

[81] See Martin Goodman, *A History of Judaism* (London: Penguin, 2017), 38, 73; Walter Eichrodt, *Man in the Old Testament*, trans. K. and R. Gregor Smith, SBT 4 (London: SCM, 1951), 9; George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 34; R. W. L. Moberly, *The Bible in a Disenchanted Age: The Enduring Possibility of Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 161.

the human core—relatedness to God, to the world, to oneself, to fellow human beings, and to the natural world.[82]

The second creation story, however, found in Genesis 2, immediately presents the reader with another, very different perspective on human origins. Now the person is depicted as emerging from and returning to dust (2:7; 3:19), an image that emphasizes "the transience and frailty of human life, as well as human dependence upon God."[83] The juxtaposition of these two creation traditions, creates a tensive image that conveys from the outset the "breadth and complexity of what it means to be human," and how the human story "is always attended by the dual possibilities of joy and flourishing (salvation) or of tragedy and despair."[84]

The many narratives that dramatize the "dust to dust" condition of the second account call to constant reconsideration the idealized God-imaged human of the first.[85] Time and again people are portrayed as seemingly incapable of living as God's covenantal community, prone to "backsliding and misunderstanding of God's purposes."[86] However, despite repeated setbacks, the willingness not to lose hope and to start again is depicted as a fundamental characteristic of both God and humankind.[87] But the human's capacity for contriteness was not linked to belief in an afterlife, or any system of rewards and punishments meted out there.[88] Instead, because the blessings (and curses) attached to the covenant would take place in this world, Torah and Prophets depict physical life on earth as a precious gift, a "supreme blessing" never to be taken for granted.[89] The finality of death was not deprecated as an unjust fate: it

[82] Jan Dietrich, "Human Relationality and Sociality in Ancient Israel: Mapping the Social Anthropology of the Old Testament," in *What is Human? Theological Encounters with Anthropology*, eds. Eve-Marie Becker, Jan Dietrich, and Bo Kristian Holm (Göttingen: Vandenhoecht & Ruprecht, 2017), 23–44, here 23.

[83] Hilary Marlow, "The Human Condition," in *The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Companion*, ed. John Barton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 293–312, here 298.

[84] Marlow, "Human Condition," 298; McConville, *Being Human*, 190.

[85] Rogerson, *Theology*, 193.

[86] Ibid., 34; MacCulloch, *History of Christianity*, 56.

[87] Rogerson, *Theology*, 37–39.

[88] Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 255. At best, death represented a transition to the underground realms of Sheol where all, the good and bad alike, continued a "shadowy, wraithlike existence" in an ill-defined netherworld. See G. R. Osborne, "Resurrection," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, eds. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 931–36, here 931.

[89] McConville, *Being Human in God's World*, 32; Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 255.

was simply accepted that there was an allotted time for human existence, that within that span a worthwhile life might be achieved, and that serving God was an activity "enjoined in the here-and-now, amid the ongoing vicissitudes of ordinary life."[90]

With their pragmatic, this-world outlook, Jews of the pre-Hellenized, early Second Temple period gave little consideration to Platonic dualisms (or tripartisms) concerning the human.[91] Instead, the ἄνθρωπος was understood more in the Aristotelian sense of an "undifferentiated, psychosomatic unity," where body, soul, and spirit were "interrelated aspects" of a single embodied being.[92] The Hebrew Bible uses a variety of terms to try to express the complexity of this integrated, undivided person: *nefesh* (the soul or life itself); *basar* (the body or flesh); *ruah* (the spirit or breath); and *leb* (the seat of wisdom, knowledge, and the emotions).[93] Endowed with all these dimensions, this unified person "does not have life," she or he *is* life.[94]

#### *1.3.2.2 The Wisdom Books*

The wisdom books of Proverbs, Job, and Qoheleth embody "a different understanding of reality" to that found in Torah and Prophets.[95] They are examples of a form of literature widespread in the ancient Near East, and may be "more representative of popular thought" than

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[90] Roland E. Murphy, "Death and Afterlife in Wisdom Literature," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity: Part Four: Death, After-Life, Resurrection and the World-to-Come in the Judaisms of Late Antiquity*, eds. Alan J. Avery-Peck and Jacob Neuser, HdO 49 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 101–16, here 107; Smart, *Religious Experience*, 370.

[91] Second Temple Judaism is the period dated from the rededication of the temple in ca. 515 BCE following the Babylonian exile (586–539 BCE) to the destruction of Herod's temple by the Romans in 70 CE. Second Temple Judaism was marked by a "wide variety in belief and practice. There was no single, overarching orthodoxy, nor was there a central authority that could have enforced such an orthodoxy." See Murphy, *Early Judaism*, 328; Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 20.

[92] Robert A. Di Vito, "Old Testament Anthropology and the Construction of Personal Identity," *CBQ* 61 (1999): 217–37, here 218; Walter F. Taylor, Jn., "Humanity, NT View of," *ABD* 3, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 321–25, here 321; O'Grady, *Christian Anthropology*, 11, 136; Smart, *Religious Experience*, 370.

[93] Hans Schwartz, *The Human Being: A Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 5–13.

[94] O'Grady, *Christian Anthropology*, 109.

[95] James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 117.

the cultic and ethical writings of Israel's religious community.[96] Like other ancient wisdom authors, the biblical sages set themselves to explore the "boundaries and possibilities" inherent in the human condition, gleaned through experience and observation of nature and people.[97] In contrast to the writers of Torah and Prophets, who claimed inspiration from God, the wisdom writers presumed "no authority except the logic of their own arguments."[98]

Proverbs is positive and highly pragmatic, offering common-sense advice on the "difficult task of coping" with life, suggesting that individuals can control their destinies, that God "oversees a just universe," and that a comforting chain of cause-and-effect (or rewards-and-retribution) guarantees justice in this life whereby people reap the consequences of their actions.[99] The Stoic concept of προαίρεσις is present in this aspect of the wisdom writings as the teaching of the Two Ways, where life is presented as a path along which two distinct groups of pilgrims walk toward different goals.[100] Known as the wise and the foolish (or, in ethical terms, the righteous and the wicked), all people fall into one category or the other, depending on their choices.[101]

In contrast to Proverbs, Job and Qoheleth are more challenging in their depiction of life's apparent meaninglessness, the problem of innocent suffering, the "painful realities of brokenness and loss," the mystery of God's freedom and silence, the mistaken assumption that "God bows before a principle of human justice," and the lack of connection between ethical

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[96] John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 487. A wisdom tradition was widespread in the ancient Near East, found in the texts of Egypt, Sumeria, and Babylon. See Jennie Grillo, "The Wisdom Literature," in *The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Companion*, ed. John Barton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 182–205, here 182, 183.

[97] McConville, *Being Human in God's World*, 175; George Ziener, "Wisdom," in *Bauer Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, Vol III, ed. Johannes B. Bauer (London: Sheed and Ward, 1970), 969–76, here 969, 971.

[98] James L. Crenshaw, *Qoheleth: The Ironic Wink* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2013), 1–2.

[99] James L. Crenshaw, *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions: Collected Writings on Old Testament Wisdom* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995), 2, 8; Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 2; Collins, *Hebrew Bible*, 492–94.

[100] Kathleen M. O'Connor, *The Wisdom Literature* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1988), 40; Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom,* 73; Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism*, 41. The Two Ways first emerges in Deuteronomy 11:26–28; 30:15–20, where "the moral life is crystallized in a choice between good and evil." See McConville, *Being Human in God's World*, 42.

[101] Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom,* 73.

uprightness and positive results.[102] Where Job's collapsed world was eventually restored (but not for his ten children who were gone forever), Qoheleth leaves the reader with a sophisticated, existential paradox: that life is absurd because the finality of death overshadows everything, and yet, in spite of this—perhaps because of this—joy abounds, and there is an imperative "to live fully and without reservation in the present, irrespective of what may come next."[103]

Qoheleth's counsel to optimize life in the here-and-now rather than live in an uncertain hope of a hereafter was the converse of an eschatological and apocalyptic worldview that was beginning to develop within ancient Judaism. In proposing a transcendence over death, this appeared to answer the "age-old dilemma of why the good suffer and the wicked prosper."[104]

#### *1.3.2.3 Eschatology and Apocalypticism*

Driven by centuries of persecution and invasion, an apocalyptic eschatology had arisen in Judaism in the final centuries BCE when, for the first time, real interest in a personal afterlife became more widespread to compensate for the troubles of the earthly existence.[105] The idea of a personal resurrection from the dead was a new one in Judaism, where previously the hope of the individual had been for "long life, prosperity, and offspring" in the context of an earthly life.[106] This shift in viewpoint was greatly facilitated by the contemporary translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek.[107] In the Septuagint, the more concrete and embodied Hebrew vocabulary for the human was replaced by a more philosophical, largely Platonic word-map of σῶμα, σάρξ, ψυχή, and πνεῦμα (approximating to body, flesh, soul, and spirit), with its array

[102] Samuel E. Balentine, "Wisdom," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, eds. Stephen B. Chapman and Marvin A. Sweeney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 274–91, here 282; Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 117–18.

[103] Crenshaw, *Qoheleth*, 7; Balentine, "Wisdom," 289.

[104] Murphy, *Early Judaism*, 130.

[105] Apocalyptic outlooks are born amid alienation or crisis, out of a sense that "the world is out of joint." Therefore, the visionaries look to another world, either in the heavens or in the eschatological future, because this one is unsatisfactory. See John J. Collins, "From Prophesy to Apocalypticism: The Expectation of the End," in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, vol. 1 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. John J. Collins (New York: Continuum, 2003), 129–61, here 147, 157.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek began in the mid-third century BCE. Translation and revision continued over the next two centuries.

of abstract meaning and dualistic overtones. Combined with the emergence of convictions about the afterlife and the immortality of the soul, especially in the later years of the Second Temple Period, the possibility of transcendence and the language in which it was expressed subtly changed the Jewish view of the human, particularly in the Hellenistic environment, home to the Gospel of Luke.[108]

#### *1.3.2.4 Conclusion to Biblical Anthropology*

While it is uncertain whether Luke's audiences were Jews or gentiles, it is apparent that the Greek-speaking Luke expected at least some of his Greek-speaking readers/auditors to be familiar with the motifs and tropes of the Septuagint.[109] Therefore, while the linguistic, cultural, and social categories of Luke's audiences were Hellenistic, other dimensions of their anthropology, theological values, and worldview may be expected to be biblical. These influences, however, cannot be neatly separated. They simply reflect something about the various "worlds" that shaped the identity of Luke's audiences, in the "veritable pot-pourri of cultural forces" that comprised the eastern Mediterranean world of the first century.[110]

### 1.3.3 The First-Century Person

In recent decades, much attention has been paid to the "vast gulf of culture and time" that separates the modern world from the Greco-Roman world of the first century, and the "ambiguities and uncertainties of [that] strange and distant" place.[111] In order to avoid reading the New Testament through a lens shaped by modern western assumptions, various scholars, using insights from cultural and social anthropology, have devised models to help biblical interpreters "to hear the meaning of the documents in terms of the social systems in which they were originally proclaimed."[112] Of particular relevance for this dissertation is the great divide

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[108] James C. VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 188, 192; Richard Bauckham, *The Jewish World Around the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 246, 256; Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem,* 254–57.

[109] S. John Roth, *The Blind, the Lame, and the Poor: Character Types in Luke-Acts,* JSNTSup 144 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 80.

[110] David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 3rd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 6; Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 19.

[111] John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 23; William Loader, *Sexuality in the New Testament: Understanding the Key Texts* (London: SPCK, 2010), 1.

that separates the contemporary western concept of a human being from the first-century Mediterranean view. Exegetes are reminded that the New Testament authors "thought rather differently about who a person might be and what might be the expected range of human behaviour."[113] Clearly, not to take this into account would be to distort any analysis of the anthropology of Luke's Gospel. As Rohrbaugh puts it, "the potential for misunderstanding is both enormous and pervasive."[114]

As part of their work, social-scientific scholars outline the broad features of the first-century Mediterranean people who wrote, heard/read, and feature as characters in the gospels.[115] They are deemed to be generally anti-introspective, non-individualistic, and non-psychologically minded.[116] The individual was not considered "alone and apart from others as a unique being," but instead was dyadic, a person always in relation with and connected to at least one other social unit, usually a family or kinship group.[117] Unlike the modern, individualistic western personality, the identity of the dyadic self was "established by and dependent upon the assessments of others."[118] As group-oriented collectivists, strict boundaries

[112] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, rev. and enl. 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), xi–xii. The "model" approach is not without its critics. See David G. Horrell, "Whither Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation? Reflections on Contested Methodologies and the Future," in *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later*, eds. Todd D. Still and David G. Horrell (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 6–20, here 6–20.

[113] Bruce J. Malina, *The Social World of Jesus and the Gospels* (London: Routledge, 1996), 36.

[114] Rohrbaugh, "Introduction," 1.

[115] A major caveat on applying social-scientific studies to Scripture is that "the world(s) of the Bible are not simply the world(s) of the Mediterranean (or any other part of the world) today." See Louise J. Lawrence, *Reading with Anthropology: Exhibiting Aspects of New Testament Religion* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), 15.

[116] Malina, *Social World of Jesus*, 37–38. These findings are not entirely undisputed. See Michal Beth Dinkler, '"The Thoughts of Many hearts Shall Be Revealed'; Listening in on Lukan Interior Monologues," *JBL* 133 (2015): 373–99, here 373. In this article, Dinkler challenges the "dominant paradigm" of the ancient, anti-introspective Mediterranean self. See also §3.4.1.

[117] Malina, *Social World of Jesus*, 38. For a fuller exploration of the dyadic personality, see Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, "First-Century Personality: Dyadic, Not Individual," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 25–65.

[118] Lawrence, *Reading with Anthropology*, 11. See also Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 2.

were maintained against outsiders, and there was a strong tendency to stereotype the "other" or the stranger.[119]

Honour and shame were pivotal values of the culture, honour being a claim to worth that is socially acknowledged, and shame its reverse.[120] Honour and shame were frequently contested through the process of challenge and riposte: public argumentation and debate that was an expression of the radically agonistic or competitive nature of an existence that was largely lived out (for men) in a public setting, where everyone knew everyone else's business.[121] In the androcentric culture, manliness had to be "fought for and constantly re-affirmed," and was generally "established at the expense of others."[122] Men exhibited intense "hypermasculine" concerns, including a "distancing dread of the feminine" and a constant vigilance and defensiveness when it came to their maleness.[123] For them, the great anxiety was to be seen as female, and the danger of sliding into effeminacy was always present.[124] The idealized body of the healthy Greco-Roman male, perfect in symmetry and proportion, and ubiquitously on display in public statuary, was deemed normative.[125] In the physiognomic

[119] David Rhoads, *Reading Mark: Engaging the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 37; Philip F. Esler, *The First Christians in their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1994), 27–28. Di Vito proposes four points of contrast and comparison between contemporary and ancient ("Old Testament") constructions of identity. First, there is a modern sense that human dignity lies in self-sufficiency and self-containment, achieved through radical disengagement from one's social and personal location in the world. In contrast, the first-century person is deeply embedded or engaged in her or his social identity. Second, there is a modern feeling of personal unity and of having sharply defined personal boundaries. The first-century person is comparatively decentred and undefined with regard to personal boundaries. Third, there is a modern belief in "inner depths," a sense of an "inside" as opposed to an "outside," and that it is the world within that holds the true self. The first-century person is lacking a sense of "inner depths," and is instead relatively transparent, socialized, and embodied. Finally, there is a modern conviction that one's humanity depends upon a capacity for autonomous and self-legislative action. The first-century person is "authentic" in her or his heteronomy, in obedience to another and dependence upon another. See Di Vito, "Old Testament Anthropology," 220.

[120] Malina, *New Testament World*, 29; Kitto, *Greeks*, 245. For a fuller exploration of honour and shame, see Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 67–96.

[121] Malina, *Social World of Jesus*, 52; Lawrence, *Reading with Anthropology*, 10–11.

[122] Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 42.

[123] Malina, *Social World*, 57–58.

[124] Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 52.

[125] Parsons, *Body and Character in Luke-Acts*, 25, 103.

consciousness of the times, any disfiguration or aberration was subject to denigration, and a suspicion that such individuals were morally deficient.[126]

In contrast to the public lives of men, women's lives were largely enclosed and private, confined to the domestic domain, with much of their status coming from marriage and the production of sons.[127] Just as men were defined as the type, so were women the anti-type—the former characterized as dominant, active, and self-controlled, and the latter as subordinate, passive, and excessive.[128] In cases where there was any concession to female-male "sameness," it was where women took on the traits, qualities, and activities of men, never the reverse.[129] Overall, there was "an assumption, explicit or otherwise, of the centrality and superiority" of the male, of his point of view, and of his standing in the world.[130]

If social-scientific theories about the ancient personality are accurate, these are the general ways that readers/auditors of Luke's Gospel would have conceived themselves as persons, shaped by the hierarchical and androcentric worldviews of their time. One of the effects of the gospels was to provide audiences with a new "tool of self-understanding," helping them redefine their identities, and subverting aspects of the social, political, and cultural values that created them.[131] Thus, instead of "valorizing" the status, wealth, and power structures that effectively oppressed most people, the gospels exalt the lowly, the poor, and those with

[126] Ibid., 17–37.

[127] Malina, *Social World*, 55; Lawrence, *Reading with Anthropology*, 11; Esler, *First Christians in their Social Worlds*, 31–34; Ross S. Kramer, "Jewish Family Life in the First Century CE," in *The Annotated Jewish New Testament: New Revised Standard Version,* eds. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 2017), 604–8, here 606–7.

[128] Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 40. Much of this thinking was systematized by Aristotle who, interpreting the world from a hierarchical perspective, regarded men as superior to women; masters as superior to slaves; and Greeks as superior to non-Greeks. He considered femaleness *per se* as a disability, a defect that was as much intellectual as physical. See Sabina Lovibond, "Feminism in Ancient Philosophy: The Feminist Stake in Greek Rationalism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy,* eds. Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 10–28, here 12–14.

[129] See Judith P. Hallett, "Women's Lives in the Ancient Mediterranean," in *Woman and Christian Origins*, eds. Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13–34, here 21, 32.

[130] Lovibond, "Feminism in Ancient Philosophy," 11.

[131] Marguerat, *First Christian Historian,* 31. See further §1.4.1 below on narrative and rhetorical purpose.

physical limitations, an inversion of values that turned all aspects of the readers' familiar world "upside down," ἀναστατόω (Acts 17:6).[132]

## 1.4 Methodology: Narrative Criticism

Because the Gospel of Luke is a narrative text—and not a wisdom, historical, mystical, epistolary, or poetic one—this dissertation adopts a narrative-critical approach.[133] Much of the study's hermeneutical framework is underpinned by the work of French philosopher and textual interpreter Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005), whose theory of text will be discussed at §1.5 below.

### 1.4.1 Narrative Criticism (A Brief Overview)

Narrative criticism is "a reading strategy" that focuses on how narratives function as literature, investigating the text in its literariness, its narrativity, and its working as a story.[134] It developed in the later decades of the twentieth century in the context of the long dominance of historical-critical methods—source, form, and redaction criticism—that had been developing since the Enlightenment.[135] These diachronic approaches had treated biblical texts "more as sources for historical reconstruction than as works of literature in their own right."[136] As author-centred

[132] Carroll, *Luke*, 10; Parsons, *Body and Character*, 144. A reference to the title of C. Kavin Rowe's book, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[133] A narrative "represents a communication event that involves an author (real and implied), a text (read or heard), an audience (implied and real, listening or hearing), and various contexts (historical, literary, social, etc)." See Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "The Major Importance of Minor Characters in Mark," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament*, eds. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon and Edgar V. McKnight, JSNTSup 109 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 58–86, here 61. Narrative is a highly intentional and selective medium. Unlike the largely haphazard nature of real life, narrative imposes order on the arbitrary events that people negotiate daily. See Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, JSOTSup 70 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989, 1992, 1997), 93. By grafting a largely artificial web of cause-and-effect onto otherwise random happenings, narrative helps life appear structured, logical, and coherent. See Danna Nolan Fewell, "The Work of Biblical Narrative," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3–26, here 11, 5.

[134] Mark Allan Powell, "Narrative Criticism: The Emergence of a Prominent Reading Strategy," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, eds. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner, SBL 65 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011), 19–43, here 22.

[135] David Rhoads, "Narrative Criticism: Practices and Prospects," in *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism*, eds. David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni, JSNTSup 184 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 264–85, here 265–66; Sandra M. Schneiders, "The Gospels and the Reader," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*, ed. Stephen C. Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 97–118, here 97–98.

[136] Mark Allan Powell, "Narrative Criticism," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 239–55, here 239.

methodologies, one of their [unachievable] goals was to deduce the biblical writer's purpose for his work (or the literal sense of Scripture in its strictest form).[137]

Under the influence of contemporary secular literary criticism, biblical exegetes shifted the locus of their attention from author to text and began to apply synchronic methods to their work.[138] They concentrate, not on the external elements of the work, but on its internal dimensions of *discourse* and *story*, and on its "being, its presence, its metaphoric power."[139] Crucially, narrative criticism identifies a text as principally a process of communication between an *implied author* and an *implied audience* (*implied reader*), or the author and reader presupposed within the text itself.[140] It also determines that every narrative is written with a rhetorical purpose, that is, with a view to having an effect on its reader, and that the goal of the narrative critic is to identify the range of potential meanings for the implied audience.[141]

Narrative criticism holds that the text is an organic unity that needs to be examined on its own terms, irrespective of its history of production. It requires a sequential, close reading; a careful attention to the words on the page; a "painstaking analysis of the nuances, ambiguities of words, images, metaphors, and small units of a text," and interrelations among them.[142]

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[137] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, xxxi; Stephen E. Fowl, "The Importance of a Multivoiced Literal Sense of Scripture: The Example of Thomas Aquinas," in *Reading with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation*, eds. A. K. M. Adam et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 35–50, here 35; Frances Young, *The Art of Performance: Towards a Theology of Holy Scripture* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1990), 16.

[138] Narrative criticism was specifically designed for the interpretation of *biblical* literature. It does not exist in the field of secular literary studies, where "narratology" might best describe a very similar enterprise. See Powell, "Prominent Reading Strategy," 20.

[139] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean?" in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, eds. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 29–57, here 30. Of course, traditional and narrative approaches are complementary and not antithetical: they simply "ask different questions of the text." See Harrington, *Reading Luke*, 9. The narrative meaning of *discourse* and *story* will be explained at §1.5.1.

[140] Malbon, "How Does the Story Mean?" 32. The terms *implied author* and *implied reader* are developed at §1.4.2.

[141] Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1999), 3; Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 242. Rhetoric is the "quality in discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his purpose." See George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 3. It was a "systematic academic discipline universally taught" throughout the Greco-Roman world. Ibid., 9.

[142] James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 23–24.

Further, it presumes that the text's final form is a coherent whole, and that any gaps, inconsistencies, or repetitions are meaningful elements of the work to be completed by the implied reader.[143] But narrative criticism also deems that neither interpretation nor filling the gaps is an arbitrary, subjective, or unendingly elastic process; instead, there are "interior constraints" that must be acknowledged, and the methodology needs to be appropriate to the material.[144] Indeed, the critic must be "disciplined" by the text, because the text and its "otherness" has set its own norms and parameters within which it is to be construed.[145]

### 1.4.2 The Implied Author and the Implied Reader

The *real author* (the first-century person traditionally called "Luke") and the *real audience* (the actual community for whom "Luke" intended his Gospel) are not considered in this study. Instead, the focus is on the *implied author* and, more particularly, on the *implied audience* or *implied reader* (strictly speaking *readers* and *audiences* in the plural since they exist along a spectrum of possible but not infinite responses).[146] While there is little consensus among scholars about how exactly to define the terms, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon describes the implied author as "the one who would be necessary for this narrative to be told or written," and

[143] Narrative Criticism draws many of the elements of this reading strategy from the works of literary theorists Stanley Fish (1938–) and Wolfgang Iser (1926–2007), two critics associated with reader-response approaches to reading. See Edgar V. McKnight, "Reader-Response Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*," eds. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes, rev. and exp. ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 230–52, here 231–33. On this reading process, see Roth, *The Blind, the Lame, and the Poor*, 213.

[144] Paul Ricoeur, "World of the Text, World of the Reader," in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflections and Imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdés (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 491–97, here 496; Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 111.

[145] Bruce W. Longenecker, *Hearing the Silence: Jesus on the Edge and God in the Gap—Luke 4 in Narrative Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), x, 12; Malbon, "Minor Characters," 83. Meir Sternberg notes how "literature is remarkable for its power of control and validation." See Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 188.

[146] See Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 100. On the spectrum of possible responses, but discussing Luke's real audience, Tannehill writes, "I believe that the primary audience for which Luke was designed was a group of late first-century churches of diverse social composition. By diverse social composition I mean that these churches included people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, social status and wealth. There were Jews and Gentiles, women and men, poor and relatively wealthy people, common people and a few members, perhaps, of the elite or retainer class who had important positions with the elite … In thinking of the reception of Luke by the Lukan community, we must allow for diverse responses, in part, to this community's social diversity. It would not be surprising if Jews in the audience heard the story in terms of God's promises to Israel while the poor understood it as a promise of rescue for the poor." See Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 24, 31.

the implied reader as "the one who would be necessary for this narrative to be heard or read."[147] They are heuristic and theoretical constructs based on the requirements of point of view, knowledge, and belief presupposed in the narrative, are internal to the text, and neither has any actual existence.[148]

### 1.4.3 Role of the Real Reader

The role of the *real reader* requires definition and clarity.[149] In narrative criticism, it is the real reader who constructs the implied reader from the textual clues given by the implied author. These cues, the "signals which mark out and orientate" the course of reading, help a real reader to identify how an implied reader would respond to the narrative (a form of reader-response that is internal to the text).[150] It is the real reader's role to interpret stories from the perspective of the implied reader, a reader who is assumed to accept the value system and faith perspective that undergirds the story.[151] In the strictest sense, the term implied reader denotes the formal position to be taken up by the real reader.[152] As Mark Allan Powell states, "Narrative Criticism … identifies how we as readers are expected to be affected by the text if we read it from the point of view that the text presumes we possess. Whether we as real readers embrace, ignore, or resist the response expected of the implied reader is a matter of individual choice."[153] In explaining the concept of implied reader, Powell notes that it is "grounded in common sense and is utilized for economical reasons;" otherwise it would be impossible "to take into account

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[147] Malbon, "How Does the Story Mean?" 33. The concepts originated with Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961, 1983), 70–76, 428–32. They were adopted and developed by Seymour Chatman in *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 148–51. Booth wrote, "The author creates, in short, an image of himself and another of his reader; he makes his reader, as he makes his second self, and the most successful reading is the one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement." See Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 138.

[148] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 7.

[149] In this respect, some interpreters use the terms *narrative critic* or *interpreter*. This dissertation generally uses the term *real reader* because it permits a clearer reference to a reader's location along the author-audience spectrum.

[150] Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 3.

[151] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 242, 243.

[152] Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 14. As Malbon says, "Implied readers mask real people (you and me) who construct them on the basis of their readings of the text." See Malbon, "Minor Characters," 61.

[153] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 253.

every eventuality that might determine how *any* reader could conceivably respond to a story."[154]

Narrative criticism is sometimes censured because, of itself, it appears to ignore the concerns of real readers, who will rarely respond to the story-world of a gospel in the manner expected of the implied (or internal) reader.[155] However, this reproach is not entirely valid because few narrative critics regard their discipline as an end in itself. Instead, the "end-game" of narrative criticism is the "engagement of texts by real readers in the real world."[156] By establishing a range of expected readings, "polyvalence within perimeters," narrative criticism creates a measure or yardstick against which real readers, with their varying real-world perspectives and assumptions, can measure the text and their responses to it.[157] It thus helps mediate between the extremes of intentional fallacy (reading a text as if the author's intent is encoded in the work) and a reduction to total indeterminacy based on the unrestrained subjectivity of the reader.[158]

Theoretically, the real reader, in constructing the implied reader, tries to read as a first-time reader, as if the story were unknown, the characters unfamiliar, and the outcome uncertain. In doing this, the interpreter gradually gathers information, and progressively (inductively)

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[154] Powell, "Prominent Reading Strategy," 23. In a similar vein, Malbon appreciates narrative criticism's non-dogmatic claim to objectivity, its confidence that its conclusions are neither capricious nor arbitrary. See Malbon, "How Does the Story Mean?" 41. Others, however, regard the concepts of implied author and implied reader as proof of narrative criticism's "inbred obsession with the historical author and the historical reader," and its unacknowledged quest for the evangelists' original intention. See Stephen D. Moore and Yvonne Sherwood, *The Invention of the Biblical Scholar: A Critical Manifesto* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 101, 110.

This is where the broad spectrum of reader-response criticism has an important role. Reader-response criticism is a movement that developed almost simultaneously with narrative criticism and shares many of its approaches. Representing a spectrum of positions from conservative to radical to post-modern and deconstructionist, it shifts attention away from the text as the locus of meaning to the real reader and the reading experience. See Robert M. Fowler, "How Did the Theory Develop and What Are its Main Features?" in Paula Gooder, *Searching for Meaning: An Introduction to Interpreting the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 2008), 127–29, here 127–29. Sometimes reading "against the text," reader-response criticism can produce less stable readings, "finding surprising and new interpretations in a never-ending interplay of possible meanings." See Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 10.

[155] Powell, "Prominent Reading Strategy," 36.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Ibid., 24, 36.

[158] See Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, xxxii. Taking an opposing view, Moore and Sherwood favour the "unpredictable meanderings of 'real' readers as opposed to the lockstep goose-stepping of 'ideal' readers." See Moore and Sherwood, *Biblical Scholar*, 29.

sorts, classifies, reconfigures, and reconsiders the material as required. In reality, few narrative critics begin with a first reading of a gospel, and instead are involved in what Camille Focant calls a "spiral" reading.[159] This means that they try to respect the unknowns and surprises of a first reading while availing of the interpretative advantages that accrue from a re-reading. In a similar way, Malbon describes how a narrative "must be read in two ways to disclose its system of relations. It must be read diachronically, that is, 'through time,' from beginning to end. It must also be read (understood) synchronically, that is, as if everything happened at the 'same time.'"[160] This allows the reader to fill the gaps, make the connections, and synthesize the material as she or he reads. It is a process that involves "many stops" and hermeneutical pauses in the course of reading.[161]

### 1.4.4 Characters and Characterization

Within the narrative-critical approach of this dissertation, there is a particular emphasis on the Luke's characters because, through them, a view of the human person, an anthropology, is revealed. Even more than the other evangelists, the Lukan author is an impassioned storyteller and appears to make a particular effort to depict many of his characters, named and un-named, in a lifelike, colourful, and memorable way.[162]

As a narratological term, *character* refers to a "story-world participant, that is, any individual or unified group occurring in a drama or work of narrative fiction."[163] For authors, *characterization* is "the literary representation of imagined human beings."[164] For readers, it is the process by which they construct and assemble characters, often by inference, from character

[159] Camille Focant, *The Gospel According to Mark: A Commentary*, trans. Leslie Robert Keylock (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 20.

[160] Malbon, "How Does the Story Mean?" 31. Malbon also notes how the "implied reader is already a rereader," thus being able to benefit from the various resonances within the text. See Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Echoes and Foreshadowings in Mark 4-8: Reading and Rereading," *JBL* 112/2 (1993): 211–30, here 230.

[161] Corrine L. Carvalho, *Primer on Biblical Methods* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2009), 39.

[162] Outi Lehtipuu, "Characterization and Persuasion: The Rich Man and the Poor Man in Luke 16:19–31," in *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism*, eds. David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni, JSNTSup 184 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 73–105, here 74.

[163] Uri Margolin, "Character," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 52–57, here 52.

[164] Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 14.

indicators or cues distributed (directly and indirectly) in texts by writers.[165] For the naïve or casual reader, well-drawn characters are "paper people," humans who are somehow captured in writing, whose resemblance to real people makes their "affective appeal" very powerful.[166] However, at a deeper level, "characters" require a more nuanced treatment and various questions must be addressed concerning them: How do they "exist"? How are they perceived? Who constructs them and how are they constructed?

#### *1.4.4.1 How Characters "Exist:" People or Words?*

A major question concerning characters is how they may be said to "exist"—are they "people" or merely words? All theoretical models of character divide into *mimetic* (or referential/representational), where character is treated as human or human-like, and *non-mimetic*, a modern concept where character is reduced to a "text-grammatical, lexical, thematic, or compositional unit."[167] Fully representational mimetic theories regard literature as an imitation of reality where characters can be equated with human beings: the reader is permitted to speculate about a character's unconscious motivations or psychology, and sometimes to "construct for them a past and future beyond what is specified in the text," that is, their "unnarrated lives."[168] Illustrative mimetic characterization (more common in ancient narrative), on the other hand, does not seek to duplicate reality but merely to suggest an aspect of it, so that characters are more symbolic, typed, and figurative.[169] But in the semiotic criticism employed by modern structuralists and formalists, characters are decoupled from their "implied

[165] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 34.

[166] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 112; Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 108.

[167] Margolin, "Character, 52; Irene J. F. de Jong, "Ancient Theories of Narrative (Western)," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 19–22, here 19; Christopher W. Skinner, "Characterization," in *How John Works: Storytelling in the Fourth Gospel*, eds. Douglas Estes and Ruth Sheridan, RBS 86 (Atlanta, SBL Press, 2016), 115–32, here 116–21.

[168] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 32–33; Michal Beth Dinkler, "Building Character on the Road to to Emmaus: Lukan Characterization in Contemporary Literary Perspective," *JBL* 136/3 (2017): 687–706, here 694–95.

[169] Robert Scholes, James Phelan, and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative: Fortieth Anniversary Edition*, rev. and exp. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 84, 88; Darr, *Character Building*, 48.

humanness," and "dissolve into textuality," losing "their privilege, their central status, and their definition": they are merely words and cannot be analysed or described as "people."[170]

Many critics, including narrative critics, in acknowledging the "complex status of character," recognize that the referential and formalist positions are reconcilable, deeming that characters can be seen *both* as persons *and* as part of a literary design—in effect, "textualized persons, personified texts that are characters."[171] The "textualized persons" of competent narratives produce what Dutch cultural and literary theorist Mieke Bal terms "character-effects."[172] The character-effect occurs "when the resemblance between human beings and fabricated figures is so great" that the reader forgets that the character is not a human being, and merely resembles one.[173] Although the character has "no real psyche, personality, ideology, or competence to act," it does "possess characteristics that make the reader assume it does, and makes psychological and ideological descriptions possible."[174] The reconciliation between the "people" or "words" aspects of characters is essential to this dissertation since, if characters cannot be evaluated as "people," an anthropology of Luke's Gospel becomes impossible.

#### *1.4.4.2 How Characters "Exist:" Being or Doing?*

A second question concerning the "existence" of characters focuses on whether they are subordinate to, independent of, or of equal importance to the plot (or action) of the narrative.[175]

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[170] Woloch, *One vs. the Many*, 15; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 33; Joel Weinsheimer, "Theory of Character: *Emma*," in *Poetics Today* 1, 1–2 (1979): 185–211, here 195. On the development of Russian Formalism and French Structuralism, see Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 2–3.

[171] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 34; Weinsheimer, "Theory of Character," 208. Dinkler calls characters "implied people … depicted referentially *and* emplotted structurally within narrative … who exist only within the narrated world but nevertheless exert extratextual effects." See Dinkler, "Building Character," 698, 706.

[172] Bal, *Narratology*, 113.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Ibid. See also Skinner, "Characterization," 121.

[175] A plot consists of an "organized or orderly system of events, arranged in temporal sequence." See Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 93. R. Alan Culpepper identifies a plot's central features as "sequence, causality, unity, and affective power." See R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 80. Christopher Booker identifies seven basic plots (and three subplots) that are fundamental to storytelling, ancient and modern, and a cast of central figures who appear in stories of all kinds, each with their own defining characteristics. See Christopher Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (London: Continuum, 2004), 6–7. Harry Hagan posits that biblical narratives reflect these recurring plots of world

When Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, identified character and plot as the central elements of narrative, he subordinated "being" to "doing," deeming that characters are necessary only as "agents" or "performers" of the action.[176] In his, and much ancient mimetic theory, it was the deed that was worthy of imitation, not the doer.[177] Modern formalists and structuralists maintain a similar position. They reject any attribution of individuality or psychological depth to characters, focusing on the characters' *function* rather than on their features as "persons."[178] They therefore analyse characters, and propose models, for what they *do* in a story, not for what they *are*.[179]

This being-or-doing polarity is another false dichotomy. Undoubtedly, depending on the type of narrative, one or other may hold the ascendancy—in so-called psychological narratives, character will predominate, while in others—apsychological narratives or adventure stories—it is action that is paramount.[180] But in most narratives, including the narrative texts of the Bible, character and plot are interdependent, both equally essential.[181] The conflicts and choices of the characters "advance the plot, and the events of the plot reveal the characters."[182]

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literature. See Harry Hagan, "Basic Plots in the Bible: A Literary Approach to Genre," *BTB* 49/4 (2019): 198–213, here 200.

[176] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 34; de Jong, "Ancient Theories of Narrative (Western)," 19–20. Aristotle claims that "Tragedy [that is, drama] is a representation not of people as such but of action and life, and both happiness and unhappiness rest on action. The goal is a certain activity, not a qualitative state; and while men do have certain qualities by virtue of their character, it is in their actions that they achieve, or fail to achieve happiness. It is not, therefore, the function of the agents' actions to allow the portrayal of their characters; it is, rather, for the sake of their actions that characterization is included." See Stephen Halliwell, *The Poetics of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 37.

[177] Halliwell, *Poetics*, 32; Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 108. Mimesis, or imitation, was linked to ethical behaviour in antiquity, whereby individuals were encouraged to imitate the best of others, whether God, parent, teacher, or other role models. See Cornelis Bennema, *Mimesis in the Johannine Literature*, LNTS 498 (London: T&T Clark, 2017), 24.

[178] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 29–32; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 59.

[179] Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 111. For Vladimir Propp's and Algirdas Greimas's models, see Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 20–22, 34, and Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 62.

[180] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 36.

[181] Darr, *Character Building,* 39. Novelist Henry James remarked on the interdependence of plot and character: "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?" See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 35–36. She cites James's 1884 essay, "The Art of Fiction," in Morris Shapira, *Henry James: Selected Literary Criticism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 80.

[182] Elizabeth Shively, "Characterizing the Non-Human: Satan in the Gospel of Mark," in *Character Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, eds. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 127–51, here 128.

#### *1.4.4.3 How Are Characters Constructed?*

The real reader constructs the implied reader, who in turn constructs the characters. This is a cognitive activity that is achieved in two intertwined ways, one deductive and the other inductive. On the deductive process, Michael Whitenton suggests that readers begin with an immediate "first impression" of a character, as they do with people whom they encounter in real life. He posits that people since ancient times make sense of the world "by essentially running mental simulations of the 'real' world" (frames, scripts, or schema) in their mind's eye, based on their own embodied experiences.[183] They initially categorize other people "based on whatever schema is most relevant among those primed by her or his appearance, behaviour, speech, and so on."[184] Transferring this to a narrative, Whitenton posits that readers will scan their "mental lexicon" and choose a frame from the "real" world to apply to characters in the story-world.[185] Once a frame is triggered, there may follow an immediate "cascade[s] of inferences about the characters," including their aims, emotions, and motives, which may or may not prove accurate as the narrative develops.[186] For example, in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the woman "of the city" with her jar of perfume, whom the narrator designates a "sinner"(7:37), may trigger a "prostitute" script in the mind of the implied reader before any action unfolds to either confirm or refute the initial impression.[187] In Chapter Three, Zacchaeus, introduced as a rich, chief tax collector, may generate a similarly immediate response in the audience based on their real-world experiences of tax collectors.

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[183] Michael R. Whitenton, *Configuring Nicodemus: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Complex Characterization*, LNTS 549 (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 53.

[184] Ibid., 112.

[185] Ibid., 27.

[186] Ibid., 50.

[187] The stock characters of Greco-Roman literature provide a window on some of the schema or frames that were available to ancient audiences. Theophrastus, in his *On Characters*, provides amusing sketches of thirty character-types who were commonly encountered in the ancient Mediterranean world and would therefore resonate with audiences. Ibid., 55. Theophrastus names his characters by their dominant trait—the Flatterer, the Coward, the Dissembler, and so on—and goes on to detail many of their foibles. See Theophrastus, *Characters*, ed. and trans. James Diggle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Theophrastus (ca. 370–ca. 287 BCE), a philosopher and scientist, was pupil, friend, and collaborator of Aristotle, and succeeded him as head of the Peripatetic school. See John Hazel, *Who's Who in the Greek World* (London: Routledge, 2000), 240–41. He based his *Characters* on various ethical philosophical works of Aristotle—the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Eudemian Ethics*, and *Magna Moralia*. Theophrastus's character types were "part of the common knowledge of literarily and rhetorically trained people" of the first centuries CE and were likely recognized by ancient readers and auditors as "markers establishing, or at least evoking, character typification." See Koen de Temmerman, "Where Philosophy and Rhetoric Meet: Character Typification in the Greek Novel," in *Philosophical Presences in the Ancient Novel*, eds. J. R. Morgan and Meriel Jones, ANS 10 (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2007), 85–110, here 86, 91.

The inductive method of character construction is less spontaneous and more measured. Here, readers assemble various character-indicators or cues distributed in the text and, when necessary, inferring traits from them.[188] According to Chatman, textual characters consist of a "paradigm of traits," where a trait is a "relatively stable or abiding personal quality" that unfolds in the course of the story, that may disappear and be replaced by another.[189] The English fiction writer and essayist E. M. Forster long ago classified characters into "flat" and "round," where a flat character is endowed with just a single trait, and a round character with several, more complex traits. In this taxonomy, the flat character is highly predictable, has a clear direction, and does not develop in the course of the action.[190] Round characters, in contrast, possess a variety of traits, some of them conflicting or contradictory, their behaviour is not predictable, they are capable of change or development, and they can surprise—in a convincing way—or resist the reader.[191] Many critics find the dichotomy between Forster's round and flat characters to be "useful but highly reductive."[192] Bennema, among others, suggests that it is better to speak of degrees of characterization along a continuum rather than according to exclusive categories, and he prefers to use the terms "simple" and "complex" to "flat" and "round."[193]

The cues or character-indicators can be by direct definition or indirect presentation.[194] In the first, "telling," a trait or quality is named (which may or may not be accurate, depending

[188] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 59.

[189] Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 126.

[190] E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1955 [orig. 1927]), 67–78. See also Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 132; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 40; Skinner, "Characterization," 121.

[191] Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, 78; Bal, *Narratology*, 114–15. Forster describes how a round character must be "capable of surprising in convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is a flat pretending to be round." See Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, 78.

[192] Rimmon-Kennan, *Narrative Fiction*, 40–41.

[193] Cornelis Bennema, *A Theory of Character in New Testament Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), xii, 85. Fred Burnett, following Adele Berlin, suggests that characters exist on a continuum that moves from "agent" to "type" to "character." See Fred W. Burnett, "Characterization and Reader Construction of Characters in the Gospels," *Semeia* 63/1 (1993): 3–28, here 16. See also Dinkler, "Building Character," 691. Roth notes how "it should be kept in mind that no actual human being is ever so simple as the roundest of characters in a narrative. No narrative … can ever display the fullness of personality traits, the interweaving of relationships, the points of view, the predictability and unpredictability of actions, all of the enormous complexities that make up a human being." See Roth, *The Blind, the Lame, and the Poor*, 76. Chatman, on the other hands, comments how "Some characters in sophisticated narratives remain open constructs, just as some people in the real world stay mysteries no matter how well we know them." See Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 118.

[194] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 59.

on the reliability of who is doing the naming). In the second, "showing," the trait is not named, but is displayed in various ways, leaving to the reader the task of inferring the quality that is being implied.[195] Any traits the reader assigns to a character must "come from within the realm of traits familiar to the culture during the era of writing."[196] Indirect presentation can include action (including characters' interactions), speech (either conversation or mental activity), external appearance (rare in Luke's Gospel) and setting.[197] This "telling" and "showing," or *diegesis* and *mimesis,* is the task of the narrator.[198]

The *narrator*, the "voice" from which the narrative comes, is created by the implied author as part of the narrative, and is not to identified with her or him.[199] As a rhetorical construct through whom the story is filtered, "everything about it [the story] bears traces of the narrator's selectivity and evaluation," thus helping shape the response that readers believe they are making on their own.[200] The narrator's voice is *not* to be equated with that of the implied author, or any of the other gospel characters (the narrator himself is a character), including Jesus; instead, the narrator exists alongside them, and the narrator's voice is heard as well as theirs.[201] Sometimes, the narrator, the implied author, and various characters may express viewpoints that are distinctive from, if not at variance, with one another.[202] This is because gospels are polyphonic texts, and no one voice, neither that of Jesus nor the narrator, can bear

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[195] Ibid., 59–60. Malbon summarizes this process very succinctly, "characters are known by what they say and by what they do and by what others (the narrator and other characters) say and do to, about, or in relation to them." See Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 14.

[196] Rhoads, *Reading Mark*, 10.

[197] Dinkler, "Building Character," 688; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 61–67.

[198] On *diegesis* and *mimesis*, see Dan Shen, "Mimesis," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 107–8.

[199] Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 175, 176; Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 243; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 14.

[200] Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels*, 25; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "The Reader in New Testament Interpretation," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 301–28, here 320; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 31.

[201] Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 243; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 13.

[202] Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 243. For example, the narrator and Jesus differ in their estimation of the "sinful" woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee (7:36–50).

the "full weight" of a gospel's ideology.[203] This means that implied reader must hold together the many points of view in a creative tension that is often incapable of a final resolution.[204]

Within the dissertation, there is constant reference to the implied author, the implied reader, the narrator, and the characters. All are constructs, and exist within the "world of the text," one of the three worlds identified by Ricoeur, whose theory of text provides the hermeneutical framework for this study.[205]

### 1.5 The Hermeneutical Framework: The Text and its Worlds

Ricoeur uses the categories of the world *behind* the text, the world *of* the text, and the world *before* (or in front of) the text.[206] Together they constitute different, complementary dimensions involved in understanding a narrative.[207] The three worlds also form the scaffolding for Schneiders's 1991 seminal work on New Testament hermeneutics, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*.[208] Here, in a virtual dialogue with the work of Ricoeur (and hermeneutical philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer), Schneiders considers the Bible both as sacred scripture and as a historical-literary classic text worthy of study in its

[203] Ibid., 242, 244.

[204] Ibid., 255. Malbon notes that the narrator cannot be censured for this polyphony because it is the implied author who "tells the tale" and under whose authority the various outlooks are expressed. Ibid. 258, 257.

[205] Hermeneutics "entails critical reflection on the basis, nature and goals of reading, interpreting and understanding communicative acts and processes. This characteristically concerns the understanding of texts, especially biblical or literary texts, or those of another era or culture." See Anthony Thiselton, "Biblical Studies and Theoretical Hermeneutics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 95–113, here 95. In short, hermeneutics is "the art and science of reading." See Abraham Kuruvilla, *Text to Praxis: Hermeneutics and Homiletics in Dialogue*, LNTS 374 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 1.

[206] Paul Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 93–106, here 102–4. "World" is a "notoriously tricky term" with Ricoeur, and he uses it very widely and in many contexts. See S. H. Clark, *Paul Ricoeur* (London: Routledge, 1990), 101. It is clear that, for him, the world of the author is "concealed *behind* the text," and that the contemporary "being-in-the-world" is "unfolded in front of the text," but in describing the world *of* the text as "a proposed world which I could inhabit and wherein I could project one of my ownmost possibilities," Ricoeur seems to conflate the world *of* the text with the world *in front of* the text. Ibid., 104.

[207] Moberly, *Bible in a Disenchanted Age*, 192.

[208] The text of the second (1999) edition is unchanged: Schneiders has merely added a new Preface.

own right, one that, ideally, will be appropriated by real readers as a vehicle to carry them into a "renewed view of reality and a new way of being and acting."[209]

### 1.5.1 The World of the Text

A text, as defined by Ricoeur, is "any discourse fixed by writing."[210] For him, discourse is a purposeful medium (it "says something about something") and a text, like speech (oral discourse), "intends things, applies itself to reality, expresses the world."[211] But in contrast to the verbal communication of persons who are immediately present to one another, a text communicates in and through temporal and spatial distance.[212] In the distanciation gained by discourse in the passage from speaking to writing, Ricoeur concluded that it acquires autonomy from the concerns and conditions of both the original author and the original audience.[213]

The world of the text "refers to what has been produced, that is, to the literary entity in its integrity."[214] It is "the imaginary world created by the narrative in its telling," with its own times, places, characters, values, and events.[215] In analyzing the world of the text, to discover how it works linguistically and rhetorically, literary critics distinguish between *story* and *discourse*. Story is the *what* of a narrative and comprises its contents, including events, characters, settings, and plot; discourse refers to the rhetoric of the narrative, *how* the story gets told.[216] The story is where the characters interact, and the discourse is where the implied author and implied readers interact.[217] Through their examination of the formal features of the story-

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[209] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 162.

[210] Paul Ricoeur, "What is a Text? Explanation and Understanding," in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 107–26, here 107.

[211] Ricoeur, "What is a Text?" 109; Ricoeur, "Distanciation," 103.

[212] Ricoeur, "Distanciation," 93.

[213] Ibid., 101–2.

[214] Sandra M. Schneiders, "Biblical Hermeneutics Since Vatican II," in *Beyond Dogmatism and Innocence: Hermeneutics, Critique, and Catholic Theology*, eds. Anthony J. Godzieba and Bradford E. Hinze (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2017), 17–26, here 21.

[215] Rhoads, *Reading Mark,* 24.

[216] Malbon, "How Does the Story Mean?" 32; Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 19.

[217] Malbon, "How Does the Story Mean?" 32.

as-discoursed—characters, rhetoric, style, syntax, plot, imagery, setting, tone, point of view, narrator, implied author, implied reader—narrative critics investigate how the implied author leads the implied reader to an interpretation.[218] It is through this engagement with the elements of the world of the text that access is first gained to the anthropology of the Gospel.

### 1.5.2 The World Behind the Text

Because Luke's Gospel is an ancient document from the distant past, the predominantly literary approach of this study cannot be used in isolation from a socio-cultural-historical understanding of the first-century Greco-Roman-Jewish world *behind* the text. The New Testament writers shared a common symbolic universe or "cultural encyclopedia" with their audiences that facilitated communication between them.[219] But a modern reader's languages, customs, economies, political orders, social systems, values, expectations, worldviews, philosophies, and ethos are very different from the Mediterranean cultures of the first century.[220] The contemporary interpreter therefore must, in David Rhoads's vivid expression, "enter in imagination through the door" into the past to avoid imposing meanings on the text that come from a modern time and place.[221] Therefore, cultural anthropology, which posits a general socio-cultural and anthropological model of the ancient world, plays a vital role in the dissertation (although it reveals nothing specifically about "Luke" or his immediate concerns). When an interpreter is engaged with these first-century realities, she is approaching the text as a "plausible historically-informed modern reader."[222] In a fusion of ancient and modern horizons, this critic, posited by Bennema, is a modern reader who has an adequate knowledge of the "cultural scripts" of the first-century world and can give a plausible explanation for the ancient sources she assumes.[223]

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[218] Ibid., 39–42.

[219] Rowe, *World Upside Down*, 8.

[220] David Rhoads, "Social Criticism: Crossing Boundaries," in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, eds. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 145–79, here 145.

[221] Ibid., 146.

[222] Bennema, *Theory of Character*, 68.

[223] Ibid., 66.

### 1.5.3 The World Before the Text

Any work of art, of whatever medium, has the capacity to "project a world" into which the audience is invited.[224] In literature, this projected world is termed the world *before* the text. The reader who enters this world and encounters the personalities and realities presented there, has the possibility of living a different life and returning to everyday life changed in some essential way.[225] For Ricoeur, the "destiny of the text is fulfilled" in the concrete act of reading and in the achievement by the real reader of self-understanding before the text, what he terms "appropriation," or its application to the present situation of the reader.[226] In this world, according to Schneiders, the concern is on "the significance of the text for the present, the implications of the biblical material for contemporary theological reflection, and the text's challenge for the contemporary believer, its transformative potential."[227]

From this it is clear that Ricoeur's world before the text explores the potential effects of a text upon its real audience and the possibilities of reading for social and personal transformation.[228] But, because this dissertation is a narrative-critical study, it does not rigorously investigate the capacity of Luke's Gospel for existential augmentation in this sense, as that would move the inquiry from a narrative-critical approach into pragmatic methodologies such as reader-response, liberation, feminist, or ethical studies, or into an examination of spiritual hermeneutics.[229] Instead, the dissertation chiefly examines the call for renewal that is internal to the narrative, where the characters and the implied readers, while belonging to the world *of* the text, are simultaneously called to "inhabit" their own world projected *before* the

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[224] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text,* 167.

[225] Ibid. Schneiders describes this transformative experience as audiences being "transported out of their surface reality into a new in-depth reality that is a depth-vision of what they are really living but to which they are often inattentive or even blind … [they] find their own inner landscapes and outer lives illuminated in subtle or shattering ways. They experience various kinds and levels of transformation or conversion." See Sandra M. Schneiders, "Biblical Spirituality," *Int* 70(4) (2016): 417–30, here 429, 430.

[226] Ricoeur, "What is a Text?" 126; Ricoeur, "Distanciation," 105–6. "By appropriation I understand this: that the interpretation of a text culminates in the self-interpretation of a subject who thenceforth understands himself better, understands himself differently, or simply begins to understand himself." See Ricoeur, "What is a Text?" 120.

[227] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 113.

[228] Schneiders, "Gospels and the Reader," 100.

[229] Ibid., 100–103. In pragmatic approaches, unlike narrative criticism, the concentration is not on the text, but on the present situation of the reader.

text. However, since characters are not created for their own sakes, but instead form a bridge to the implied audience, who exist on the border between the internal world of the narrative and its real readers, the text's implications for real audiences, where applicable and appropriate, are explored and considered.[230] Otherwise, it would fail Powell's maxim that narrative criticism is not an end in itself.[231]

### 1.5.4 The Meaning of Meaning and the Worlds of the Text

All literary theories must "account for meaning."[232] The "meaning of meaning" was extensively examined by Ricoeur, asking how and what does a text mean?[233] Given his conviction that language "intends to mediate reality," meaning always involves "someone saying something to someone about something."[234] Although Ricoeur is not a narrative critic (his concern is with the real reader), his work on meaning holds considerable relevance for narrative criticism. His theory can be summarised thus: all meaning emerges through interpretation; the goal of interpretation is understanding; and understanding is the experience of meaning.[235] Ultimately, for Ricoeur, understanding is self-understanding; it is not epistemological but ontological.[236]

Ricoeur distinguished between meaning as *propositional content* (the world of and behind the text) and meaning as *event* (the world before the text).[237] In considering

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[230] Malbon, "Minor Characters," 61, 63.

[231] Powell, "Prominent Reading Strategy," 36.

[232] Ian Maclean, "Reading and Interpretation," in *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*, eds. Ann Jefferson and David Robey, 2nd ed. (London: Batsford, 1986), 122–44, here 122. "Meaning" is a difficult topic. As Schneiders puts it, "Everyone can agree that the objective of New Testament interpretation is to arrive at an understanding of the meaning of the text. But there the agreement ends, because the meaning of meaning itself as well of understanding is disputable." See Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 13.

[233] Schneiders, "Gospels and the Reader," 106. It was a "given" for Ricoeur that the meaning of a text is not reducible to the intention of the writer. See Ricoeur, "Distanciation," 101–2.

[234] Ricoeur, "What is a Text?" 109; Richard Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur: The Owl of Minerva* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2004), 4.

[235] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 17–18, 157–59. Schneiders comments how "interpretation is a never-ending process of engagement and re-engagement with a text whose real meaning is always developing through the work of interpretation." See Schneiders, "Gospels and the Reader," 108.

[236] Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur*, 4.

[237] Schneiders, "Gospels and the Reader," 106.

propositional content, he designated a text as a dialectical reality where *sense* and *reference* interact to constitute meaning.[238] The *sense* comprises *what* is said and is established by the grammatical and syntactical integrity of words and sentences and their relation to each other.[239] The *reference* concerns *that about which* something is said, and is the "truth value of the proposition, its claim to reach reality."[240] All interpreters, including narrative critics, use a selection or combination of exegetical, historical, social, narrative, literary, and critical tools to establish the propositional content or *ideal meaning* of a text, that is, what it is that the text intends to say.[241] The worlds of and behind the text, insulated as far as possible from the subjectivity of the interpreter, are an essential part of valid interpretation, and Ricoeur valued the "structural objectifications" gained from them.[242] The meaning reached in this ideal form establishes the text's "inner governing structure" and acts as the "norm of valid interpretation."[243] The knowledge or meaning achieved here by the reader, critic, or interpreter is an epistemological one.

Having established an ideal meaning, Ricoeur then posits how this ideal meaning emerges as real meaning or self-understanding, that is, how epistemological knowledge develops into an ontological awareness whereby "new possibilities of being-in-the-world are opened up within everyday reality."[244] For Schneiders, the real reader's "existential horizon" is expanded, her humanity is deepened, and she incorporates the meaning of the text into her

[238] Ricoeur, "Distanciation," 103. In his use of sense and reference, Ricoeur follows the model of *Sinn und Bedeutung* proposed by German analytical philosopher Gottlob Frege (1848–1925). See John W. Van Den Hengel, *The Home of Meaning: The Hermeneutics of the Subject of Paul Ricoeur* (Washington, DC: University of America Press, 1982), 32–33.

[239] Paul Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Central Problem of Hermeneutics," in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 127–43, here 129; Schneiders, "Gospels and the Reader," 106.

[240] Ricoeur, "What is a Text," 110; Ricoeur, "Distanciation," 103. Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 146. For example, the sentence, "Dogs are felines," makes *sense* grammatically and syntactically, but it has no *reference* in reality because that is not how dogs are understood.

[241] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 146–47, 158.

[242] Ricoeur, "Distanciation," 143.

[243] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, xxxiv, xxxii.

[244] Ricoeur, "Distanciation," 104.

world.[245] The *event of meaning* takes place in an extended interpretative process that oscillates between *explanation* (the analytical work by which ideal meaning is established) and *understanding*.[246] To understand is "to follow the dynamic of the work, its movement from what it says to that which about which it speaks."[247] It is the event in which the text's meaning "comes home" for the real reader, and the truth claims of the text are no longer in the abstract but in the concrete, incorporated into the reader's own world.[248] When this understanding is reached, the *imminent reference* of the world *of* the text (what it was talking about) becomes the *ultimate reference* for the reader who accepts the "implications for his or her reality" in the world *before* the text.[249]

For Ricoeur, interpretation "is not authentic unless it culminates in some form of personal appropriation."[250] But he also maintains that appropriation is neither subjective nor arbitrary, that a text is a "finite space of interpretations," and that to achieve self-understanding before a text is not to project onto it "one's own beliefs and prejudices."[251] Instead, to appropriate is to access the potential of that which is already present, "at work, in labour, within the text," and it occurs in the re-contextualized worlds of real readers.[252]

### 1.5.5 The Hermeneutical Model and Narrative Criticism

In the examination of the effects of the text on implied readers, the procedures of the narrative critic are akin to Ricoeur's model. First, they identify the *sense* and *imminent reference* of the

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[245] Schneiders, "Gospels and the Reader," 109. Schneiders describes how, ideally, "the interpreter of a gospel is not merely trying to grasp what happened in the first century or what the evangelist intended to say or what the text actually does say about what happened. The interpreter is undergoing a kind of transformative experience … [and] … emerges from the experience somehow different." Ibid.

[246] Ricoeur, "What is a Text?" 107–26; Schneiders, "Gospels and the Reader," 108.

[247] Ricoeur, "Metaphor," 139.

[248] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 17.

[249] Ibid., 147.

[250] Ricoeur, "Metaphor," 178.

[251] Ricoeur, "Distanciation," 101; Ricoeur, "World of the Text," 496; Ricoeur, "Metaphor," 140. One of the reservations raised about Ricoeur's hermeneutics is that he gives no detailed consideration into what constitutes a valid interpretation or personal appropriation. See Clark, *Paul Ricoeur*, 109.

[252] Ricoeur, "What is a Text?" 126. In a similar vein, Kuruvilla comments that meanings are "discovered, not created." See Kuruvilla, *Text to Praxis*, 3.

worlds *behind* and *of* the text, thus establishing the semantic or *ideal meaning* of the narrative (what Schneiders calls an "objective pole" or "norm of interpretation").[253] Next, they analyse the rhetoric to discover the call of the text and the vision of reality that it represents. For example, in the parable of the good Samaritan (10:30–35), the text makes sense in that it is grammatically and syntactically correct, and can be read logically as a tale with a beginning, middle, and end. The parable has an *imminent reference* in that it is about a man who falls among thieves and is kindly treated by a surprising stranger. And it has an *ultimate* reference or an existential meaning for the implied readers who are led to follow the call of the Gospel to exercise compassion, σπλαγχνίζομαι, in their dealings with others. In disclosing the trait of compassion as a core characteristic of a human being who is living optimally in the world, who engages in a practical way with those with whom she or he comes in contact, who gives abundantly, freely, without question, and without expectation of reciprocation, and whose behaviour contributes to the wellbeing of the proximate "other," the parable reveals an anthropological dimension of the Gospel that represents the world in front of the text for its implied audience as much as it does for a real reader encountering the text in her or his contemporary setting.

### 1.5.6 The Focus of the Study

Of these three worlds, this dissertation first concentrates on the world *of* the text with its many constitutive literary elements, especially characterization. There is also an examination of aspects of the world *behind* the text (the cultural, sociological, philosophical, anthropological, theological, and historical matrix of the Greco-Roman-Jewish world) when the text invites or requires such an appraisal. It investigates the world *before* the text to the extent that its rhetoric was intended to produce "responses" of an existential nature in the implied audience. Finally, where appropriate, the study considers the potential of the text for existential augmentation in the present situation of real readers because it is in this exploration that the "end-game" of narrative criticism lies.

The study undertakes a close reading of four pericopae: the Anointing Woman and Simon the Pharisee (7:36–50), Martha and Mary (10:38–42), Zacchaeus and the "Grumblers" (19:1–10), and the Two Wrongdoers (23:32, 39–43). All are examples of the "triangular" situations often found in the Gospel, where Jesus appears on stage with two other main

[253] Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, xxxii.

characters, whose responses to him are contrasted.[254] Two of the pericopae take up large narrative spaces (the Anointing Woman and Zacchaeus), while two are considerably shorter (Martha and Mary and the Two Wrongdoers). There is a pair of women (Martha and Mary) and a pair of men (the two wrongdoers). Two passages comprise a mixed cast where a woman (the anointing woman) and a man (Zacchaeus) are subjected to the critical scrutiny of others. Two occur in domestic settings (the Anointing Woman and Martha and Mary), while two are situated largely in the public domain (Zacchaeus and the Two Wrongdoers). Finally, the four pericopae are relatively well spaced throughout the narrative, from near the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry to virtually its end. In each passage, the study explores and explains the text as it unfolds, which is an exercise in communicating and interpreting the narrative as a dynamic reality.

[254] The phrase "triangular" situations comes from Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 5. Wolter calls such contrasting pairs "narrative twins." See Michael Wolter, *The Gospel According to Luke: Volume II (Luke 9:51–24)*, trans. Wayne Coppins and Christoph Heilig (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017), 82. In the Zacchaeus pericope, the "grumblers" may be regarded as a group character. See §2.2.1 footnote #8 for a note on a group character.

# CHAPTER TWO

# THE ANOINTING WOMAN AND SIMON THE PHARISEE (7:36–50)

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the interruption that occurs when an unexpected woman intrudes on a meal in a Pharisee's house where Jesus is present as a guest. It dramatizes complex issues of identity, recognition, and response that were presented more abstractly in the preceding discourse (7:18–35), thus making it easier for audiences to engage with them.[1] Considered "one of the great episodes" in the Lukan Gospel, it is highly structured and rhetorically shaped.[2] The opening verses are filled with misdirection, occasioned not only by gaps in the narration, but also by the multiple interpretative possibilities of the innuendo-laden text. This means that the implied readers are led into making premature judgments about what is unfolding. As the full facts emerge and the narrative gaps are filled, they are obliged to reconsider earlier interpretations.

[1] The implied author frequently arranges sections of the Gospel so that they are "mutually interpretive." In particular, he often follows a discourse or didactic section with a narrative that illustrates its concerns. See Johnson, *Luke*, 16–17. In the co-text of this pericope, John the Baptist and his disciples question Jesus' identity, "Are you the one who is to come?" σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος; (7:19, 20). Matters of perception and recognition are raised by Jesus with "seeing" verbs at 7:22, 24, 25, 26, 34. And the Jesus of the co-text seeks a response from his narrative hearers who, mired in indifference or indecision, neither dance nor weep (7:32). All these matters surface during the interactions at Simon's dinner.

[2] Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 687. Different commentators identify the passage's organization in various ways. Bovon divides it into First Scene (vv. 36–39), Second Scene (vv. 40–43), Third Scene (vv. 44–47), and Fourth Scene (vv. 48–50). See Bovon, *Luke 1*, 293, 295, 296, 297. Wolter arranges it into an introduction (v. 36), the event (vv. 37–38), a dialogue (vv. 39–47), and Jesus' reaction (vv. 48–50). See Michael Wolter, *The Gospel According to Luke: Volume I (Luke 1–9:50)*, trans. Wayne Coppins and Christoph Heilig (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 317. John Nolland divides the material into three instances of "report and accompanying evaluation (vv. 36–38/39; vv. 40–42/43; vv. 44–46/47) with vv. 48–50 as an epilogue." See John Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, WBC 35A (Nashville: Nelson, 2000), 353. As will emerge in the analysis below, Nolland's scheme is especially useful as the specific judgments of Simon (vv. 39, 43) and Jesus (v. 47) are crucial to an interpretation of the pericope.

The triad of main characters consists of Jesus, the woman, and Simon the Pharisee. The fourth character is the invisible but pervasive narrator, and there is also a background group of other diners. The narrator dominates the opening part of the passage (vv. 36–39a), as Jesus does the remainder. Simon is accorded only a short monologue and two brief sentences, while the woman, although nameless and silent, is the focal point around whom the pericope revolves. The audience first sees her through the narrator's eyes (when he describes her extravagant actions), then through Simon's eyes (when he judges what he sees), and finally through Jesus' eyes (when he interprets her behaviour).[3] While Simon is presented as a foil for the woman whose qualities are placed in juxtaposition with his, a close reading discloses that he is not a simple, stereotypically-negative character from whom the audience can comfortably distance itself. Instead, he emerges as a complex and enigmatic figure, whose ultimate response to Jesus is left sufficiently indeterminate to engage the reader.

### 2.2 The Pharisee's Invitation (7:36)

The narrator sets the action in motion in an abrupt fashion by reporting that an unnamed Pharisee has invited Jesus to dine at his house.[4] The impression is given that Jesus is the last (and therefore the chief) guest to arrive at what appears to be a formal Greek-style symposium dinner, where (male) guests recline, κατακλίνω, in the Hellenistic manner, resting on one side, with feet pointing away from the table, engaging in debate and discussion of significant issues.[5] Jesus' inclusion signifies his social standing as a well-known teacher and hence an interesting table-companion.[6] The implied audience's initial reaction to the Pharisee's invitation is one of

[3] Amy-Jill Levine and Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 214.

[4] The personal name "Jesus" is not used in this pericope until v. 40. He has not been called "Jesus" since 7:9, at the healing of the centurion's servant. Since then, although twice identified as "the Lord" (7:13, 19), Jesus is designated as "he."

[5] Jerome H. Neyrey, "Ceremonies in Luke-Acts: The Case of Meals and Table Fellowship," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 361–87, here 377; Johnson, *Luke*, 127; Tannehill, *Luke*, 134; Green, *Luke*, 306; Kathleen E. Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 123; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 290, 293; Michal Beth Dinkler, *Silent Statements: Narrative Representations of Speech and Silence in the Gospel of Luke* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 121. "κατακλίνω," L&N 1, §17.24; BDAG, 518. The verb is found in the New Testament only in Luke's Gospel.

[6] Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 353.

surprise because, in the narrative to this point, Pharisees have been depicted as opponents of Jesus and therefore would not be expected to offer him hospitality.[7]

### 2.2.1 The Narrative Pharisees

Although this is the first time that the implied audience has met an individual Pharisee, Pharisees comprise the most prominent group character in the Gospel thus far.[8] They are introduced into the narrative in a series of conflict stories (5:17–26, 29–32; 6:2–5, 6–11; 7:30), where the rhetoric of the text guides the readers to view them in a largely negative manner.[9] The narrator reports them as watching Jesus closely, παρατηρέω (6:7); considering him carefully, διαλογίζομαι (5:21); grumbling about him, γογγύζω (5:30); filled with fury, ἐπλήσθησαν ἀνοίας (6:11); trying to decide, διαλαλέω, what they might do to him (6:11); and, in a scathing indictment, deemed by the narrator to have "rejected God's purpose, βουλή, for themselves" (7:30).[10] By consistently providing a combative and contrasting point of view to Jesus, the Pharisees distinguish Jesus' words and actions, make his teaching stand out sharply, and remind the audience (both implied and real) that decisions concerning Jesus must be made.[11]

Throughout this series of confrontations, the Pharisees are almost invariably referred to as Φαρισαῖοι or οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, thus reinforcing their group identity and attitudes (5:21, 30; 6:7; 7:30). On one occasion, however, at the incident in the grainfields, the narrator mentions that

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[7] For the implied reader, there might be a "question mark beside the meal invitation." See Carroll, *Luke*, 177.

[8] A "group character" functions as a single character in a narrative. See Mark Allan Powell, "The Religious Leaders in Luke: A Literary-Critical Study," *JBL* 109 (1990): 93–110, here 94.

[9] Pharisees are present at the healing of the man with paralysis (5:17–26) and Levi's feast (5:29–32). They twice query Jesus' breaking of the Sabbath, first in the grainfields (6:1–5), then at the cure of the man with the withered hand (6:6–11). They may be part of the "they" who critically compare John's fasting and praying with Jesus' feasting and drinking (5:33–39), and they are reported to be among those who refuse to be baptized by John (7:30).

[10] "παρατηρέω," to watch closely and diligently, to observe someone to see what a person does: L&N 1, §24.48; BDAG, 771. "διαλογίζομαι," to think or reason with thoroughness and completeness, especially about the implications of something: L&N 1, §30.10; BDAG, 232. "γογγύζω," to complain, grumble, murmur, to express discontent, to express oneself in low terms of disapprobation: L&N 1, §33.382; BDAG, 204.

[11] Lynn Cohick, "Pharisees," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 673–79, here 673; Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story*, 260.

it is just "some" of the Pharisees, τινὲς δὲ τῶν Φαρισαίων (6:2), who berate Jesus, indicating that it is possible that not all Pharisees will follow the stereotype that the implied author is constructing.[12] The end of the healing of the man with paralysis presents another possible exception to their monolithic negativity. "All" who witness the cure are reported to be amazed, ἔκστασις, they glorify God, δοξάζω, and are filled with awe, φόβος, at the strange things, παράδοξα, that they witness (5:26).[13] Even if the "all" is an exaggeration, it must be assumed that the Pharisees are included with the crowd in these positive responses, thus leaving some "wriggle-room" and a measure of fluidity in their early characterization.[14] This maintains reader interest and involvement, because stereotypes constantly presented with no possibility of individual variation would make the reading experience predictable and repetitive.[15] Pondering the surprising dinner invitation, the reader considers whether the host will follow the stereotype or be more akin to a "real" individual, that is, someone with mixed characteristics and motivations.

### 2.2.2 The Historical Pharisees

The narrative Pharisees must be distinguished from their historical counterparts. Extensive conclusions concerning them are difficult. Vasile Babota, from his studies of the books of Maccabees, the writings of Josephus, and the Dead Sea Scrolls, proposes two settings for their origins.[16] First, Pharisees may have been involved in scribal activity in the final centuries BCE,

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[12] Amy-Jill Levine, "Luke's Pharisees," in *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees*, eds. Jacob Neusner and Bruce D. Chilton (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 113–30, here 120.

[13] The implied audience might approach such enthusiasm with a degree of scepticism, recalling how "all" in the Nazareth synagogue were similarly stirred (4:22), only to quickly fill with rage and try to kill him (4:28–29). Furthermore, Darr questions the nature of the response of the "all" on the basis that the narrator fails to inform the audience whether "all" truly understood the nature of the healing as Jesus explained it, that is, as establishing his authority to forgive sin. See Darr, *On Character Building*, 95. Darr, in fact, believes that the reader sees in Simon the Pharisee "a representative of all the Pharisees who (the narrator told us) rejected God's will for themselves by not experiencing God's baptism (7:29)."

[14] "Wriggle room" is a term of Robert Fowler. He discusses how modern authors "want to break away from static or monolithic views of characters. Most want to crack characters open, to give them some wriggle room, to allow for fluidity and multiplicity in characterization." See Robert M. Fowler, "Characterizing Character in Biblical Narrative," *Semeia* 63 (1993): 97–104, here 97.

[15] See Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story*, 261–62.

[16] Other evidence for the Pharisees' historicity emerges from the New Testament and early rabbinic literature, but these are often polemic and tendentious. See Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Pharisees," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, *New Revised Standard Version*, eds. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 2017), 619–22, here 621; Vasile Babota, "In Search of the Origins of the Pharisees," in *The Pharisees*, eds. Joseph Sievers and Amy-Jill Levine (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 23–40, here 23.

a time when some of the Hebrew Scriptures achieved their final shape, and also when translation into the Septuagint began.[17] The second window is a socio-political one. The documents locate at least some Pharisees in Jerusalem and portray them as playing a conspicuous role in Judean society during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE), the second king of the Hasmonean dynasty.[18] They emerge as being in a position to influence, engage with, and challenge the Hasmonean rulers, and even to negotiate with the Syrian-based Seleucids who controlled the wider political region.[19] In addition to this high-level influence, the Pharisees also appear to have exerted a certain sway over sections of the general population.[20] As Babota comments on these far from comprehensive findings, "the Pharisees did not rise to such positions overnight; nor did they appear from nowhere. Whether under this name or another, they must have evolved over a longer period of time."[21] He further notes that his conclusions "can only tell something about more prominent Pharisees, not about all who associated themselves, or were associated by others, with the label 'Pharisees(s).' Finally, none of these settings answers such questions as when, how, and why Pharisees appeared in the Second Temple period."[22]

[17] Babota, "In Search of the Origins of the Pharisees," 36–37, 40.

[18] Ibid., 37. The Hasmonean dynasty (167–63 BCE) ruled Palestine after the ousting of the Seleucids in the Maccabean Revolt. The Seleucids, particularly under King Antiochus I Epiphanes (ca. 215–ca. 164 BCE) sought to introduce syncretistic worship into the temple and to forbid the observance of Torah (1 Macc 1:41–57; 2 Macc 6:1–6).

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 40. Some previously-held scholarly opinion deemed that the Pharisees were particularly concerned with matters of purity and that they may have "led the way in preserving the traditions of purity outside the temple." See James F. Strange, "Archaeology and the Pharisees," in *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees*, eds. Jacob Neusner and Bruce D. Chilton (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 237–52, here 251. However, recent exploration of the archaeological evidence (ossuaries, ritual baths, chalkstone vessels, synagogues, and phylacteries), reveals how "purity practices were widespread in the first century and touched all groups," not only Pharisees, but also the Essenes of Qumran, the Sadducees, pilgrims, and the ordinary people. See Eric M. Myers, "Purity Concerns and Common Judaism in Light of Archaeology," in *The Pharisees*, eds. Amy-Jill Levine and Joseph Sievers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 41–54, here 42, 43. Concerns about purity, pollution, and separateness were not unique to Judaism. Instead, they were widespread among all ancient peoples "who lived in a world structured by such categories, which demarcated zones of divine-human interaction." See Paula Fredriksen, "Paul, the Perfectly Righteous Pharisee," in *The Pharisees*, eds. Joseph Sievers and Amy-Jill Levine (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 112–35, here 129.

### 2.2.3 Jesus Accepts the Pharisee's Invitation

While the narrative Pharisees' antagonism towards Jesus makes this Pharisee's dinner invitation unexpected, it is no surprise that Jesus accepts it. He has thus far demonstrated a "free-wheeling" attitude to the table company that he keeps, as willing to dine with the household of Simon the fisherman as with social and religious pariahs like tax collectors and sinners (5:29, 30).[23] In coming to this house, Jesus treats Pharisees no differently to anyone else whom he encounters and, instead of dismissing them for their negativity toward him, he shows that he is prepared to engage with them.[24]

On the Pharisee's part, whatever reservations the reader may have about him, there is little reason to attribute to him a malicious motive since, when the narrator can assign a devious intention to the Pharisees, he does so (6:7, 11).[25] In other words, this Pharisee is not established as inviting Jesus because he wants to question him, to trick him, to test him, or to find an accusation against him.[26] It may be that he is curious about Jesus, an understandable reaction as Jesus has just been acclaimed a prophet, having raised the widow of Nain's son from the dead (7:11–16), and wants to scrutinize him at close quarters.[27]

Because the narrator does not introduce the Pharisee as hostile, but instead leaves his character and motivations undefined, he begins as an open character, leaving the implied

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[23] John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew, Volume Three, Companions and Competitors*, ABRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 250.

[24] Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 688; Tannehill, *Luke*, 135; Powell, "Religious Leaders," 109. I. Howard Marshall comments that "Jesus displayed no reticence in accepting the invitation; the fact that he was especially interested in despised people did not mean that he was uninterested in the more respectable members of society; they too needed the gospel." See I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 308. Fred Craddock notes that for Jesus to eat with tax collectors and sinners and refuse an invitation from a Pharisee would have made him guilty of "reverse prejudice." See Fred B. Craddock, *Luke,* IBC (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1990), 104.

[25] Green, *Luke*, 307; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent,* 85; Bock, *Luke 1*, 694; Judith Lieu, *The Gospel of Luke* (Peterborough: Epworth, 1997), 58; Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 209. Dennis Hamm has a different opinion, contending that, "Given the behaviour of the Pharisees up to this point, we can presume that Simon the Pharisee's inviting Jesus to dinner is part of the Pharisaic program to catch him in a violation of the law." See M. Dennis Hamm, "Luke," in *The Paulist Biblical Commentary*, eds. José Enrique Aguilar Chiu, Richard J. Clifford, and Carol J. Dempsey (New York: Paulist, 2018), 1030–104, here 1057.

[26] See Craddock, *Luke*, 104; Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 209.

[27] Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story,* 267; Bock, *Luke 1*, 694.

audience interested in the unfolding of events.[28] The readers already know that characters can be surprising, like the synagogue-building gentile centurion at Capernaum who responds positively to Jesus, and whom Jesus praises for his faith (7:1–10).[29] It may be that the narrative Jesus also approaches the invitation with a feeling of expectation because this will be a new experience for him. He has never been to a Pharisee's home, has never met a Pharisee without the presence of his disciples, and has never had a one-on-one encounter with an individual Pharisee where a two-way dialogue might be possible.[30]

### 2.2.4 A Symposium-Style Meal

A number of cultural, social, and literary conventions, familiar to the implied audience, converge on the occasion of this dinner. First, it is an occasion of hospitality when certain practices and precepts apply.[31] Second, it signals the acceptability of Jesus as a guest, as one would normally eat only with one's peers.[32] Third, the event is following the literary genre of a symposium, where a common cast of participants—host (the Pharisee), chief guest (Jesus), and a number of other guests (yet to be introduced)—is the norm.[33] A further dimension of the symposium genre is that an "extraordinary incident" frequently occurs to fuel after-dinner conversation, sometimes in the arrival of another stock character known as the "uninvited

[28] Wolter, *Luke I*, 319; Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story*, 267; Green, *Luke*, 307–8; Ringe, *Luke*, 107; James L. Resseguie, "The Woman Who Crashed Simon's Party: A Reader-Response Approach to Luke 7:36–50," in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, eds. Frank E. Dicken and Julia A. Synder, LNTS 548 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 7–22, here 12.

[29] The resistance of some individual characters to readers' attempts to define them in stereotypical terms is what Russian literary critic, linguist, and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin calls their "unfinalizability," or their ultimate ambiguity and elusiveness. See Raj Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma: Many Voices in the Gospel of Luke*, LNTS 431 (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 66–67.

[30] During his earlier encounters with groups of Pharisees, there was only one conversational interaction between them (5:33–39). Otherwise, while the Pharisees either disparaged him among themselves (5:21; 6:7, 11) or criticized him to the disciples (5:30), Jesus' responses to them were met with silence.

[31] Hospitality or "the practice of receiving a guest or stranger graciously" was a widespread cultural practice throughout the Greco-Roman world and the ancient Near East, probably reflecting the nomadic or Bedouin traditions from which it sprang. See John Koenig, "Hospitality," in *ABD* 3, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 299–301, here 299; Andrew Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005), 131–32.

[32] Craig L. Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 93.

[33] E. Springs Steele, "Luke 11:37–54—A Modified Hellenistic Symposium?" *JBL* 103 (1984): 379–94, here 381.

guest."[34] Thus, while the audience perhaps anticipates an interruption to the gathering, they might not expect that it will materialize in the form of an unconventional woman.[35]

### 2.3 The Woman Enters (7:37)

In two long sentences (vv. 37–38), without direct speech, the narrator introduces the woman and describes her actions. Beginning with her sudden appearance (καὶ ἰδοὺ), he employs three types of focalization or narrative perspective.[36] These are rhetorical devices that position the readers "simply by words in a text, to watch the action from a particular angle" in a way that impacts their evaluation of what they see.[37] By describing the woman carrying an alabaster jar of ointment, the narrator is stating what is obvious to all at the dinner: this is external focalization.[38] When he depicts her as γυνὴ ἥτις ἦν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἁμαρτωλός, "a woman who

[34] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 290; Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 22–23.

[35] Women associated with an otherwise all-male banquet setting were regarded in the popular imagination as prostitutes, "flute-girls" engaged by the host to provide entertainment of a sexual nature. But this woman is not there at the Pharisee's invitation and it is highly unlikely that a Pharisaic meal would include the laying on of an erotic performance. See David Lyle Jeffrey, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012), 111; Parsons, *Luke*, 128–29; Corley, *Private Women*, 63. It would appear that the woman would have no difficulty in simply walking in on the banquet as social life in antiquity was conducted in a far less private way than it is in modern times. See Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 354; Méndez-Moratalla, *Paradigm of Conversion*, 107.

[36] Focalization is a term coined by French literary theorist Gérard Genette, intended to refine point of view and perspective. There are three types of focalization: external, internal, and zero. See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 72–73, 174. Each of these features in v. 37. The phrase καὶ ἰδοὺ is a Septuagintism that appears twenty-six times in the narrative. See Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 121. The implied author often uses it to introduce new characters: a man with leprosy (5:12), the paralyzed man (5:18), the anointing woman (7:37), the woman with the bent back (13:11), Zacchaeus (19:2), Joseph of Arimathea (23:50), and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:27. He also employs it to introduce a sudden or unexpected event: Zechariah's muteness (1:20), Mary's pregnancy (1:31), Elizabeth's pregnancy (1:36). Thus, in the present pericope, καὶ ἰδοὺ both introduces the woman and adds a tone of surprise and unexpectedness to her arrival. "ἰδού," a prompter of attention or a marker of strong emphasis: L&N 1, §91.10, §91.13; BDAG, 468.

[37] Gary Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism: Point of View and Evaluative Guidance in Biblical Narrative* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 9, 6. The use of focalization is a reminder that texts are highly "structured worlds" where the implied author not only selectively tells the audience what is happening (he cannot tell everything), but indirectly guides them how react to those events. See Greg W. Forbes and Scott D. Harrower, *Raised from Obscurity: A Narratival and Theological Study of the Characterization of Women in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015), 11.

[38] Because alabaster was a luxury item in antiquity, quarried only in Egypt, this establishes the woman for the implied audience as an individual of some means, or at least someone with access to expensive goods. See Barbara E. Reid, "'Do You See This Woman?' A Liberative Look at Luke 7.36–50 and Strategies for Reading Other Lukan Stories against the Grain," in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, with Marianne Blickenstaff (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 106–20, here 116. "μύρον," perfume, perfumed oil, strongly aromatic and expensive ointment: L&N 1, §6.205; BDAG, 661. Like most biblical characters, there is no description of either the woman's physical appearance or her clothing. See Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 48; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, new and rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 143.

was in the city a sinner," or "a woman in the city, who was a sinner," or "a woman who was a sinner in the city," the narrator is using zero focalization: he goes beyond the time and place of the scene, and tells something about the woman from a context outside the narrative.[39] While this information may (or may not) already be familiar to other characters within the story-world, the reader depends on the narrator to provide it. When he states that the woman is there because she learned that Jesus is dining in the Pharisee's house, he employs internal focalization. This gives the implied audience an insight into the woman's interiority that is hidden from the characters. The readers now know more about the woman (that she has come because of Jesus) than does the Pharisee or anyone else at the symposium, thus establishing the readers as being in a superior position to them.

The three character markers that the implied author assigns to the woman—a woman, a sinner, and "in the city"—are charged with overtones of sexual licence, prostitution, and streetwalking.[40] Mention of the ἐν τῇ πόλει makes this connection especially strong. First, the phrase is an example of what ancient rhetoricians termed an *emphasis* (or *significatio*), an expression that left more in suspicion than was actually asserted.[41] Allowing audiences to infer matters on their own was considered by classical theorists to be more effective than plain language alone.[42] Thus, while an *emphasis* gives readers an illusion of autonomy, seeming to

[39] Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories,* 72. The construction of v. 37a, with its imperfect verb, ἦν, presents some difficulty, leaving the audience in some doubt whether the woman is currently a sinner, whether she was a sinner but is no longer, or whether the narrator means to say, not that she is or was a sinner, but that the woman was considered by the city to be a sinner: See Martin M. Culy, Mikeal C. Parsons, and Joshua J. Stigall, *Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 241; Reid, "Do You See This Woman?" 113; John J. Kilgallen, "Forgiveness of Sins (Luke 7:36–50)," *NovT* 40 (1998): 105–16, here 106; Wolter, *Luke I,* 319.

[40] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 293; Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 3rd rev. ed. (London: SCM, 1972), 126; Corley, *Private Women*, 124. Not all commentators agree that the words necessarily suggest a sexual sin. See Michael Patella, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2005), 52; Lieu, *Luke*, 59. Reid suggests that to be ill, disabled, or have had contact with gentiles would label her a sinner. See Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part? Women in the Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1996), 116. Bock considers that the woman might be the wife of someone with a dishonourable reputation, a woman in debt, or an adulteress. See Bock, *Luke 1*, 695.

[41] See Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.53.67 [Caplan, LCL]. Quintilian notes how an emphasis "succeeds in revealing a deeper meaning than is actually expressed in words. There are two kinds of emphasis: the one means more than it says, the other often means something which it does not actually say." Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 8.8.83 [Butler, LCL]. See also Reich, *Figuring Jesus*, 12.

[42] See Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.64–65.

allow them draw their own conclusions, it is all the while under the control of the implied author.[43] In this pericope, the allusive but pointed thrust of the ἐν τῇ πόλει seems unmistakable.

Second, and more directly, the Book of Sirach, written as an expression of Hellenistic Judaism and therefore reflecting a worldview familiar to the implied readers, offers lengthy advice and admonitions concerning women who are "in the city." Seeing women "as men's nemesis," Sirach advises men not "to look around in the streets of a city," μὴ περιβλέπου ἐν ῥύμαις πόλεως, because it the place where they might give themselves to prostitutes, μὴ δῷς πόρναις τὴν ψυχήν σου (Sir 9:6–7).[44] Once the reader makes a connection between the woman and prostitution, the jar of aromatic oil that she carries takes on a sexual meaning, bringing to mind a prostitute's perfumed massage oil that "belonged to the art of seduction."[45]

### 2.3.1 Women are Sinners in the Ancient World?

Even without the inclusion of ἐν τῇ πόλει, the implied audience would likely have assumed that a "woman" who was a "sinner" was involved in sexual misconduct. This is because, according to the way gender was constructed and understood in the Greco-Roman-Jewish world, there was almost a tautology of "woman" and "sinner," in the sense of women missing the mark, being off-centre, and imperfect.[46] While males were defined as the ideal human type, women were considered the anti-type, or deviation from the norm.[47] Femaleness, unlike maleness, was largely expressed in a sexual context: women were deemed lacking in self-control and driven by their passions, especially sexual passions, thus presenting an ever-present allurement to men.[48]

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[43] See Whitenton, *Configuring Nicodemus*, 98.

[44] William Loader, *Making Sense of Sex: Attitudes towards Sexuality in Early Jewish and Christian Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 7. Unsurprisingly, Torah too is unequivocal in its disapproval of prostitutes: "There shall not be a prostitute among the daughters of Israel," οὐκ ἔσται πόρνη ἀπὸ θυγατέρων Ἰσραήλ (Deut 23:17, LXX 23:18). Ibid., 113. The NRSV translates this as, "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a temple prostitute."

[45] Ibid., 116.

[46] Teresa J. Hornsby, "The Woman is a Sinner/The Sinner is a Woman," in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, with Marianne Blickenstaff (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 121–32, here 132, 125, 126.

[47] Ibid., 125, 130.

[48] Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Women in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke-Acts," in *Women and Christian Origins*, eds. Ross Shepard Kramer and Mary Rose D'Angelo (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 171–95, here 190; Loader, *Making Sense of Sex*, 118, 21; Charles H. Cosgrove, "A Woman's Unbound Hair in the

While "sinner" was a very fluid label in ancient Judaism, widely deployed as a socio-religious label, it nevertheless had one underlying meaning: a sinner represented everything that stood in opposition to the righteousness, holiness, and goodness of God. Because sin was "a reality signifying the broken relationship between God and humanity," it was committed when individuals neglected cultic and moral requirements, or the proper conduct of human relationships laid down by God under the Mosaic law.[49] Many attitudes and behaviours therefore involved people in sin, including violence, theft, slander, oppression of the poor, and immorality.[50] In the current pericope, the tripartite grouping of woman, sinner, and "in the city" seems to infer that the woman's sin is prostitution.[51]

### 2.3.2 Women: Marriage and Prostitution

In identifying the woman as a prostitute (as the implied author seems to intend), the implied readers were confronted by two competing social realities in their consideration of her.[52] On the one hand, the ideal woman was expected to be sexually exclusive and restrained, qualities that she was encouraged to develop and maintain through living a secluded life within either her father's or husband's home.[53] Early female marriage protected women (and men) from unrestrained feminine passions. A woman gained honour from marriage (usually in her late teens to a man at least ten years older) and the production of sons.[54] While pre-marital chastity

Greco-Roman World, with Special Reference to the Story of the 'Sinful Woman' in Luke 7:36–50," *JBL* 124 (2005): 675–92, here 679.

[49] Clayton N. Jefford, "Sin," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, eds. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1224–26, here 1224; Michael F. Bird, "Sin, Sinner," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2013), 863–69, here 863; "ἁμαρτωλός," L&N 1, §88.295; BDAG, 51.

[50] "Sinner" was also a relative and dynamic term, measured in relation to a particular "in" group, and a failure to conform the standards of the landmark group could lead to the designation of an individual as a "sinner," a consequent name-calling, and socio-religious ostracism. See Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts*, 107.

[51] Prostitution, although suggested, is not explicit. The implied audience will learn from the later parable of the two lost sons that the implied author knows the word "prostitute," πόρνη (15:30), and could have used it here if he wanted to be categorical about the nature of the woman's sinfulness. See Parsons, *Luke*, 129. The ambiguity surrounding the woman's designation serves to sharpen audience involvement with the story.

[52] Corley, *Private Women*, 124.

[53] Loader, *Sexuality in the New Testament*, 4.

[54] Ibid., 37; Malina, *Social World of Jesus*, 55.

was expected, at least officially, of both men and women, the emphasis was primarily on the woman, on whose virginity a high premium was placed.[55]

On the other hand, prostitution, although subject to disapproval, was recognized as a reality, frequently a matter of female destitution and survival, especially for a divorced or widowed woman without the normal supports of family of origin or children.[56] In this pericope, whether the implied audience instinctively sympathizes with the woman or censures her, they recognize that, as a "sinner," she belongs to the category of persons whom Jesus seeks out (4:18–19; 5:32; 7:22) and welcomes into his company.

### 2.3.3 Sinners and Idealized Women

This is the third time that the audience meets a "sinful" character in the narrative. On neither of the other occasions does the narrator designate the (male) character as a sinner. At the healing of the man with paralysis, Jesus indirectly casts the man as a sinner, by associating his cure with the forgiveness of his sins (5:20). And, when Simon Peter encounters Jesus on the lake of Gennesaret, it is Peter who describes himself as a "sinful man," ἀνὴρ ἁμαρτωλός εἰμι (5:8), a comment that Jesus ignores. The audience is given no indication about the nature of the men's sins but, unlike the woman, they might not automatically identify them as morally dissolute characters.[57]

The narrator's labelling of the intruder as a "sinner" differs from the way he has portrayed the other individual women in the Gospel to date. Elizabeth, Mary, and Anna are presented as powerful prophets (1:42–45, 46–55; 2:36–38), and the angel describes Mary as

[55] Loader, *Making Sense of Sex*, 46. This was partly for pragmatic reasons because, on marriage, her chastity guaranteed the legitimacy of the heirs and the reliable transmission of property (almost invariably through the male line) down the generations. See Loader, *Sexuality in the New Testament*, 4.

[56] Loader, *Making Sense of Sex*, 112; Green, *Luke*, 309. Occasionally a married woman supplemented the household income through prostitution, with or without her husband's knowledge; and sometimes men prostituted their wives and daughters, either from exploitative greed or desperation. See Loader, *Making Sense of Sex*, 112, 115. David Carr describes how men "essentially 'owned' their wives' and daughters' sexuality." See David Carr, "Untamable Text of an Untamable God: Genesis and Rethinking the Character of Scripture," *Int* 54 (2000): 347–62, here 355.

[57] Levine notes how "few would identify Peter's sin as prostitution." See Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 210. This is probably even more true of the man who suffered from paralysis.

one favoured by God (1:28).[58] As less exalted characters, Simon's mother-in-law appears as the beneficiary of Jesus' healing and as one who serves him (4:38–39), and the widow of Nain as the object of Jesus' compassion (7:13). According to the androcentric norms of the first century, the latter pair are idealized women: docile, silent, unassuming, passive recipients of Jesus' attention and compassion, filling subsidiary roles that befit their female status (one an embedded family member and the other a widow).[59] All five women stand in sharp juxtaposition to the interloper at the Pharisee's dinner with her association with sexual licence and streetwalking.

### 2.3.4 The Readers Take Stock

The implied readers, presented with two diverse and interesting characters—the Pharisee and the woman—take an opportunity to pause and reflect before proceeding with the story.[60] The implied author's direct characterization of the woman from v. 37 is that, as a sinner "in the city," she is a prostitute, and is of sufficient means to possess an expensive alabaster jar of ointment. Indirectly, she is depicted as a courageous, independent, decision-making, risk-taking boundary-breaker who, by her arrival at an all-male meal, is prepared to defy the cultural codes of her world. While the audience does not yet understand her exact motive in being there, they know from the narrator that her presence is somehow connected to Jesus (v. 37), that she knows who he is and has sought him out. She is a determined and purposeful character who, having decided on a course of action, equipped herself with the ointment and made her way to the Pharisee's house, where her reception was unpredictable.[61] It would appear that she is neither disruptive nor disorderly, since she materializes in silence, invisible as a servant, seemingly unnoticed by the company until she is already active among them.[62]

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[58] Reid, "The Gospel of Luke: Friend or Foe?" 7, 19. D'Angelo avers that, once Jesus' ministry starts, women are no longer presented as prophets, but as characters who now "serve the portrait of Jesus as prophet." See D'Angelo, "Women in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke-Acts," 186.

[59] See Seim, *Double Message,* 55–57.

[60] Malbon calls this kind of opportunity "narrative punctuation." See Malbon, "Minor Characters," 72.

[61] The implied audience has already met similarly resolute, proactive (male) characters in the narrative: the man suffering from leprosy (5:12), the paralyzed man and his friends (5:18-19), and the centurion (7:3), who all seek Jesus' help.

[62] The καὶ ἰδοὺ that introduces the woman links her to the ἰδοὺ γὰρ with which the angels announced the birth of Jesus (2:10). Both Jesus and the woman arrive unexpectedly and are present before anyone is aware of it.

The Pharisee, nameless like the woman, is depicted as a man with a home and a prominent position, and sufficiently wealthy to be able to entertain.[63] Like the woman, he may also be a risk-taker and a boundary-breaker since, in inviting Jesus to dine, he is not acting within the conventions established for Pharisees in the Gospel thus far. This makes him interesting as a character and the reader again speculates that his role may be as an individual and not just a "representative Pharisee."[64] However, since the audience sees the woman before he does and, because she is present before he realizes it, he does not appear to be in control of the situation in his own home. In this, he begins the pericope at a disadvantage, unaware of the forces that are already at work.

### 2.4 The Woman's Actions (7:38)

Having characterized the woman as a streetwalker, the implied author next describes her encounter with Jesus. In a verb-intensive sentence, virtually each move she makes is reported, and everything the narrator relates is evident to all those present.[65] The depth of detail gives the reader a vantage point in the midst of the action, an impression of being another guest at the Pharisee's table: "*Having stood*, στᾶσα, behind at his feet *crying*, κλαίουσα, with tears *she began*, ἤρξατο, *to wet*, βρέχειν, his feet, and with the hairs of her head she *was wiping*, ἐξέμασσεν, and *was kissing*, κατεφίλει, his feet and *was anointing* [them], ἤλειφεν, with the perfume." The series of three imperfects with which the sentence ends would have a particular effect on the Greek-speaking audience.[66] This is because imperfects can "evoke an internal

[63] See Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 15.

[64] The phrase "representative Pharisee" is from John T. Carroll, "Luke's Portrayal of the Pharisees," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 604–21, here 610. Carroll, in fact, considers that Simon *is* a "representative Pharisee." Darr also deems that he "represents all Pharisees." See Darr, *Character Building*, 101.

[65] Although it is not exactly scene material, "where the time it takes to narrate the event roughly equals the elapsed time of the event itself," neither is it summary material, because the implied audience receives comprehensive coverage of the woman's activities. See Gary Yamasaki, "Point of View in a Gospel Story: What Difference Does It Make? Luke 19:1–10 as a Test Case," *JBL* 125 (2006): 89–105, here 91.

[66] Tense stems of the verb in Greek convey two interrelated elements of meaning, one on the level of time (present, past, future) and the other relating to aspect (kinds of action, *Aktionsarten*, or points of view). See Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), §318. Aspect "is the primary value of tense in Greek and time is secondary, if involved at all." See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Study of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 496; Culy, Parsons, and Stigall, *Handbook*, xxiii. Aspect shows not *when*, but *how* an action occurs. It is concerned with duration, progression, completion, repetition, inception, current relevance, and their opposites. See Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 1. Aspect belongs to the rhetoric of a narrative because it "concerns how authors or speakers want their audiences to view an action." See Andrew David Naselli, "A Brief Introduction to Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek," *DBSJ* 12 (2007): 17–28, here 18.

perspective by which the audience is drawn into the story."[67] They create vividness for the reader and "the illusion that events are seen on the spot."[68] Here the imperfects give an insight into the intensity, extravagance, and emotion of the woman's actions, on her ceaseless and continuous attention to Jesus (reinforced by the repeated use of καί), and the length of time that she takes over the proceedings.[69] Her silence throughout serves to emphasize the entirely physical nature of her behaviour.

### 2.4.1 Is the Conduct Erotic?

The narrator is selective in the information he provides, not revealing who the woman is, why she has sought Jesus out, or why she is acting in this manner. As a rhetorical strategy, this withholding of information has two consequences. First, it disorients the readers by defamiliarizing the situation within the Pharisee's home, where expectations surrounding the meal are "creatively deformed" by the surprising behaviour of the woman.[70] Second, it leads to an increased engagement with the text as they strive to create meaning from what is occurring. This prompts them into making a premature judgment about the woman, construing her actions as those of a woman "in the city" practicing her trade with a most unlikely man in an incongruous setting.[71] Her loose hair (often suggestive in antiquity), her prolonged kissing and anointing of Jesus' feet (also with strong sexual associations)—all at a dinner reserved for

[67] Alexander C. Loney, "Narrative Structure and Verbal Aspect Choice in Luke," *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 28 (2005): 3–31, here 18. See also Egbert J. Bakker, "Pragmatics: Speech and Text," in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 151–67, here 165.

[68] Loney, "Narrative Structure," 8. Loney is citing Egbert J. Bakker, "Verbal Aspect and Mimetic Description in Thucydides," in *Grammar as Interpretation: Greek Literature in its Linguistic Contexts*, ed. Edgar J. Bakker (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 7–54, here 37.

[69] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 294; Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 14; Green, *Luke*, 309. Resseguie identifies v. 38, with its repetition of καὶ, as a paratactic construction. See Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 13. A parataxis is a rhetorical device that involves the juxtaposition of equal clauses or phrases, with or without coordinating conjunctions. It adds flow, emphasis, and exaggeration to sentences, and the audience is uncertain when the sequence will end. See Bas Aarts, Sylvia Chalker, and Edmund Weiner, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 2014), 288–89; BDF, §458.

[70] "Defamiliarization" (*ostranenie*) is a term coined by Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky and adopted by Wolfgang Iser that literally means "making strange." It disrupts and frustrates the readers' expectations by making the familiar world seem chaotic, as the usual frames of reference do not apply. Because it jolts the audience from the "lethargy of the familiar," they are forced to examine norms and values that have hitherto been taken for granted. See James L. Resseguie, "Defamiliarization in the Gospels," *Mosaic* 21 (1988): 25–35, here 25, 28, 33; Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 10, 11–12.

[71] Green, *Luke*, 310.

men—belong in a "realm of intimate behaviour" that is inappropriate in this house and for someone like Jesus.[72] The woman's focus on Jesus' feet (feet are mentioned seven times in the pericope) may remind the biblically-literate audience of Chapter 3 of the Book of Ruth where Ruth, on Naomi's instructions, uncovered the sleeping Boaz's feet and spent the night there (Ruth 3:4–14).[73] The ambiguous Ruth and Boaz story is filled with sexual innuendo, where "feet" may be a euphemism for the genitals.[74] In the current situation, although the woman's copious tears (which are inexplicable to the audience) may suggest that this is not an erotic scene, it is still an irregular incident and, to the Pharisee, the woman's intimate behaviour must appear "wildly out of bounds" on various social, emotional, and moral grounds.[75] The implied readers, guided by the rhetoric, must wait to discover if their initial considerations of the woman will be modified or substantiated as the pericope develops.

### 2.4.2 Jesus and Physical Touch

The implied audience is attentive to how Jesus will react to the woman's attentions. First, because this is the first time during Jesus' ministry that an individual woman takes the initiative

[72] Cosgrove, "Unbound Hair," 679; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 295; Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 14; Elaine M. Wainwright, *Women Healing/Healing Women* (London: Equinox, 2006), 183; Parsons, *Luke*, 129. Of course, in antiquity, a woman's unbound hair could also denote religious devotion or mourning. See Cosgrove, "Unbound Hair," 679–84.

[73] Hornsby, "Woman is a Sinner," 129. Hornsby mentions how the verbs κλαίω and καταφιλέω occur in Ruth 1:9, 14, as they do in Luke 7:38. She suggests that "a reader familiar with the Ruth story would recognize these two verbs together in the anointing story and remember the Ruth and Boaz scene." See Hornsby, "Woman is a Sinner," 129.

[74] Jeremy Schipper, *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 7D (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 143, 157; John Craghan, *Esther, Judith, Tobit, Jonah, Ruth*, OTM 16 (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1982), 215–18. In less charged contexts, feet or the washing of feet carried no such overtones as, in most households, it was customary to supply water for a guest to wash her or his own feet. In wealthier homes, a slave might be assigned to perform this especially humble duty. See Kenneth E. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, in *Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke: Combined Edition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 4–5. In an entirely different association, the audience might consider the woman's actions a recognition of "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger …who brings good news (Isa 52:7). See Kilgallen, "Forgiveness of Sins," 108.

[75] Bovon, *Luke 1,* 295; Green, *Luke*, 310; Patella, *Luke*, 53; Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 211; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 86; F. Scott Spencer, "A Woman's Touch: Manual and Emotional Dynamics of Female Characters in Luke's Gospel," in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, eds. Frank Dicken and Julia Synder, LNTS 548 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 73–94, here 88. The woman's crying is expressed by the verb κλαίω. This signifies weeping and wailing, with an emphasis on the noise accompanying the weeping: "κλαίω," L&N 1, §25.138; BDAG, 545. So far in the Gospel, κλαίω has featured in the beatitudes and woes (6:21, 25); at the widow of Nain scene (7:13); and in the children's song, "we sang a dirge and you did not weep" (7:32). Later in the narrative, Jairus and his household (8:52), Peter (22:62), and the daughters of Jerusalem (23:28) will weep, and Jesus himself will weep over the coming fate of Jerusalem (19:41).

to approach him, they have no way to predict his response to any woman, still less to this unconventional female.[76] Second, this is the first occasion that the Gospel records anyone being physically close to Jesus since his infancy (2:7, 28).[77] Since then, although people try to touch Jesus for his power and healing (6:19), it is Jesus who initiates any real bodily contact, laying his hands on the sick and diseased (4:40), on a man with leprosy (5:13), and on the bier of the widow's son at Nain (7:14). At the only reported healing of an individual woman, Simon's mother-in-law, Jesus did not touch her, merely stood over her and rebuked her fever (4:39). The audience will learn from the imminent incident of the woman with the flow of blood (8:43–48) that Jesus can appear techy and surprised when he is touched unexpectedly for healing.[78] This apparent reticence on Jesus' part to corporeal touch makes his response to the woman's lavish gestures all the more eagerly awaited by the readers.

### 2.4.3 Jesus Does Not React to the Woman's Actions

An ellipse (when events are passed over in silence) or narrative gap masks any immediate reaction of Jesus to the physicality of the woman. If Jesus is surprised, discomfited, or outraged by her conduct, this is not mentioned, as it would distract from the direction in which the implied author wants to bring the audience.[79] Instead, the narrative silence establishes an urbane, self-assured Jesus in command of himself and of the situation: he remains calm and silent as he accepts the woman's ministrations, apparently not sensing any need to maintain distance and reserve.[80] Indeed, as she focuses on her task, they both appear oblivious to all

[76] Just recently, with the widow of Nain, it was Jesus who stopped the funeral procession because he felt pity for her (7:13). She did not request his help.

[77] See Spencer, "A Woman's Touch," 86.

[78] Ibid., 90–91. Although the narrative reports one more incident where Jesus touches another character (Jairus's daughter at 8:54) and one where he seems to invite others to touch him (the little children at 18:15), the woman with the flow of blood is the last person recorded as touching Jesus (only the edge of his clothes) in a non-threatening manner. The next time he is touched is during his arrest (22:54), interrogation (22:63, 64, 66; 23:1, 11), and crucifixion (23:26, 33). Joseph of Arimathea touches the body of the dead Jesus (23:53) and, while the risen Jesus invites the disciples to touch his resurrected body (24:39), the narrative does not report whether they do so.

[79] See Denis McBride, *The Gospel of Luke: A Reflective Commentary* (Dublin: Dominican, 1991), 102.

[80] Frederick W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age According to St. Luke: A Commentary on the Third Gospel* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1972), 99; Hornsby, "Woman is a Sinner," 131; Loader, *Sexuality in the New Testament*, 59.

others present.[81] It clearly made a very strong impression on Jesus' host and it is to this that the implied author now turns as he shifts the focus from the woman to the Pharisee.

### 2.5 The Pharisee's Thoughts (7:39)

The characterization of the Pharisee as an individual starts in v. 39 as he reacts to the woman's intrusion. For the first time, he begins to be cast in a negative light. The Pharisee's disapproval of what he witnesses is never voiced publicly. Instead, his ideological point of view is filtered through an internal monologue where he literally speaks "within himself," ἐν ἑαυτῷ.[82] A monologue "creates the illusion that the reader is encountering the character's true nature," because characters get an opportunity to articulate ideas they might otherwise be unwilling to speak openly.[83] The implied audience therefore is given the impression that the Pharisee is revealed to them as he actually is, without any need for pretence.[84]

The present tense used in the monologue, "is touching him," ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ, suggests that the internal dialogue occurs while the kissing and anointing of Jesus' feet is still taking place. The Pharisee's thoughts reveal that he recognizes who the woman is and knows of her reputation.[85] This raises the question of why he did not expel her from his house the moment

[81] Spencer, "A Woman's Touch," 88.

[82] An interior monologue is "a direct, immediate presentation of the unspoken thoughts of a character without any intervening narrator." Monologues featured (sparingly) in Greek and Roman literature, developed by ancient authors such as Homer, Apollonius, Virgil, Ovid, Longus, and Xenophon of Ephesus. See Scholes, Phelan, and Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative*, 177–78. For these classical writers, monologues typically occurred at "high-stakes moments of internal crisis, when the hero must negotiate an inner conflict." Inner speech also occurs in the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint. Unlike the thinking characters of Greek and Roman authors, the biblical writers frequently characterize the thinkers as wise or foolish, especially in terms of their relationships with God. See Dinkler, "Lukan Interior Monologues," 381, 382. Other than the present pericope, monologues occur in Luke's Gospel only in parables: in the rich fool (12:17–19); the faithful or unfaithful slave (12:45); the two lost sons (15:17–20); the dishonest manager (16:3–4); the widow and the judge (18:4–5), and the wicked tenants (20:14). Generally speaking, in these parables, "none of the personalities whose thoughts are described is particularly commendable," instead being self-satisfied, crafty, amoral, and immoral. See Philip Sellew, "Interior Monologue as a Narrative Device in the Parables of Luke," *JBL* 111/2 (1992): 239–53, here 239, 242.

[83] Dinkler, "Lukan Interior Monologues," 398; Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 212. Kelly R. Iverson notes that an internal monologue "is distinctive to the literary enterprise and provides a tool for characterization that is not available in the real world." See Kelly R. Iverson, "'Who Do You Say That I Am?' Characters and Characterization in Narrative and Performance," in *Let the Reader Understand: Studies in Honor of Elizabeth Struthers Malbon*, ed. Edwin K. Broadhead, LNTS 583 (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 51–65, here 55.

[84] Alter describes how "with the report of inward speech, we enter the realm of relative certainty about character." See Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 146–47.

[85] Bock, *Luke 1*, 697.

she appeared or why, when Jesus did not halt the woman's actions, the Pharisee himself did not do so.[86] The narrator highlights the Pharisee's indignation by reminding the audience that Jesus was in his house by invitation, ὁ καλέσας.[87] Under the conventions of hospitality, certain courtesies would be anticipated of a guest by a host, one of which would be to respect the values of the house.[88] Accordingly, in deference to the proprieties, the Pharisee might expect Jesus to halt the woman's ministrations. Conversely, because a guest would anticipate reciprocal civilities from a host, the Pharisee also had a responsibility to take action if he deemed the woman's behaviour unacceptable.[89]

### 2.5.1 The Pharisee's Point of View

The Pharisee vents his irritation, first against the woman, but chiefly against Jesus and his inappropriate acceptance (as he considers) of her attentions. The Pharisee mentally criticizes neither the woman's gestures nor her appearance. Instead, he goes deeper, disparaging both who she is, τίς, and what kind, ποταπὴ, of woman she is, that is, a sinner, with ἁμαρτωλός used as a pejorative label.[90] Given the assumptions under which he is operating, the Pharisee's consternation about the woman and the situation is hardly unfounded.[91] He represents the accepted social and religious conventions, and his thoughts reflect a legitimate concern relating to violated moral and cultural boundaries.[92] Understanding this, the implied audience can identify with the Pharisee's disquiet.[93] They maintain some distance from his point of view only because it is Jesus who is accepting the woman's attentions, because their previous experience of Pharisees in the narrative makes them cautious, and because they do not yet

[86] Robert M. Price, *The Widow Traditions in Luke-Acts: A Feminist-Critical Scrutiny* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 102.

[87] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 295.

[88] See Malina, *Social World of Jesus*, 232.

[89] Ibid., 232–33.

[90] See Bovon, *Luke 1*, 295.

[91] Patella, *Luke*, 53; Corley, *Private Women*, 125; Green, *Luke*, 311.

[92] Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 19.

[93] The monologue facilitates such identification because one of a monologue's functions in ancient literature was to engage the readers personally in the events of a story, "inviting them to imagine their own reactions to similar situations." Furthermore, a monologue's insights into a character's interiority often facilitated readerly association with that character. See Dinkler, *Silent Statements*, 124, 125, 129.

understand what is happening. They suspect that, while the Pharisee believes that he knows who and what the woman is, it is Jesus who actually knows everything about her.

The heart of the Pharisee's criticism is that, since he himself knows the woman's reputation, he assumes that Jesus, an alleged prophet, οὗτος εἰ ἦν προφήτης, should also be aware of it. His thoughts thus reflect the common belief that a prophet can perceive the character of persons with whom he deals.[94] In the Pharisee's view, a true prophet, recognizing the woman's sinfulness, would have rejected her and her attentions.[95] Lacking the audience's insight, the Pharisee concludes that, because Jesus does not know that the woman is a sinner, it follows that he cannot be a prophet. As nothing in the earlier part of the text suggests that the Pharisee is hostile to Jesus, this view seems to represent his evolving opinion of his guest, one that is forming as their encounter progresses.[96] The audience hears the Pharisee's εἰ and οὗτος as especially disparaging because they have already heard these words on the lips of other characters who are inimical to Jesus.

### 2.5.2 The εἰ and the οὗτος

The εἰ introduces a contrary-to-fact condition, so that the Pharisee's thought process is, "If [Jesus] were a prophet [but clearly he cannot be], he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him …"[97] The reader recalls how, earlier in the narrative, Satan twice questioned the identity of Jesus with an εἰ challenge, "if you are the Son of God," εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ (4:3, 9). By linking the Pharisee with Satan, the implied author seems to

[94] Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 689; Wolter, *Luke I*, 321.

[95] Joshua W. Jipp, *Divine Visitations and Hospitality to Strangers in Luke-Acts: An Interpretation of the Malta Episode in Acts 28:1–10* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 178; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 86.

[96] Although the text does not explain why the Pharisee thought that Jesus might be a prophet, he is probably repeating a popularly circulating rumour about Jesus only to disparage it: at the recent raising of the widow's son at Nain, the witnesses proclaimed that "A great prophet has arisen among us!" (7:16). Or he may have heard how Jesus, at his inaugural sermon in the Nazareth synagogue (4:18–19) and later in his reply to John's messengers (7:22), amalgamated various prophetic Isaianic references and applied them to himself and his mission. See Jipp, *Divine Visitations,* 174. The citations from Isaiah include 29:18; 35:5–6; 42:18; 58:6; 61:1–2.

[97] Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 15. Resseguie, David B. Gowler, Bovon, Marshall, and Wallace each designate the protasis (the εἰ clause) as introducing a second class condition, an unreal condition in present time, or a condition that, for the sake of argument, describes an unreal, impossible, improbable, or contrary-to-fact situation. See David B. Gowler, *Host, Guest*, *Enemy and Friend: Portraits of the Pharisees in Luke and Acts* (New York: Lang, 1991), 220; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 295; *Marshall*, *Luke*, 309; Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 694. Wallace notes that this construction sometimes portrays a condition that is true, although the speaker assumes it to be untrue, and he cites Luke 7:39 as an example. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar,* 694. "εἰ," BDF, §371, §372.

characterize him as antipathetic to Jesus.[98] In addition, while the demonstrative pronoun οὗτος can be used positively (of Jesus at 1:32; 2:34; 4:22; 7:27 and of Simeon at 2:25), it can also be deployed pejoratively, as a "namelessness technique," with an undercurrent of contempt.[99] Thus, the Pharisees at the healing of the man with paralysis, while accusing Jesus of blasphemy, asked deprecatingly about him, "Who is this one?" τίς ἐστιν οὗτος; (5:21).[100]

However, the implied author does not leave the matter so uncomplicated for the audience, allowing them to judge the Pharisee as unquestionably averse to Jesus. While the present οὗτος certainly links Jesus' host with the negative Pharisees of 5:21, the reader also recalls how, in an instance of how dynamic the responses to Jesus can be, those Pharisees eventually joined the "all" in glorifying God (5:26).[101] This nuancing in the characterization of the Pharisees means that it is conceivable that the current Pharisee will also have a change of mind when he sees how things progress.

### 2.6 Jesus Speaks and the Pharisee Gets a Name (7:40)

Jesus, who was silent up to this point, now takes the initiative. His phrase, "Simon, I have something to say to you," is succinct and authoritative, demanding attention from both the Pharisee and the reader.[102] By describing the Pharisee's monologue first, the narrator permits Jesus to comment on it, thus commencing the construction of contrasts with the woman that will form the remainder of the pericope.[103] The Pharisee, of course, not believing that Jesus is

[98] At the passion, the various enemies of Jesus—the elders, chief priests, and scribes (22:67); the leaders (23:35); and the soldiers (23:37)—will all issue a similar εἰ taunt concerning Jesus' identity.

[99] Jonathan M. Watt, "Pronouns of Shame and Disgrace in Lk 22:63–4," in *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, JSNTSup 170 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 223–34, here 232. "οὗτος," L&N 1, §92.29; BDAG, 740–41.

[100] Other examples of οὗτος used with a tone of contempt are the Pharisees (15:2), the parabolic elder son (15:30), the parabolic tenants (20:14), the chief priest's servants (22:56, 59), the leaders at the crucifixion (23:35), and the inscription over the cross (23:38).

[101] Footnote #13 raised the issue of how genuine is the response of the "all" at 5:26.

[102] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 295. The people of Capernaum earlier remarked on the authority and power of Jesus' spoken word: "For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits" (4:36).

[103] Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story*, 266.

a prophet, has no inkling that Jesus is reading his thoughts. He is thus the victim of dramatic irony, because he understands less about the situation than the audience does.[104]

### 2.6.1 "Simon"

When Jesus calls his host "Simon," he becomes the only Pharisee named as an individual in the Gospel.[105] Up to this point in the pericope, he has been identified by the narrator three times as "the Pharisee" (vv. 36, 37, 39) and once as "one of the Pharisees" (v. 36). Calling Simon by name establishes a personal quality to the meeting, providing the audience with the impression of a "one-on-one encounter" with an individual, not just another Pharisee.[106] Given this change in relationship, the reader again wonders whether expectations attached to the Pharisees as a group will guide events, or will individual characteristics prove to be more important?[107] The woman, unlike Simon, and despite her distinctiveness and unconventionality, is never individualized by name. Instead, she is described either as a "sinner" (v. 37 by the narrator; v. 39 by Simon), as "the woman" (vv. 37, 39, 44 by the narrator; v. 39 by Simon), and as "this woman" (v. 44 by Jesus), thus maintaining her at some distance from Simon, the reader and, to an extent, from Jesus.

### 2.6.2 "Teacher"

The opening conversation between Jesus and Simon is ostensibly cordial. He is not overly familiar with Jesus, responding "teacher" to Jesus' "Simon." In acknowledging Jesus as a teacher, Simon mirrors the narrator, who consistently portrays Jesus in this role.[108] Whatever

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[104] Dinkler, *Silent Statements,* 128; Green, *Luke*, 310; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 86; Johnson, *Luke*, 127; Patella, *Luke,* 53.

[105] Levine and Witherington note how the root of Simon's name is Sh-M-A, "whence the term Shema, the name of the Hebrew prayer from Deut 6:4, that begins, 'Hear, O Israel …' Simon will need to hear, to listen." See Levine and Witherington, *Luke,* 213. Simon is also the first character in the Gospel whom Jesus calls by name. The audience will learn that for Jesus to do so is very rare. Only Martha (10:41), Zacchaeus (19:5), Simon/Peter (22:31, 34), and Judas (22:48) will also be familiarly addressed and, of these, only the encounter with Zacchaeus is positive.

[106] Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story*, 267; Green, *Luke*, 308; Tannehill, *Luke*, 136–37.

[107] Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story*, 267.

[108] Jesus begins teaching (4:15) even before his programmatic statement of mission in Nazareth (4:18–19). He teaches in various outdoor (5:3) and indoor (5:17) settings in Judea and Galilee (23:5), including in synagogues (4:15, 33; 6:6; 13:10) and the temple (19:47; 20:1; 21:37). On the eve of his death, Jesus still identifies himself as a teacher (22:11).

reservations Simon has about his guest, his greeting might be regarded as conveying "very considerable politeness" (if also some formality and reserve).[109] This is because, although Simon does not accept Jesus as a prophet, "teacher" is a respectful title, showing deference to one regarded "as an influential, authoritative, and perhaps accredited teacher of religion."[110] However, the implied audience, having overheard Simon's dismissive monologue, and appreciating the commanding tone of Jesus' "I have something to say to you," suspects that beneath the veneer of amiability and politeness—"Simon," "teacher,"—various tensions are building between them.

First, their exchange represents an instance of challenge and riposte, the agonistic "game of social push and shove" that took place between men who regarded one another as social equals.[111] The challenger's intention was to usurp the reputation of another, and to deprive him of his honour or good name.[112] Here, for Jesus to fail to take up Simon's challenge ("if this man were a prophet … ") and offer a counterchallenge ("I have something to say to you") would mean a loss of honour for him. Second, after the unbroken silence of the pericope to this point, Jesus forces a reluctant Simon to speak. Strangely, in a symposium setting, where searching debate and conversation is expected, it appears that Simon, the host, does not wish to dialogue with his guests at all, and particularly with his chief guest, Jesus.[113] The fact that Jesus now compels Simon to engage with him denotes a power differential in which Jesus is taking the upper hand.[114]

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[109] See Marshall, *Luke*, 310. This is the first time that Jesus is addressed as "teacher" in the narrative. He is given this courtesy title on eleven occasions by a wide variety of characters—Pharisees, lawyers, scribes, Sadducees, and ordinary people from the crowd (7:40; 9:38; 10:25; 11:45; 12:13; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21, 28, 39; 21:7). However, because these are invariably non-disciples, Marshall considers that διδάσκαλος is "ultimately inadequate as a description" of him. Ibid.

[110] Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 690; Green, *Luke,* 311; Bock, *Luke 1*, 698; Parsons, *Luke*, 130; C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, TPINTC (London: SCM, 1990), xxx. Johnson disagrees, deeming that Simon's διδάσκαλος does not indicate a positive response to Jesus. See Johnson, *Luke*, 127.

[111] Malina, *New Testament World*, 33, 35.

[112] Ibid., 35.

[113] Dinkler, *Silent Statements*, 126; Darr, *Character Building*, 103.

[114] Dinkler, *Silent Statements*, 120.

## 2.7 Jesus Takes Charge (7:41–44b)

In reporting Simon's reply to Jesus, Διδάσκαλε, εἰπέ, φησίν, "teacher, speak, he says," the implied author employs the historical present tense, one of the few occasions that it appears in the Gospel.[115] On the linguistic plane, a present tense verb in a past tense setting is often used in "lively or dramatic narration," where "the narrator imagines himself to be present."[116] It can also be a rhetorical means of marking prominence in a narrative.[117] If, therefore, φησίν primes the implied audience to expect drama or animated discourse, they will not be disappointed. The remainder of the pericope consists, not of "telling" by the narrator, but almost entirely of dialogue, dominated by an assertive and forceful Jesus.

### 2.7.1 The Parable (7:41–42)

Jesus begins with a terse parable. Although the narrator does not designate the vignette as a parable—as he did at 5:36 and 6:39—the audience recognizes it as another instance of the characteristic style of the Lukan Jesus.[118] It is designed to interpret the woman's actions, to defend himself for permitting her to touch him, to refute Simon's doubts about his identity as a prophet, and—despite the sting inherent in Jesus' riposte—to lead Simon over a non-condemnatory "imaginative bridge," allowing him judge events from a new angle.[119]

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[115] Culy, Parsons, and Stigall, *Handbook*, 245–46.

[116] Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar for Colleges* (New York: American Book Company, 1920), §1883; BDF, §321.

[117] Culy, Parsons, and Stigall, *Handbook*, 245–46.

[118] A parable generally meant that one thing was to be understood in juxtaposition or comparison to another. It could therefore help "put a new perspective on a situation by looking at it indirectly through a comparable case." See Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story*, 268. A parable did not have one fixed literary form in first-century Judaism. At its most developed, it consisted of a full-blown dramatic story, with characters, action, and plot, but "parable" also included similes, metaphors, proverbs, wisdom sayings, and less complex vignettes like the present one. See John R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable: Metaphor, Narrative, and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 5. The implied audience is already familiar with Jesus' partiality for short comparisons with their introductory formulae, "That one is like" (6:48), and "To what then will I compare?" (7:31); with his use of proverbs, "Doctor, cure yourself!" (4:23) and "No prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown" (4:24); and with his extended wisdom sayings (5:36–39; 6:39–42, 43–45, 48–49). Almost immediately after the present pericope, at the parable of the sower, Jesus identifies himself as one who speaks in parables (8:10). The implied reader, however, does not yet know that the Lukan Jesus will go on to be the intradiegetic narrator of a large collection of extended parables such as the good Samaritan (10:30–35), the lost sons (15:11–32), or the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9–14).

[119] Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 213; Tannehill, *Luke*, 136.

The parable begins abruptly and seems entirely unconnected to the situation in Simon's house.[120] In a great remove from the relatively affluent dinner-setting, it depicts the cruel reality of indebtedness, a problem endemic to the vast underclass of the ancient world, where people were easily trapped into impossible cycles of debt.[121] In a combination of the commonplace and the extraordinary, the parable relates how a moneylender cancels the debts, large and small, of two individuals.[122] The creditor's motive in doing so was the simple inability of the debtors to pay, a benevolence that, although unusual, was not unknown to a first-century audience and would therefore resonate with them.[123]

The verb the implied author chooses for "he cancelled" is χαρίζομαι. This is multivalent, and can be applied to the remission of monetary debt, to the forgiveness of a personal wrong, or to the bestowing of a favour.[124] It appears in the Gospel of Luke only in the current pericope and at the report of how Jesus gifted sight to many who were blind (7:21). It is based on the attractive quality of χάρις, an attribute that denotes graciousness, kindness, goodwill, care, gift, and favour.[125] Furthermore, the χαρ- stem brings to mind other words in the same domain of gift and graciousness——χάρισμα (free gift, something freely and graciously given), χαριτόω (to show grace, favour, kindness, blessing), and χαρά (joy, delight, gladness).[126] Given these associations, it would appear that χαρίζομαι was deliberately selected

[120] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 291; Ringe, *Luke*, 109; Hamm, "Luke," 1057. Jan Lambrecht describes how many of Jesus' parables, because they seem to deviate from what is going on, create distance and rupture from the given situation. However, by their very estrangement, they force his hearers to engage with the story and to ask themselves what relevance it might have. See Jan Lambrecht, *Once More Astonished: The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 3–4.

[121] Lieu, *Luke*, 59; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 83. A parable about money and debt reflects the Lukan fiscal perspective that permeates the both the Gospel and Acts. See Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 247–51.

[122] As one denarius represented a day's wages for a common labourer, neither five hundred denarii nor fifty denarii were negligible sums. See Hultgren, *Parables of Jesus*, 214; Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 355.

[123] John K. Goodrich demonstrates how debt remission in Roman antiquity was practiced in land tenancy arrangements and proved advantageous to both landlords and tenants. He explains that the "instability of land tenancy during the early imperial period quite often required wealthy proprietors to reduce debts (rents and arrears) in order to *enable* and *encourage* their repayment, as well as to secure the longevity of their tenants and their own long-term profitability." See John K. Goodrich, "Voluntary Debt Remission and the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1–13)," *JBL* 131.1 (2012): 547–66, here 553.

[124] "χαρίζομαι," L&N 1, §40.10, §57.102, §57.223; BDAG, 1078.

[125] "χάρις," L&N 1, §25.89, §57.103, §88.66; BDAG, 1079–81. Already in the Gospel, Mary has found χάρις with God (1:30); the χάρις of God is upon Jesus (2:40, 52); and Jesus speaks words filled with χάρις (4:22).

[126] "χάρισμα," L&N, §57.103; BDAG, 1081. "χαριτόω," L&N, §88.66; BDAG, 1081. "χαρά," L&N, §25.123, §25.124; BDAG, 1077.

by the implied author, as other verbs were available to him; for example, ἀπολύω has already featured at 6:37 in the context of releasing a debt or an obligation, while ἀκυρόω would also have signalled cancelling, annulling, or making void.[127] Neither of these, however, convey the positive tones of χαρίζομαι.

The implied audience, with the advantage of engaging the narrative in "slow motion," and knowing that Jesus often teaches through analogy, has time to consider how, in first-century Judaism, the word used in commercial contexts to identify debt (ὀφείλω, v. 41) was, in religious contexts, the most common word used for sin (ἁμαρτία)—a correspondence that will be made in the Our Father at 11:4.[128] On this basis, they may surmise that the moneylender is likely a metaphor for God, and the exonerated debts symbolic of forgiven sins. This intuition confirms the readers' instinct that the dynamic between the "sinner" woman and Jesus is not what it appears, and they already know that Jesus can forgive sins (5:20). But Simon, taken unawares by events in his home, challenged unexpectedly by Jesus, and in the presence of the uninvited woman, does not have the same "freedom" to make similar connections as the implied reader. Before he can consider the parable's relevance, Simon is confronted by Jesus' pointed question, "which of them will love him [the moneylender] more?"[129] Given the parable's brevity and lack of narrative detail, this question represents the real focus of Jesus' interest.[130] It opens a hermeneutical interlude within the pericope, an invitation to Simon to interpret the parable.

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[127] Stephen E. Runge notes how "One of the key presuppositions of discourse grammar is that choice implies meaning … The choices we make are directed by the goals and objectives of our communication. The implication is that if choice is made, then there was meaning in that choice." See Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 5–6. "ἀπολύω," BDAG, 117–18. BDAG 117.1 notes how ἀπολύω can be understood as a legal term, meaning to acquit, to set free, release, or pardon, and cites 6:37 as an example of pardoning a debt. "ἀκυρόω," L&N, §76.25; BDAG, 40; Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, 5th rev. ed. (Rome: Editrice Pontifico Istituto Biblico, 1996), 49. Ἀκυρόω features at Matt 15:6; Mark 7:13; Gal 3:17 in the context of making void the word of God (Matt and Mark) or annulling the covenant (Gal).

[128] See Gary A. Anderson, *Sin: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 7. The "slow-motion" reader is from McKnight, "Reader-Response Criticism," 244.

[129] The ἀγαπάω that the narrative Jesus uses focuses on love and affection based on deep appreciation and high regard for another. "ἀγαπάω," L&N 1, §25.43; BDAG, 5–6. Had he used love in the sense of φιλέω, it would have had connotations of the love and affection found in an interpersonal relationship with someone considered a friend. "φιλέω," L&N 1, §25.33; BDAG, 1056–57. Marshall, Johnson, and Jeremias comment how ἀγαπάω in this context includes the notion of gratitude. See Marshall, *Luke,* 311; Johnson, *Luke,* 127; Jeremias, *Parables of Jesus*, 126–27. Fitzmyer remarks that it denotes a "deep thankfulness." See Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 690.

[130] Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20,* 356.

### 2.7.2 Simon's Reply (7:43)

It is almost impossible for Simon not to answer "correctly." However, apparently realizing that he is caught in a trap, but unsure of what it consists and how it is going to implicate him, Simon's reply is cautious, "supposing," ὑπολαμβάνω, that the one who will love the moneylender more is the one for whom the greater debt was cancelled, that is, the one who was more gifted or graced.[131] The implied audience recognizes that the Pharisee, faced with two situations that he does not understand can be comparable (the woman and the parabolic debtors), has pronounced a judgment each time—"she is a sinner" (v. 39), and "I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt" (v. 43).[132] Jesus' strong affirmation, "You have judged rightly," ὀρθῶς ἔκρινας, confirms Simon's interpretation. It also gives him an opportunity to explain how, with these verdicts, Simon has unwittingly contradicted himself, and to provide his own evaluation of the woman and her actions.

### 2.7.3 A Change in Perspective (7:44a)

Jesus turns to the woman, but continues to address Simon as he puts a second question to him. While the "turning" adds emphasis to what Jesus is going to say about her, his physical movement also represents the shift of perspective demanded of the implied audience.[133] Negatively, the woman remains anonymous, the "passive object" of the men's gaze and conversation.[134] Positively, Jesus does her the courtesy of looking at her as he speaks and his question, "Do you see this woman?" gives her a particular prominence. While the question must have discomfited the woman, it was also awkward for Simon. By now he must realize that there is some connection between his own judgment of the woman (v. 39) and the parable that followed upon it.[135] Moreover, Jesus is going to point it out publicly, leading to a possible loss of face for Simon before the company.

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[131] Marshall, *Luke,* 311; Bock, *Luke 1*, 700; Parsons, *Luke*, 131.

[132] Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20,* 357.

[133] See Green, *Luke,* 312, 288. Jesus also "turns" to speak, στρέφω, at 7:9; 9:55; 10:23; 14:25; 22:61; 23:28. On all of these occasions, Jesus addresses those to whom he turns.

[134] Lieu, *Luke,* 60.

[135] Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20,* 357.

### 2.7.4 "Do You See This Woman?" (7:44b)

The implied audience, who first saw the woman through the narrator's eyes, then through Simon's eyes, is about to see her through Jesus' eyes.[136] The readers know that "seeing" is a fundamental Gospel metaphor because it already permeates the narrative, with sensory, spiritual, and cognitive associations.[137] Thus, while restoration of sight to the materially blind is one of the specific purposes of Jesus' healing ministry (4:18; 7:21–22), "seeing" is often more than physical seeing and the various verbs used throughout the narrative—ὁράω, βλέπω, θεωρέω, θεάομαι—all suggest deeper levels of perception, recognition, and understanding.[138] In the Sermon on the Plain, Jesus is adamant that he wants people to see clearly, διαβλέπω (6:42), and, in the pericope preceding the incident in Simon's house, he questions the crowds about John the Baptist, asking repeatedly what it is they went out to see in the wilderness prophet (θεάομαι, 7:24; ὁράω, 7:25, 26), as if trying to sharpen their discernment and move them away from seeing only what they expected to see.[139]

Now, in Simon's house, because of the multivalency of βλέπω and the often symbolic nature of seeing, the audience is primed to recognize that deeper concerns underlie Jesus' query to Simon, "Do you see this woman?" Βλέπεις ταύτην τὴν γυναῖκα; More than physically seeing her, Jesus is asking, "Have you really perceived this woman well?"[140] Where Jesus can "pierce through appearance to reality," to who the woman actually is, to the heart (5:22; 1 Sam 16:7), Simon merely "saw," ἰδὼν (7:39), her reputation as a sinner.[141] Jesus wants to lead Simon (and

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[136] Levine and Witherington, *Luke,* 214.

[137] Dennis Hamm, "Sight to the Blind: Vision as Metaphor in Luke," *Bib* 67 (1986): 457–77, here 457. Its ontological importance was established early in the Gospel with Zechariah's vision in the sanctuary (1:11–12, 22), the angels' appearance to the shepherds (2:8–14), and Simeon's prophesy in the temple (2:29–32). While the shepherds and Simeon both "see" the child Jesus in a corporeal way, they also, in a different dimension, "see" the one whom the angels pronounce is Saviour, Messiah, and Lord (2:11), and whom Simeon celebrates "entirely in terms of vision," describing him with the epithets "light," φῶς, and "glory," δόξα (2:30–32). Ibid.

[138] The implied author's preference is for ὁράω, deployed over seventy times, but he also uses βλέπω, (fourteen times), θεωρέω, (seven times), θεάομαι, (three times) and διαβλέπω (once). "ὁράω," L&N 1, §24.1, §32.11; BDAG, 719–20. "βλέπω," L&N 1, §24.7, §24.41, §32.11; BDAG, 178–79. "θεωρέω," L&N 1, §24.14, §32.11; BDAG, 454. "θεάομαι," L&N 1, §24.14; BDAG, 445–46. "διαβλέπω," to be able to see clearly and plainly, to open one's eyes wide, to be able to distinguish clearly: L&N 1, §24.35; BDAG, 226.

[139] See Fiona Gardner, *The Only Mind Worth Having: Thomas Merton and the Child Mind* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015), 127.

[140] Hamm, "Luke," 1057.

[141] Gardner, *Child Mind*, 128; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 88, 90.

the implied readers) to regard the woman differently, to see her as Jesus does himself. But another, even more fundamental Gospel concern, underlies Jesus' question. It involves Jesus' identity, τίς ἐστιν, who Jesus is (5:21). In disparaging the woman, Simon also dismisses Jesus as a prophet. Therefore, Jesus' query to Simon also asks, "How do you see me?" As one of the definitive questions underlying the narrative, the same query is also placed before the implied audience.[142]

## 2.8 Simon, the Failed Host? (7:44c–46)

With consummate literary skill, the implied author allows Jesus to continue speaking, uninterrupted by any input from the narrator or by any reply from Simon, who is given no further voice. Demonstrating his didactic and dramatic flair, and to maximum rhetorical effect, Jesus recapitulates the woman's actions of washing, kissing, and anointing his feet (vv. 37–38), contrasting each with something that Simon omitted to do.[143] He interprets her gestures as lavish acts of hospitality, and establishes an uncomplimentary *syncrisis* with Simon because of his failure as host to match the extravagance of the woman's deeds.[144]

### 2.8.1 The Comparison

The impression made by Jesus' speech on the implied reader is considerable. First, the audience is surprised because, in a "carefully staged" presentation, an "effective choreography" where story and plot diverge, the narrator has withheld until now the important information that Simon has been a minimally adequate host.[145] When Jesus entered the Pharisee's house, the

[142] The question pervades the narrative. It is raised by the Pharisees (5:21), the disciples (8:25), and Herod (9:9); and by Jesus of the disciples (9:18) and Peter (9:20). The audience knows from early in the narrative who Jesus is. His identity as Saviour, Messiah, and Lord was established by the angels at 2:11, and God himself addresses Jesus as "my Son, the Beloved," ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (3:22).

[143] Wolter, *Luke I*, 320.

[144] *Synkrisis* was a well-known rhetorical trope in antiquity, featuring in the *Progymnasmata* of Theon, Hermogenes, Aphthonius, and Nicolaus. As defined by Aphthonius, *synkrisis* is "a comparison, made by setting things side-by-side." See Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, xiii, 113.

[145] Green, *Luke*, 308; Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 18–19; Carroll, *Luke,* 179. The *story* consists of the events as they actually happened in Simon's house, that is, "the chronological and causal sequence of happenings in real time." In this case, Simon asked Jesus to a meal and omitted certain courtesies for his guest. The uninvited woman arrived and performed lavish acts of hospitality to which Simon silently objected. The *plot*, on the other hand, consists of the story as the implied author chooses to tell it. Here he withholds essential information from the audience (that Simon failed to perform certain courtesies). As Simon's shortcomings are exposed, the reader's earlier judgment of the situation is frustrated and a new point of view must be formulated. See Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 18–19.

reader would have assumed that the conventions of first-century hospitality were followed.[146] Indeed, if Jesus is the chief guest, invited because Simon considers him a teacher (v. 40) and possibly a prophet (v. 39), Simon might be expected to be fulsome in carrying out the time-honoured practices. That Jesus shares these expectations is clear from his remark, "I entered *your* house," εἰσῆλθόν σου εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν, where the position of the pronoun σου particularly emphasizes Simon's role and responsibility as host.[147] Second, the semantic choices and method of delivery of Jesus' speech are striking. In his recapitulation, Jesus repeats much of the narrator's vocabulary of vv. 37–38—πούς (appeared three times in the narrator's account and three times now), δάκρυον, θρίξ, κεφαλή, μύρον, βρέχω, ἐκμάσσω, καταφιλέω, ἀλείφω—thus reinforcing the woman's actions and accentuating Simon's omissions.[148]

Third, Jesus' presentation is conveyed in a series of verbal strikes delivered over three paired phrases or antitheses.[149] Each follows the same pattern: a negative directed at Simon, "You did not," followed by an affirmation of the woman, "but she did." The οὐκ … αὕτη δὲ reverberates through Jesus' speech, emphasizing the magnitude of the woman's offering and the scale of Simon's lapses.[150] By placing the missing acts of hospitality (water, kiss, and oil) at the beginning of each clause, Simon's failings become even more glaring.[151] The effect is intensified by Jesus' emphatic use of pronouns.[152] In addition to the triple "*you* did not … but *she*," there is "*I* entered" (twice), εἰσῆλθόν; *your* house, σου εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν; *my* head, τὴν κεφαλήν μου; and *my* feet (four times), ὕδωρ μοι ἐπὶ πόδας … μου τοὺς πόδας (x 3). The

[146] The conventions could include a warm, respectful, and genuine welcome, food, drink, water for foot-washing, clothes, and entertainment. See Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 66, 142; Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 6.

[147] Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 179; Gowler, *Host, Guest*, 225. Professor Séamus O'Connell notes that one would normally expect εἰσῆλθόν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν σου.

[148] Wolter, *Luke I*, 323–24.

[149] In ancient rhetoric, *antithesis* or *contentio* was a figure of speech in which style was "built on contraries, using contrary thoughts in successive clauses." See Reich, *Figuring Jesus*, 8; BDF §485.

[150] Wolter, *Luke I*, 323–24; Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 18. Resseguie describes vv. 44–46 as an example of an ancient rhetorical construction called an asyndeton, or *dissolutio*. This is a "stark, naked construction that lacks all conjunctions to smooth or qualify the transition from one action (or lack of action) to the next." With a "rat-a-tat cadence," the asyndetic clauses hammer home Simon's failings as a host. Ibid., 17. See also Reich, *Figuring Jesus*, 9, 46; BDF, §460; Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 20–22; Aarts, Chalker, and Weiner, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar*, 6.

[151] Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 17.

[152] Marshall, *Luke,* 311; Wolter, *Luke I*, 324.

hyperbole is encapsulated by the contrast Jesus draws between Simon's failure to provide even olive oil, ἔλαιον, a multipurpose everyday product that could be used in everything from cooking to massage, and the woman's offering of μύρον, the expensive perfumed oil with which she anoints his feet.[153] Fourth, through his litany of contrasts, and in another example of defamiliarization, Jesus unexpectedly casts the uninvited woman into the role of host.[154] This is an instance of the reversal of status and honour foretold by Mary (1:51–53) and now being fulfilled by Jesus.[155] Finally, and ironically in view of the fact that Simon was prepared to recognize Jesus as "teacher," Jesus presents the discounted woman as Simon's teacher, from whom he can learn much.[156]

### 2.8.2 Is Simon an Ungracious Host?

While the implied audience is left reeling from the vigour and forcefulness of Jesus' speech, they nevertheless recognize that it is deliberately overstated, because not all the particular actions for which Jesus castigated Simon and lauded the woman were necessarily expected from a first-century host.[157] Once again, this leaves the readers uncertain about how to regard Simon vis-à-vis Jesus. From one perspective, Simon may have intended no disrespect by not providing Jesus with the additional hospitable gestures.[158] Although less than gracious, it is only when contrasted with the extravagance of the woman's actions that Simon appears at a

[153] Lieu, *Luke*, 59; Marshall, *Luke,* 312. "ἔλαιον," L&N 1, §6.202; BDAG, 313. "μύρον," L&N 1, §6.205; BDAG, 661.

[154] Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 214.

[155] Seim, *Double Message*, 91.

[156] Tannehill, *Luke*, 136; Bock *Luke 1*, 701.

[157] Wolter, *Luke I*, 324; Marshall, *Luke*, 311–12; Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 357; Tannehill, *Luke,* 136; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 82; Dorothea H. Bertschmann, "Hosting Jesus: Revisiting Luke's 'Sinful Woman' (Luke 7.36–50) as a Tale of Two Hosts," *JSNT* 40 (2017): 30–50, here 41–43. In a warm and dry country like Palestine, the provision of water for guests to wash their feet would be welcome, and is attested in Gen 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24. However, its provision was not mandatory. In any case, a host would rarely wash a guest's feet: in a wealthy household, a servant would perform this task, or guests would wash their own feet. While a perfunctory kiss was an accepted form of greeting (2 Sam 15:5), it would not have been a normal act of hospitality to a guest. Although there was a custom of anointing the head with oil (Ps 23:5, LXX 22:5; Ps 133:2, LXX 132:2), a host would not necessarily be expected to extend this courtesy to a guest.

[158] Snodgrass, *Stories With Intent*, 85. Gowler suggests that Simon failed as a host to the extent that he had extended only a "lukewarm" reception and "had not offered Jesus his best." See Gowler, *Host, Guest*, 225. Méndez-Moratalla describes Simon's behaviour as host a "mediocre attention." See Méndez-Moratalla, *Paradigm of Conversion*, 118. Harrington considers Simon's reception of Jesus as "coldly formal." See Harrington, *Reading Luke*, 132.

disadvantage. But, from another standpoint, although the omission of a single act might not reveal Simon as antagonistic towards Jesus, to exclude all (especially the mundane provision of water) could reflect "a hidden contempt or doubt about Jesus' greatness."[159] If so, it existed from the time Jesus entered Simon's house, and not from when Jesus accepted the touch of the woman, the act that seemed to trigger the negative monologue. On this reading, the audience now questions his motive in extending the dinner invitation to Jesus in the first place, and deem that the "teacher" address may have had an ironic edge to it, after all.[160]

Their hesitation about Simon has an effect on the implied readers. If the implied author is now associating Simon with the negative characteristics of the earlier Pharisees, it means that Simon's individuality is being subsumed and he is reverting to a stereotype. It makes it less interesting for the audience if an otherwise enigmatic character is being redrawn along predictable lines. But it is not clear-cut whether this is the case, and the shading of Simon's characterization keeps the audience attentive while they await his reaction to what Jesus has said.

### 2.9 Jesus Draws a Conclusion (7:47a): "Her Sins Have Been Forgiven"

Given the "combative and competitive" situation that now exists between host and guest, Simon might now be expected to defend himself.[161] But, before he has time to do so, Jesus continues with his speech, affording Simon no chance to counter-challenge (an effort rendered more difficult if Jesus continues to look at the woman instead of Simon). Jesus' emphatic "therefore" or "for this reason," οὗ χάριν, links the series of antitheses back to the parable, and

[159] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 296–97. Lieu calls Simon's hospitality a "contemptuous pretence." See Lieu, *Luke*, 59. Bailey comments that "war has been declared" by Simon. See Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 8.

[160] If even some of the Lukan audience were familiar with the stock characters of Greek theatre and literature, Simon's behaviour might remind them of Theophastus's Ironical Man, or Dissembler, ὁ ἔρων, a man whom Theophrastus describes as one who will praise to their faces those whom he attacks behind their backs. See Theophrastus, *Characters*, 64–67. The Dissembler was known for a lack of frankness, a dissembling of real motives, and a parade of false ones. See Kitto, *Greeks*, 244.

[161] Jipp, *Divine Visitations,* 177.

the χαρ- stem provides a strong link to the χαρίζομαι found there (7:42).[162] At the same time, the λέγω σοι looks forward, and marks what follows as important.[163]

Jesus does not defend the woman by denying that she was ever without sins.[164] On the contrary, he describes her as a person who once had many sins, αἱ ἁμαρτίαι αὐτῆς αἱ πολλαί. With this turn of phrase, he distinguishes the woman from her conduct, a differentiation that gives an insight into how the Lukan Jesus sees people. In an ancient world where people were generally defined by their actions, Jesus' view of the woman reflects more the attitude of God in 1 Sam 16:7 where he sees, not the externals, but the heart. Jesus' depiction of the woman therefore differs from the character tag of an ἁμαρτωλός attached to her by both the narrator and Simon. But where the narrator was ambiguous with his γυνὴ ἥτις ἦν … ἁμαρτωλός (v. 37), leaving the reader uncertain whether she was a current or former sinner, Simon was incorrect in his assessment of her as a present sinner (v. 39), ἁμαρτωλός ἐστιν. (This means that Simon has now drawn two wrong conclusions: that Jesus is not a prophet and that the woman is a sinner.) That the woman is already forgiven seems clear from the perfect passive tense of the verb ἀφίημι,"have been forgiven," which expresses "a past action whose effects endure into the present."[165] Here ἀφέωνται is most likely to be understood as a theological passive, indicating that the forgiving was done by God, and that Jesus, as God's Son and agent, declares what has been done for her.[166]

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[162] See Wolter, *Luke I*, 325. "χάριν," because of (this), by reason of, for this reason, therefore: L&N 1, §89.29; BDAG, 1078–79. It is rare for Jesus to draw a conclusion to a parable, but he does so in this instance as it "arises out of a specific situation," and depends upon the context for its interpretation. See Parsons, *Luke*, 131; Hultgren, *Parables of Jesus*, 215.

[163] The λέγω σοι represents a "metacomment," a device that breaks the flow of the discourse and highlights "the introduction of important propositions … ones to which the writer or speaker wants to attract extra attention." See Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 102, 124. Found over forty times in the Gospel, the expressions λέγω σοι, σοὶ λέγω, λέγω ὑμῖν, and ὑμῖν λέγω are employed almost exclusively on the lips of Jesus. The only exception is John the Baptist at 3:8, who is also the first to introduce the idiom. On six occasions, Jesus prefaces the phrase with ἀμὴν (4:24; 12:37; 18:17, 29; 21:32; 23:43), rendering it even more significant. And three times he employs λέγω ὑμῖν but replaces ἀμὴν with ἀληθῶς, or "truly," at 9:27; 12:44; 21:3.

[164] Patella, *Luke,* 53. Danker states that Jesus' acknowledgement of her sins indicates that he does not, "as the Pharisees have complained, take sin lightly." See Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 100.

[165] Reid, "Do You See This Woman?" 110. BDF explains that the perfect tense "denotes the continuance of completed action." See BDF, §340.

[166] Johnson, *Luke*, 128; Marshall, *Luke*, 313; Reid, "Do You See This Woman?" 111; Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 583, 688, 692; Green, *Luke*, 241 (discussing ἀφέωνται at 5:23).

### 2.9.1 The enigmatic ὅτι (7:47b)

Jesus' introduction of the ὅτι phrase, ὅτι ἠγάπησεν πολύ, brings an unexpected disjuncture into the discourse, its appearance proving so disruptive that it must be considered a major focal point of the pericope. It raises the problematic question of whether the woman's actions (which, for Jesus, express her love, ἀγάπη) are the *cause* or *consequence* of her forgiveness. The usual understanding of ὅτι as the subordinating conjunction "because" or "since" would have the woman's actions the cause of the forgiveness of her sins ("She is forgiven *because* she loved much").[167] However, this is to controvert the logic of the parable, where the debts were first cancelled, and the love of the debtors ensued.[168] Since the audience expects the parable to provide the hermeneutical key for what follows, they are primed to understand the ὅτι phrase as, "She is forgiven, *therefore* she loved much," thus interpreting the woman's extravagant gestures "not as the basis for the forgiveness but as the demonstration of it."[169]

The ambiguity around ὅτι is clearly deliberate on the part of the implied author and is introduced because the matters being explored—love, gift, forgiveness, restoration, healing, salvation, acceptance, and the relations between them on divine and human levels—are complex and not amenable to reductive readings based solely on chronology or cause-and-effect.[170] Had the implied author intended to follow the parable unambiguously and have the

[167] Among other meanings, ὅτι represents a mark of causality, denoting because, since, for, in view of the fact that. See "ὅτι," L&N 1, §89.33; BDAG, 731–32; BDF, §456.

[168] Zerwick and Grosvenor, *Grammatical Analysis*, 203; Corley, *Private Women,* 126.

[169] Johnson, *Luke*, 128. Grammatically, either interpretation is valid. If ὅτι is a subordinating conjunction, understood as "because" or "since," it introduces a subordinate clause that gives the actual reason for the state of affairs formulated in the main statement (she is forgiven because she loved much). However, subordination with ὅτι is often very loose, so that it can also be translated as "for," "evidenced by the fact that," "in recognition that." See BDF, §456 (1); BDAG, 732.4. On this understanding, the sentence reads, "Because of this conduct I tell you (that) her many sins have been forgiven, as is evidenced by the fact that she loved much." See Marshall, *Luke*, 313. Commentators who favour this interpretation (love as a consequence of forgiveness) are Johnson, *Luke*, 128; Marshall, *Luke*, 306; Fitzmyer, *Luke 1–1X*, 687; Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness*, 135; Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 358; Danker, *Jesus and the New Age,* 100; Méndez-Moratalla, *Paradigm of Conversion*, 120; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation: Volume One: The Gospel According to Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 117; Kilgallen, "Forgiveness of Sins," 114; Parsons, *Luke*, 131; Reid, "Do You See This Woman?" 110; Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 75; Bock, *Luke 1*, 703; Jeremias, *Parables of Jesus*, 127; Green, *Luke*, 313; Resseguie, "Woman Who Crashed," 20. Among those who support forgiveness on account of the woman's love are Wolter, *Luke I*, 325, and Jipp, *Divine Visitations,* 180–81. Levine and Witherington believe the matter is unresolved. See Levine and Witherington, *Luke,* 214–15. Bovon also allows the tension to stand, positing that "the woman's actions are simultaneously indications of and reasons for her forgiveness." See Bovon, *Luke 1*, 297.

[170] Marguerat notes how tensions, ruptures, and shifts are "inherent to narrativity," which can reject "the systematization of argumentative discourse." See Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, 46.

sentence read, "She is forgiven, *therefore* she loved much," he had available a number of inferential conjunctions that would have set the matter beyond dispute, for example, ἄρα, διό, ὥστε, and διὰ τοῦτο.[171] In particular, he might have used οὖν to draw a clear inference, as Jesus did with his first question to Simon, "Therefore, οὖν, which of them will love him more?" (v. 42), where the parable itself provided the incontrovertible answer.[172]

The complication of the ὅτι both confuses and challenges the readers. Because they (and Simon) expect an alignment with the parable, they risk being blinded by their assumptions, and do not immediately perceive what is being communicated. By replacing the post-parable οὖν with ὅτι, Jesus is not crafting an exact identification with the parable, but is instead developing or re-orientating it, much to the surprise, and perhaps the resistance, of the implied audience.[173] Thus, in the narrated parable, the χάρις of the moneylender led to the ἀγάπη of the debtors. However, by using ὅτι in his interpretation of the woman's actions—an enacted parable—Jesus tilts the meaning, and declares that it is her ἀγάπη, actualized in hospitality, that leads to forgiveness—"She is forgiven, *because* she loved much."

Therefore, the two parables (narrated and enacted) together explore the origins, consequences, and complexity of love. According to the Lukan Jesus, ἀγάπη happens when people are gifted or graced by another; the more people are gifted, the more ἀγάπη they show;

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[171] A referential conjunction introduces an inference that can be deduced from the previous statement. See Culy, Parson, and Stigall, *Handbook*, 107. Examples include,"If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then/therefore, ἄρα, the kingdom of God has come to you" (11:20); "I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, therefore, διό, I did not presume to come to you" (7:6-7); They filled the boats, so that/therefore, ὥστε, they began to sink (5:7); "I have just been married, and therefore, διὰ τοῦτο, I cannot come" (14:20).

[172] Οὖν appears as an unequivocal referential conjunction at 3:8, 9; 10:2, 40; 13:7; 23:22. For example, Martha says, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then/therefore, οὖν, to help me" (10:40). Or the owner of the vineyard tells the gardener, "For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none! Therefore, [οὖν], cut it down! (13:7). The manuscript evidence for omitting or including οὖν in the second instance is evenly divided. See Culy, Parsons, and Stigall, *Handbook*, 454.

[173] The Lukan Jesus is adept at disconcerting his audiences and taking them by surprise. One way he does this is to shift the orientation within his parables. For example, in the parables of the lost in Chapter 15, the account of the elder son subverts the pattern of the first stories. Instead of following the model that he established with the sheep, coin, and younger son, Jesus instead introduces a counter-example, thus unsettling the implied audience who have to re-think their assumptions. Similarly, in the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus inverts the lawyer's self-absorbed and reactive question, "Who is my neighbour?" (10:29) and asks instead, "Who was a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?" (10:36), thus shifting the perspective to a proactive and more altruistic one. Within his narrative encounters, too, Jesus can be subversive of audience expectations. Thus, with Martha, as will be seen in Chapter Three of this study, he dismisses both the hospitality that he lauds in the anointing woman, and the compassion that he extols in the good Samaritan (10:38–40). And with his rebuff of his mother and brothers at 8:19–21, Jesus rejects the family bonds that were so deeply embedded in the cultural and social mores of the first-century world.

and because of their ἀγάπη, they experience forgiveness, ἀφίημι, (a polyvalent word that expresses aspects of salvation, healing, release, acceptance, and transformation).[174] With the anointing woman, the lavishness of her hospitality, which expresses her ἀγάπη, is a measure of how much she has received. From this, the implied audience understands that, in a previous unnarrated encounter between Jesus and the woman, something happened between them whereby she was graced or gifted, χαρίζομαι, a realization (a "seeing") that brings her to Simon's house to enact her ἀγάπη in the form of hospitality, and for this ἀγάπη she is released from her sins (her past?) and receives all the somatic and spiritual healing that accompanies it (cf. 1:47, 80; 8:55).

The ὅτι, then, cannot limit what happens between Jesus and the woman to a simple "because/therefore," "either/or" exploration. Instead, its semantic reach creates space for a "both/and" interpretation, on the understanding that there is a reciprocity between love and forgiveness (even though the hermeneutical thrust in this pericope is on love leading to forgiveness).[175] This reciprocity involves movement on the divine and human planes. God's role in the process of loving/gifting/forgiving must always come first, especially since one of the narrative's essential purposes, as Byrne puts it, is to "bring home to people a sense of the extravagance of God's love in their regard."[176] On the human level, responsibility lies with the person to recognize, accept, and respond to God's unceasing initiative, his endless gifting, as the woman does with Jesus.[177] This is a dynamic event where it is often impossible in human terms to pinpoint its beginning (and is therefore an occurrence that the implied author pointedly omits in this sophisticated pericope). What the implied audience observes with the woman and Jesus is an ongoing process of love and reconciliation, a "cycle of exchange" caught in mid-

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[174] The verb ἀφίημι has connotations of freedom, liberation, pardon, cancellation, letting something go: "ἀφίημι," L&N 1, §40.8; BDAG, 156–57. The reader already knows that ἄφεσις is central to Jesus' ministry. When he first proclaimed it in his programmatic sermon the Nazareth synagogue (4:18–19), he associated it with the liberation of those held in physical captivity or oppression. But as Jesus begins to enact ἄφεσις in the narrative, he brings "release from all that holds humans captive," including illness, disability, and release from the guilt of sin. See Kylie Crabbe, "A Sinner and a Pharisee: Challenge at Simon's Table in Luke 7:36–50," *Pacifica* 24 (2011): 247–66, here 252. "ἄφεσις," the act of freeing and liberating from something that confines, the act of freeing from an obligation, guilt, or punishment; pardon, cancellation: L&N, §40.8, §37.132; BDAG, 155.

[175] Carroll notes how there is "no simple calculus of forgiveness and love (or gratitude, or attachment to Jesus) in Jesus' ministry." See Carroll, *Luke*, 179.

[176] See Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 2; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 297.

[177] See Bovon, *Luke 1*, 297.

action.[178] When Jesus, as God's agent, accepts the woman's ministrations, they are engaged in the mysterious "mutuality and simultaneity" that exists between loving and forgiving, and between giving/gifting and receiving.[179] Because these are "intimately related, with one prompting the other," the woman is already both forgiven and being forgiven, has already been loved and is loving, has been gifted and is being gifted.[180]

Thus, the ὅτι of the Lukan Jesus, with its ambiguity and opacity, its unexpectedness and its disjuncture from the narrated parable, compels the audience to pause, reflect, and consider matters that might have been overlooked had the implied author had less regard and respect for the diligence of his reader.

### 2.9.2 Is Simon the Little Debtor? (7:47c)

Like much of v. 47, its conclusion leaves considerable work for the implied audience. In the first place, the inconsistency between the perspective of the parable (love follows forgiveness) and the ὅτι (forgiveness follows love) continues, where Jesus' assertion that "the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little" returns to the thrust of the parable. It is a contradiction that can be negotiated only in terms of the "both/and" circularity of love and forgiveness. In the second place, the question arises whether Simon is the lesser debtor. At first glance, it appears that Jesus is characterizing him as one who "loves little." This is because v. 47c seems to complete the logic of what went before; first, the debtors were treated antithetically in the parable, and Simon and the woman were presented antithetically in vv. 44–46; next, because the woman was equated with the debtor who was forgiven much (v. 47a), it might be supposed that Simon is the one who, as the lesser debtor, is forgiven little and therefore loves little.[181]

[178] See Bertschmann, "Hosting Jesus," 47.

[179] Ibid.

[180] See Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 215; Bertschmann, "Hosting Jesus," 47.

[181] Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 692; Kilgallen, "Forgiveness of Sins," 111–12. Darr describes Simon's position as, "either Simon does not need (much) forgiveness, or he has been forgiven little because he has not repented." See Darr, *On Character Building*, 102.

However, to surmise that Simon is the referent of v. 47c might be an overly-specific conclusion that is not sustained by the text.[182] The Pharisee is nowhere described as having many sins, of undergoing any experience of God's forgiveness, or of showing an inappropriate amount of gratitude if he has done so.[183] That the dictum is not to be applied too precisely to Simon may be judged by Jesus' selection of pronouns: whereas the application of v. 47a to the woman was individual, αἱ ἁμαρτίαι αὐτῆς, the application of v. 47c is general, ᾧ, "to whom, to whomever, to whomsoever." The wide-ranging ᾧ makes it possible that v. 47c constitutes an epigrammatic conclusion to the parable in the form of a pithy proverb or universal wisdom statement.[184] Since proverbs are based on common-sense, experience, and insight into human behaviour, their truth value generally becomes self-evident, and accepted as applicable to everyone.[185] As the enunciation of a principle, this maxim could apply, not only to Simon, but to his guests and the implied readers alike.[186] Therefore, instead of shifting the application of v. 47c solely onto Simon, and thereby exonerating themselves, all who hear it must consider if and how it pertains to them.

Both as an individual character and a representative figure (representative not necessarily of Pharisees but of people in general), Jesus wants Simon to "learn about the depth of God's forgiveness and its powerful effect through the experience of the woman. If Simon can accept her, the woman's example can revitalize Simon's understanding of God."[187] In doing so, Simon—and the implied audience—might be led to see the woman as Jesus sees her, and to acknowledge Jesus as a prophet and one who can proclaim God's eschatological forgiveness. This indirect approach to Simon through the ᾧ is likely to be more effective than

[182] Nolland posits that the first thing v. 47b does is to repeat "in negative form the basis on which it was possible in v. 47a confidently to deduce that the woman had been forgiven a great deal. The woman must have been forgiven much, because she does not fit the pattern: little forgiveness, little love." See Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 359.

[183] Tannehill, *Luke*, 136; Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 359; Marshall, *Luke,* 313.

[184] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 291. See also Kilgallen, "Forgiveness of Sins," 111, although Kilgallen deems that Simon would consider that this principle is to be applied to himself. The audience is already familiar with wisdom adages such as, "No one puts new wine into old wineskins" (5:37), or "Can a blind person guide a blind person?" (6:39). See §1.3.2.2 for a discussion on ancient wisdom literature.

[185] Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 62–63.

[186] According to Marshall, the present tense verbs support the saying as a "formal and theoretical" one [and therefore capable of general application]. See Marshall, *Luke*, 313.

[187] Tannehill, *Luke*, 137.

a confrontational one.[188] He is less disposed to take offence and begin another cycle of challenge and riposte, forced on the defensive before Jesus and his guests.[189] Not feeling threatened gives Simon the possibility of seeing the woman and to ponder that those who recognize and admit their need of God's love and forgiveness are, like her, best able to receive it.[190]

### 2.9.3 Simon on the Boundary

For the first time since the beginning of v. 44, there is an impression that Jesus pauses in his discourse. His flow is stopped by the narrator interjecting, "then he said to her" (v. 48). In this interval, a temporal gap is created, giving Simon space to consider what Jesus has said. Because Jesus has "carefully led him toward a judgment about the woman that is different from his initial one," he finds himself "poised on the threshold of decision."[191] He is at a potential turning point, but his response is unpredictable and unknowable.[192] The reader is given no further insight into his interiority by means of another monologue. Silent throughout most of the pericope, Simon remains silent now, and the audience is not told whether he "rejects what Jesus has said or that begins to understand and agree."[193] As Jesus moves on to address the woman, Simon is "narratively abandoned" in his moment of decision, and the reader is left with the crisis "dramatically defined but not resolved."[194] By leaving Simon's response unfinalized and unpredeterminable, he is established, not a stereotype who cuts himself off

[188] Jesus will not always take this indirect approach with the Pharisees. On the next occasion that he is invited to dine with a Pharisee, he excoriates them with a series of woes (11:39–44), demonstrating how he can vary his approach to suit the circumstances.

[189] As a Pharisee who probably considers himself to be pious and religious, and that any debt he has is small, a hasty retort might prompt an attitude like that of the only other individual Pharisee in the narrative—the parabolic Pharisee of 18:10–14 who is self-satisfied in the presence of one whom he deems a sinner.

[190] Hultgren, *Parables of Jesus*, 217.

[191] Tannehill, *Luke*, 137.

[192] See David McCracken, "Character in the Boundary: Bakhtin's Interdividuality in Biblical Narratives," *Semeia* 63 (1993): 29–42, here 32–33.

[193] Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story*, 268. Gowler states that "The fracas may still end in either incorporation or rejection." See Gowler, *Host, Guest*, 225.

[194] See McCracken, "Character in the Boundary," 33.

from God's purposes (7:30), but an open and complex character, with possibilities for growth and change.[195]

### 2.10 "Your Sins Have Been Forgiven" (7:48)

Jesus, instead of speaking *about* the woman, finally addresses her, and presumably continues to look at her. Considering the lavish hospitality that she extended to Jesus and how he lauded her to Simon, their encounter would hardly be complete without a direct response from him. However, in contrast to "Simon," Jesus employs no personal term of greeting when speaking to her. While he may not know her name, there are various expressions that he could have used, as he does at other interactions of healing and restoration: "daughter," Θυγάτηρ (8:48); "child," Ἡ παῖς (8:54); "woman," Γύναι (13:12).[196] There is thus an abruptness to his communication that jars somewhat on the reader.

Jesus' authoritative words *to* the woman, "Your sins have been forgiven," ἀφέωνταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, repeat almost verbatim his words to Simon *about* her, "her sins have been forgiven," ἀφέωνταί αἱ ἁμαρτίαι αὐτῆς (v. 47). They generate distance from her even as they acknowledge her recent action. It is as if the intimacy established by the anointing is now being relativized by this unmediated recognition of her presence and her conduct. Nevertheless, Jesus' words are a forthright testimony—directed at her but heard by everyone present—of her status as a forgiven sinner. The arresting and commanding nature of Jesus' statement is demonstrated by the fact that those hearing it—Simon's guests—react immediatly.

### 2.11 "Who is This Who Even Forgives Sins?" (7:49)

In an instantaneous response to Jesus' words to the woman, "those who were reclining with him," οἱ συνανακείμενοι, are finally given a role in the narrative.[197] While they have a function in their own right, they also serve to characterize Simon indirectly, as he might be expected to

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[195] Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story*, 268–69. "Unfinalized" and "unpredeterminable" are terms used by Russian philosopher and literary critic, Mikhail Bakhtin. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 61.

[196] During interactions with men, Jesus used the vocatives "man," Ἄνθρωπε (5:20; 12:14) and "young man," Νεανίσκε (7:14).

[197] "συνανάκειμαι," to recline at table for purposes of eating, to eat together: L&N 1, §34.10; BDAG, 965. "οἱ συνανακείμενοι," fellow guests or banqueters: BDAG, 965.

share the point of view of those with whom he chooses to dine.[198] Although it is not stated, there is a reader presumption that the other guests are Pharisees like Simon. This is because they would be the most socially and religiously acceptable group around his table. In addition, there is a striking linguistic symmetry between Simon's guests and the Pharisees at the healing of the paralytic: they both question Jesus' identity, τίς οὗτός ἐστιν; and his power to forgive sins (5:21).[199]

However, the implied author again prevents a one-dimensional portrayal of the Pharisees and frustrates simple assumptions by the implied audience. Despite the similarities, there are significant divergences from the earlier Pharisees' responses. Simon's guests "invoke neither the accusation of blasphemy nor the rationale that it is God alone who can forgive sins," thus making their comment less critically expressed than that of 5:21.[200] The intensive adverb καί, signifying "even," implies a potential openness to the possibility that Jesus, because of his unique identity (who is this?), himself has authority to forgive sins and is currently doing so.[201] In considering this, the Pharisees' use of the present tense verb ἀφίησιν ascribes to Jesus a power that was not apparent from Jesus' own use of the theological passive ἀφέωνται in vv. 47a and 48.[202] This leeway or "loophole" afforded Simon's guests is narratively plausible because it resembles how the carping Pharisees of 5:21 eventually joined "all" in praising God (5:26).[203]

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[198] Dining in the ancient world was a "highly controlled activity that reflected and reinforced social hierarchies and group identity." See Carvalho, *Biblical Methods*, 27.

[199] There are other similarities to earlier Pharisees, including Simon. The guests speak among themselves, λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, exactly as Simon did with his critical monologue, εἶπεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ (v. 39), reminding the audience of the Pharisees' censorious reasoning, ὁ διαλογισμός, at the healings of the paralyzed man and the man with the withered hand (5:21–22; 6:8).

[200] Wolter, *Luke I,* 325. See also Méndez-Moratalla, *Paradigm of Conversion*, 125.

[201] Wolter does not consider that anything has changed in the Pharisees' attitude since the healing of the paralytic. Although their current question conflates their comments of 5:21, he believes that the accusation of blasphemy is still "present in the background." See Wolter, *Luke I*, 326. In a similar vein, Reid deems that Simon's companions "are shown as contradicting Jesus' attempt to move Simon to a different perception of the woman." See Reid, "Do You See This Woman?" 111. "καί," even, also, in addition: L&N 1, §89.93; BDAG, 494–96. See also Zerwick and Grosvenor, *Grammatical Analysis*, 203.

[202] See Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 692.

[203] "Loophole" is another term employed by Bakhtin, broadly equivalent to unfinalizability. Loopholes permit characters to remain ambiguous, elusive, and unpredeterminable. See Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 66–67. At this point in the narrative, this elusiveness includes the very identification of characters as Pharisees or otherwise. Just as Simon's guests are not categorized as Pharisees, neither is it certain that Pharisees are included in the "all" at the cure of the paralyzed man. This indeterminacy, created by the implied author, keeps the readers

The Lukan Jesus seems to recognize that there is a possibility of a positive response from his fellow-diners. Unlike previous encounters with critical Pharisees (5:22, 31, 34; 6:3, 9), and his recent riposte to Simon (v. 40), Jesus makes no reply to the silent thoughts of Simon's guests, instead affording them an opportunity to consider the implications of what they have witnessed. Therefore, like Simon, the guests also find themselves in a liminal state, where they "hover as though on a threshold between two different places."[204] What has happened to the woman is now being opened up for Simon's guests (and therefore for the implied audience): is Jesus is God's agent who merely announces what God has done or is he the Lord who is to be more and more associated with the creditor who is able to cancel the debt of sin?[205] Although οἱ συνανακείμενοι are brought to a possible "cusp of transformation," the reader never knows the outcome because, like Simon, his guests are narratively abandoned as the focus returns to the woman and Jesus is afforded the last word in the pericope.[206]

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involved, alert, and somewhat off-balance. It also means that they will approach Jesus' next encounter with Pharisees in the narrative with a sense of uncertainty about the outcome.

[204] Crabbe, "A Sinner and a Pharisee," 250. Crabbe here describes liminality as "a stage in the experience of profound transition, during which a person is separated from her or his familiar context but has not yet moved into the new context. Such experience is inevitably transformative … " Ibid.

[205] See Parsons, *Luke*, 131.

[206] "Cusp of transformation" is a term from Crabbe. See Crabbe, "A Sinner and a Pharisee," 250. The ambiguity or opacity of the Pharisees is a consistent feature through the Gospel narrative. While their general portrait is negative, and they are the subject of much averse narratorial comment (7:30; 11:53–54; 16:14), the portrait drawn of them is not monolithic. Thus, although the Pharisees grumble about Jesus and criticize him (5:21, 30; 6:2; 15:2), and Jesus regularly excoriates them (11:39–44; 12:1; 18:10–14), he still continues to dine with them (7:36; 11:37; 14:1), something he would hardly do if they were inveterate enemies. And, while the Pharisees are reported to watch Jesus and make plans to deal with him (6:7, 11), nothing comes of their machinations—they do him no physical harm, are entirely absent from the passion narrative, and play no part in his death. Indeed, at 13:31, "some" Pharisees, τινες Φαρισαῖοι, warn Jesus of Herod's plan to kill him. In Acts, their role moves in a positive trajectory. They come to the defence of the apostles (5:33–39) and of Paul (23:6–10), and Pharisees are counted among believers (15:5). As Tannehill avers, if the Pharisees are no longer portrayed as "rigid opponents" in Acts, they were not as hopeless in the Gospel as they might have seemed. See Tannehill, *Shape of Luke's Story*, 262. Overall, Gowler considers that "the Pharisees cannot be coherently categorized into one group, but instead consist of at least four subgroups that span the entire spectrum from enemies to friends, from unbelievers to members of the household of God." See Gowler, *Host, Guest*, 306–7.

Darr has a different opinion of the narrative Pharisees. He posits that that they are "caricatures of a morality to be avoided," one that "blinds and deafens one to God." See Darr, *On Character Building*, 92. He suggests that the narrative "encourages readers to construe them consistently, homogeneously, collectively," so that group traits will be imputed to every individual Pharisee." Ibid., 93. On this basis, he avers that, in Simon the Pharisee, "the reader sees a representative of all the Pharisees who (the narrator told us) rejected God's will for themselves by not experiencing John's baptism." Ibid., 101. This study adopts a different view, regarding Simon as an open character whose ultimate response to Jesus is unpredictable.

Levine posits that the issue remains undecided, and deems that "whether Luke sees the Pharisees as a group or as individuals, whether his gospel offers pictures of the Pharisees as neutral, benevolent, or evil incarnate … these questions will remain debated." See Levine, "Luke's Pharisees," 130.

## 2.12 "Your Faith Has Saved You/Your Trust has Healed You" Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε (7:50)

At first reading, Jesus' mention of faith and salvation (alternatively translated as trust and healing) at this final stage of the encounter seems a disjuncture, as neither were earlier mentioned as playing any part in the proceedings. (It was the woman's love, ἀγάπη, that Jesus commended at v. 47, not her πίστις.) But a re-consideration suggests that Jesus's two direct statements to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven" (v. 48) and "Your faith has saved you/your trust has healed you" (v. 50) are set in parallel, and that the woman's love for Jesus and her forgiveness are now being conveyed as faith and salvation (or trust and healing).[207] In other words, Jesus is interweaving the two expressions, and these, in turn, are bound up with the woman's love.[208]

### 2.12.1 πίστις and σῴζω

Πίστις is a complex, polyvalent word that appears widely across Luke's narratives.[209] But, because it was also in common use in the Greco-Roman-Jewish world, the implied audience would primarily understand it within its contemporary range of meanings.[210] For them, πίστις (and its cognates πιστεύω and πιστός) was not usually conceived of in a propositional or

[207] Green, *Luke*, 314. Bovon considers that "Love for Jesus and forgiveness are now expressed with different words, as 'faith' and 'salvation.' Luke uses these concepts interchangeably." See Bovon, *Luke 1*, 298.

[208] The two expressions, "Your sins and forgiven," and "Your faith has saved you," are found together only in the present pericope. "Your sins are forgiven" features at the healing of the man with paralysis (5:20) and the anointing woman (7:48); while Jesus declares "Your faith has saved you/made you well" at the cures of the woman with the flow of blood (8:48), the man cured of leprosy who returned to give thanks (17:19), and the blind beggar of Jericho (18:42). In none of these three latter physical cures is there any mention of forgiveness of sins, but presumably either formula, "Your sins are forgiven," or "Your faith has saved you," would have been equally effective. There are some cures where Jesus does not employ either idiom: the man with the withered hand (6:10), the woman with the bent back (13:13), and the man with dropsy (14:4). Faith/trust or forgiveness seem to play no part in these healings: the three people involved merely happen to cross Jesus' path while they are going about their business and want nothing from him.

[209] Πίστις occurs eleven times in the Gospel and fifteen times in Acts. Nolland notes how it can exist anywhere along a spectrum of meanings that ranges from confidence in Jesus as a proven healer to belief in Jesus as the Davidic Messiah through whom God is "mightily at work." See Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 901. "πίστις," L&N 1, §31.85; BDAG, 818–20.

[210] Teresa J. Morgan, "Introduction to *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*," *JRelS* 54 (2018): 563–68, here 564. Morgan notes how "Communities forming themselves within an existing culture do not typically take language in common use in the world around them and immediately assign to it radical new meanings. New meanings may, and often do evolve, but evolution takes time … In its earliest years, therefore, we should not expect the meaning of Christian *pistis* (or *fides*) language to be wholly *sui generis*. We should expect those who use it to understand it within the range of meanings which are at play in the world around them." Ibid.

cognitive way that involved an abstract set of beliefs or doctrines. Instead, it was understood as a relational term denoting an attitude of trust, trustworthiness, good faith, hope, and confidence in another, whether human or divine.[211] On this understanding, the Lukan Jesus interprets the woman's bold approach as an enacted πίστις, evincing trust and confidence in him (a demeanour that he describes as love).[212] In addition, he further re-defines, re-focuses, and re-designates πίστις in terms of its effect (*wirkung*) on her, that is, her salvation (σῴζω).

Like πίστις, σῴζω (and its cognates σωτηρία, σωτήρ, and σωτήριος) is a multivalent word that permeates Luke's writings as a complex root metaphor.[213] As a term that was already familiar to the implied readers from its contemporary use, they would instinctively comprehend σῴζω as having a strongly material element that denotes physical healing or rescue, whether from danger, illness, or death.[214] Thus, the implied author reports many healings where σῴζω is applied in this literal manner, for example, the woman with the flow of blood (8:48), Jairus's daughter (8:50), the man with leprosy (17:19), the blind beggar (18:42). On a more existential level, the Lukan σῴζω accrues such figurative associations as "making whole," "to give new life to," or "to cause to have a new heart," in other words, to transform, re-orient, or to re-create a person.[215] It is with this transferred meaning that Jesus appears to address the woman:

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[211] Ibid., 563, 567. On the human level, it was accepted that trust was necessary for sound human and community relations, although it was recognized that, in many situations, trust may be "fragile and contestable, cut with mistrust, doubt, fear, and suspicion." In the religious situation of the Greco-Roman world, the gods were generally seen as trustworthy while, in the Jewish tradition, especially Genesis and Exodus, God is consistently depicted to be so. In Hellenistic Judaism, when God is characterized as more distant and trust in him seems more challenging, πίστις is still a non-negotiable obligation for humanity, and the commandments provide a way of expressing trust in and faithfulness towards him. Ibid., 565, 568, 566.

[212] The narrative Jesus admires those who approach him in this intrepid manner. The implied audience has already seen how, at the healing of the man with paralysis (5:20) and the centurion's servant (7:9), Jesus commends their bold and persistent behaviour as actualizations or "visualizations" of their πίστις. See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 94–95. Just as the paralyzed man (and his friends) were undeterred by the milling crowds, and the centurion by considerable religio-cultural barriers, so the anointing woman is undaunted by the social and gendered conventions of the first-century Jewish world.

[213] σῴζω appears seventeen times in the Gospel and thirteen times in Acts. "σῴζω," L&N 1, §21.18, §21.27, §23.136; BDAG, 982–83.

[214] Thus, σωτήριος was a term that non-Jewish inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world applied to individual gods and deified emperors, on whose power and intercession they depended for the safe conduct of their lives. See Craig R. Koester, "'The Savior of the World:' (John 4:42)," *JBL* 109 (1990): 665–80, here 666.

[215] L&N 1, §21.27. Morgan notes how the synoptic evangelists use σῴζω [and *pistis*] "when they want to emphasize the mobility of Christ between heaven and earth. People who come to Jesus to be healed, for instance, in the synoptic gospels, seem to approach what they see as a rabbi who can heal them, and encounter the Messiah who can save them." See Morgan, "Introduction," 567. Lieu describes how the implied author can deploy σῴζω with a "deliberate play on the ambiguity of the word," so that a physical cure also involves a spiritual one. See Lieu, *Luke*, 146.

according to him, because of her enacted πίστις, she is transformed or re-created, her new life launched by him with the emphatic "go" imperative, πορεύου.[216]

### 2.12.2 "Go in Peace"

Jesus' parting words to the woman, to "go in peace," are those of resolution and closure.[217] From his point of view, the woman's situation is settled, and she leaves Simon's house experiencing the release associated with ἀφίημι (vv. 47, 47, 48), and the sense of rescue, deliverance, healing, transformation, and new heart related to σῴζω.[218] But the audience, understanding the social realities faced by the woman, might have a practical concern for her. Where will she go? Where will she be welcomed? Will she find acceptance within the community? In this uncertainty about her "going," she differs from the once-paralyzed man and the centurion's servant who also had a πίστις-and-σώζω encounter with Jesus. When the narrative left them, they each had a role and a place of belonging: the man returning to his home (5:25) and the servant ready to resume duties in the centurion's house (7:10).

However, because the narrative's interests lie elsewhere, the woman's future life is not a matter that need overly concern the implied reader. Just as Jesus gave the woman permission to exit Simon's house, so the reader is allowed to leave her. Thus, the woman's story ends, as it began, in the middle.

## 2.13 Conclusion

The implied author invests considerable narrative space in this lengthy pericope, with the woman as its focal point. The anthropological importance of this particular pericope is

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[216] The re-reader understands the woman is thus the proleptic counterpart of both the parabolic younger son and of Zacchaeus. Like them, in the same metaphorical way, she was dead and has come to life; she was lost and is found (15:24, 32; 19:10).

[217] In dismissing the woman to "go in peace," Jesus employs a parting formula familiar from the Septuagint (1 Sam 1:17; 20:42; 29:7 [I Kgs 1:17; 20:42; 29:7 LXX]). The only other character in the narrative told to "Go in peace" is the woman cured of the flow of blood, whom Jesus dismisses with exactly the same formula that he uses with the anointing woman, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνη (8:48).

[218] Jonathan T. Pennington defines the practical salvation that Jesus brings in terms of "human flourishing," that is, the fullness of life that God desires for humanity. See Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 290–91. One of the theses of his book is that "the Bible is about human flourishing." Ibid., 290.

underlined by Jesus' query, "Do you see this woman?" (v. 44), a question he asks of no other character in the narrative. Jesus' approval of the woman establishes her as a paradigmatic character whom the reader is invited to observe closely. Significantly, Jesus defines her by two essential traits: that she loves him and trusts him (vv. 47, 50). Other characteristics may be inferred from the text. She is courageous, independent, single-minded, focused, responsive, daring, dramatic, physical … and she intuits that, with Jesus, a different life, a saved life, is possible for her. An idealized character, the audience responds to her with what Powell calls "idealistic sympathy."[219] This is empathy with a character who represents what they would like to be, but compared with whom they understand that they undoubtedly fall short. (The irony of a former woman "in the city" being in this position is not lost on the audience.)

Unlike the woman, Simon is not idealized, but neither is he her antithesis. Instead, Simon is an enigma, a character on a boundary, whose ultimate response to Jesus remains unknown. Simon's dilemma evokes in the implied readers an element of "realistic empathy," or an identification with a character who, in some ways, resembles themselves.[220] They too must decide who Jesus is. An outright rejection of Jesus by Simon would allow the audience to dissociate themselves from him and conduct an undemanding reading based on simple contrasts. Instead, the ambiguity of Simon's characterization and its open-endedness demands a deeper engagement with the text. (Remembering the ὅτι of v. 47, the reader knows that the implied author favours this more challenging style.) And because characters like Simon form a bridge to the implied audience at the border of the text, and from there to the real readers beyond, the same decision concerning the identity of Jesus also confronts them.

[219] Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism? A New Approach to the Bible* (London: SPCK, 1993), 56.

[220] Ibid.

# CHAPTER THREE

# MARTHA AND MARY (10:38–41)

## 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the disruption in the routine of two sisters when Jesus visits them in their family home, an intimate setting that is rare in the Gospel.[1] The cast is exceptionally limited, consisting of the triad of Martha, Mary, and Jesus, who is named here only as the "Lord." The narrator controls the first half of the pericope, and establishes the tone for what follows. In the second half, Martha speaks, Mary is silent, and Jesus closes the passage with a decisive declaration that favours Mary and rebuffs Martha, a dénouement that the audience finds disturbing.[2] Unlike the episode with the anointing woman, this brief vignette unfolds in a chronological manner. It includes much unusual vocabulary that demands attention from the reader.[3] With its familial relationships, domestic crisis, and display of visceral emotion, the passage depicts a timeless human situation with which real readers can readily identify.[4] As Johnson says, "These are people like us."[5]

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[1] Bar-Efrat, in his study of the Hebrew Bible, notes how "People's actions in daily life are hardly mentioned at all in biblical narrative, and we do not usually hear about the minutiae of their day-to-day routine. We meet biblical characters primarily in special or unusual circumstances, in times of crisis and stress, when they have to undergo severe tests." See Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 78. Although the Martha and Mary episode occurs in a mundane domestic atmosphere, a crisis does occur and an unexpected "test" presents itself: after a straightforward beginning, there quickly emerges a tense and agonistic atmosphere.

[2] Donahue describes the Martha and Mary pericope as a "parabolic narrative" because of its realistic and human characters, its dramatic interaction, the shock value of its surprising twist, and its ending with an enigmatic saying of Jesus. See Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, 134–35.

[3] It is also a lexically unstable text. This study will focus on the Nestle-Aland 28th Revised Edition, dealing with lexical variants only when necessary.

[4] Johnson notes the Lukan narrative's capacity "vividly to evoke with a minimum of words the circumstances of real life and social relationships." See Johnson, *Luke*, 179.

[5] Ibid., 176.

It immediately follows the parable of the good Samaritan, which focuses on the radical "doing" of hospitality, and in this episode Jesus himself enters a home to receive hospitality.[6] The "narrative twins" Martha and Mary are clearly of "contrasting temperaments," with different understandings of what is expected of them.[7] Facing a similar situation—an encounter with Jesus—they respond in dissimilar ways.[8] Martha serves Jesus and Mary listens to him. In terms of Lukan values, both are doing the correct thing, but Jesus lauds only one of them.[9] The story is therefore "deliberately paradoxical," built on a tension between competing good actions.[10] The passage characterizes Jesus in a manner that challenges the audience. When he unequivocally sides with Mary, he appears unjust, contradictory, and unappreciative, a view of him from which the reader might wish to "rescue" him.[11]

Although the underlying themes of the pericope are not uniquely "women's business," the encounter receives an essential contour from the fact that it is a meeting with two women.[12] A meeting with two men would have unfolded with a markedly different tone. Using female characters, and through the shock of a hospitality "turned upside down" (Acts 17:6), it is a story that primarily explores the radical call of discipleship, but also probes the complexity of human relationships, including those involving the narrative Jesus.[13]

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[6] The Martha and Mary episode is in dialogue with four other pericopae that all involve "hearing" and "doing:" the parable of the sower (8:5–15), the instructions to the missionaries (10:1–10), the good Samaritan (10:25–35), and the Lord's prayer (11:1–13).

[7] Wolter, *Luke II*, 82; Wilfred J. Harrington, *The Gospel According to St Luke* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), 154.

[8] Michal Beth Dinkler, "Stories, Secular and Sacred: What's at Stake?" *Journal of Religion and Literature* 47 (2015): 221–29, here 225.

[9] Carroll comments how "the distinct roles of the two sisters seem almost a caricature, dividing labors that belong together in a disciple." See Carroll, *Luke*, 247.

[10] Loveday C. Alexander, "Sisters in Adversity: Retelling Martha's Story," in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, with Marianne Blickenstaff (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 197–213, here 211.

[11] Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?* 145.

[12] See Alexander, "Sisters in Adversity," 213; Jennifer S. Wyant, *Beyond Mary or Martha: Reclaiming Ancient Models of Discipleship* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 11.

[13] See Adele Reinhartz, "From Narrative to History: The Resurrection of Mary and Martha," in *"Women Like This:" New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 161–84, here 171.

### 3.2 Jesus Enters Martha's World (10:38)

In a summary statement, pared to its essentials, the narrator reports how "he" entered a village and was received into Martha's house (the previous sentence had "Jesus" as its subject so there is no reader confusion). Although "they" are reported to be travelling together, πορεύεσθαι, the spotlight of this encounter is clearly going to focus on Jesus so that, for purposes of dramatic intensity, his companions are temporarily removed from view.[14] The sense of Jesus' journeying towards Jerusalem (9:51) is captured by the vocabulary of the opening scene: πορεύομαι, εἰσέρχομαι, κώμη.[15] The implied readers understand that Jesus, on his peripatetic mission, greatly depends on finding support, accommodation, and safety (that is, hospitality) with sympathetic hosts along the way.[16]

#### 3.2.1 Martha

In entering Martha's home, Jesus leaves the public, "male" space where he was debating with the lawyer (10:25–37) and enters the private, domestic sphere more associated with women.[17] With this change in setting, the implied audience anticipates that a different dynamic will apply: that the agonistic jostling for honour and standing linked with the male arena will be replaced by the diffidence, compliance, deference, and regulated speech expected of the female circle.[18] However, Martha's introduction suggests that she is a character who might not conform to the feminine stereotype.[19] By personally welcoming Jesus, she is established as

[14] Green, *Luke*, 435; Corley, *Private Women*, 135.

[15] Warren Carter, "Getting Martha Out of the Kitchen: Luke 10.38–40 Again," in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, with Marianne Blickenstaff (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 214–31, here 217.

[16] Tannehill, *Luke*, 185. In the world behind the text, this mirrors the early Christian missionary practices that were familiar to the real audience, thus rendering more plausible this construction for the implied reader. In addition, Meier considers that, historically, many of those healed or exorcized by Jesus, along with their families and friends, would have become supporters, extending shelter, food, and money to Jesus when he passed on one of his preaching tours. See Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 81. Martha and Mary probably fit into this category, as do the women reported to provide for Jesus and his companions out of their resources (8:3).

[17] Malina and Neyrey, "Honor and Shame," 61; Seim, *Double Message*, 255.

[18] See F. Scott Spencer, "Out of Mind, Out of Voice: Slave-Girls and Prophetic Daughters in Luke-Acts," *BibInt* 7 (1999): 133–55, here 139; Lawrence, *Reading with Anthropology*, 11.

[19] Martha's description as "a certain woman," γυνὴ δε τις, reflects a favourite way of the implied author to introduce new characters. The reader has already met it at 8:27 (the man with demons) and at 10:30 (the victim of the assault in the parable of the good Samaritan). The formula will also be used to introduce one of the chief priests at 22:50 and, in Acts, Ananias (5:1), Simon the magician (8:9), and Cornelius (10:1).

head of an autonomous female family unit, unconnected to any male protector, or anyone to whom she must defer about opening her home.[20] Although a woman managing her own affairs was not unknown in first-century Greco-Roman-Jewish society, it was relatively unusual, and it highlights Martha as distinctive before any action begins.[21] In addition, as a κυρία within her own house, her independence may be emphasized by her name, since Μάρθα means "ruling lady," "mistress," or "lady" in Aramaic.[22] Because she is named, there is an impression that Martha and Jesus are known to one another, and that his visit will be on a friendly and personal level. There is nothing to indicate whether Jesus is expected or arrives unannounced.

### 3.2.2 An Unconventional Visit?

Within the conventions of first-century social norms, it might be deemed questionable for an unattached woman to receive an unmarried male into her home, irrespective of whether or not he was going to overnight there (something that is not clear in the text).[23] However, there are various factors for the implied audience to take into account. First, because there is no indication given of Martha's age, she could be of sufficiently advanced years to make the visit irreproachable. Second, even if Martha is a younger woman, the audience is already familiar with Jesus' apparent indifference to public opinion in male-female relations, evident in his

[20] Alexander, "Sisters in Adversity," 198; Tannehill, *Luke,* 185; Wyant, *Beyond Mary or Martha*, 45. The reader is accustomed to the implied author mentioning women in relation to their men: Elizabeth and Zechariah (1:5, 13, 24); Mary and Joseph (2:4–5); Herodias and Herod (3:19); Simon's mother-in-law and Simon (4:38–39); the wife and daughter of Jairus (8:42, 49–56). The exceptions are Martha, the anointing woman (7:36–50), and the woman with the flow of blood (8:43–48).

[21] Seim notes how some Roman and Hellenistic women had acquired "wealth or at least a relative economic independence, without attaining a corresponding political, social or religious influence and power." See Seim, *Double Message*, 99.

[22] Allie M. Ernst, *Martha from the Margins: The Authority of Martha in Early Christian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 193; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV*, AB 28A (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 893; Marshall, *Luke*, 451; Seim, *Double Message*, 98; BDAG, 616.

[23] François Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27,* ed. Helmut Koester, trans. Donald S. Deer, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 69; Pamela Thimmes, "The Language of Community: A Cautionary Tale (Luke 10.38–42)," in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, with Marianne Blickenstaff (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 232–45, here 237. In his instructions to the missionaries at 9:4 and 10:7, Jesus commanded them to remain in the same house (μένω) for the duration of their stay, which seems to imply a visit of intermediate length, longer than a night but not extended or permanent. Although Jesus himself is now a travelling missionary, no similar verb is used in the Martha and Mary pericope to indicate whether Jesus will stay the night or nights. Μένω has already been used to describe how Mary remained with Elizabeth for three months (1:56), and how the Gerasene demoniac lived permanently, not in a house, but among the tombs (8:27). Jesus will use μένω in his meeting with Zacchaeus (19:5), as will the Emmaus disciples when inviting Jesus to stay with them because night is approaching (24:29). "μένω," to remain in the same place over a period of time, to live, to dwell, to lodge: L&N 1, §85.55; BDAG, 630–31.

journeying with women companions (8:1–3) and his recent acceptance of the anointing woman's attentions. To an outsider, the behaviour of these women (and Jesus') would appear shameless and likely be regarded as "illicitly sexual."[24] But, as insiders to the narrative, the readers know that appearances can be deceptive: at the seemingly suggestive incident of the anointing woman (7:36–50), neither Jesus nor the woman broke any boundaries of morality, even if Jesus seemed to permit his honour to be threatened.[25] Third, in 1 Kgs 17:8–16 there was a scriptural example of a woman providing for a man in her house. There, commanded by God, the prophet Elijah requested and received hospitality from the widow of Zarephath.[26] Fourth, from Martha's point of view, she joins other women who act independently: Mary who travels alone into the hill country to be with Elizabeth (1:39), the anointing woman who intrudes on Simon's dinner-party (7:36–50), the woman with the flow of blood who determinedly touches Jesus' garment (8:43–48), and the women travelling-companions of Jesus who follow him to the end (8:1–3; 23:49).

### 3.2.3 Martha: Hospitable Host: ὑποδέχομαι

Martha's introduction in the context of hospitality, established through the verb ὑποδέχομαι, is emphatically positive.[27] Ὑποδέχομαι is one of a number of cognates of δέχομαι, all synonyms that are frequently concerned with the interpersonal activity of welcoming a person by receiving her or him with friendship and affection.[28] Thus, the implied author of Luke-Acts uses δέχομαι (Luke 9:5; 10:8, 10), ὑποδέχομαι (10:38; 19:6; Acts 17:7), ἀποδέχομαι (Luke 8:40; 9:11; Acts 18:27; 21:17; 28:30), ἀναδέχομαι (Acts 28:7), and προσδέχομαι (Luke 15:2) when he intends to convey this friendly reception of another.[29] There are undoubtedly subtle

[24] Ben Witherington III, "On the Road with Mary Magdalene, Johanna, and Other Disciples—Luke 8:1–3," *ZNW* 70 (1979): 243–47, here 245; Green, *Luke*, 318–19. Based on the overall evidence of the Gospels, David J. A. Clines describes Jesus as a "womanless" man, an inveterate "male bonder" whose closest associations were with his male companions. See David J. A. Clines, "*Ecce Vir*, or Gendering the Son of Man," in *Biblical Studies/Cultural Studies: The Third Sheffield Colloquium*, eds. J. Cheryl Exum and Stephen D. Moore, JSOTSup 266 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 352–75, here 366, 363.

[25] See Green, *Luke*, 319. Green, in fact, does not consider that Jesus allowed his honour to be compromised.

[26] Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 295.

[27] Ernst, *Martha from the Margins,* 198.

[28] Johannes P. Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982), 63.

[29] "δέχομαι," and its cognates: to accept the presence of a person with friendliness, to welcome, to receive, to have as a guest: L&N 1, §34.53, §57.125. "δέχομαι," BDAG, 221; "ὑποδέχομαι," BDAG, 1037; "ἀποδέχομαι," BDAG, 109; "ἀναδέχομαι," BDAG, 62; "προσδέχομαι," BDAG, 877. In the Gospel, the verbs are

differences between these terms that would have been intuited by ancient audiences, but whose nuances are no longer distinguishable by modern readers of the text.[30]

Because hospitality was a highly esteemed social custom in the ancient world, the implied audience would recognize in Martha's ὑποδέχομαι the opening courtesies of the hospitality convention(s), and appreciate that she is being characterized constructively. (In retrospect, they see that, because the implied author was leading them in a different direction in the pericope with the anointing woman, there was no δέχομαι verb mentioned in association with Simon.[31]) In addition, in the Jewish tradition, hospitality was also a revered biblical virtue. Its "metanarrative" was found in Gen 18:1–15, where Abraham and Sarah discovered that travellers—"even divine travellers"—want food.[32] Therefore, while Martha's hospitality makes her culturally commendable, it also portrays her as Abraham-like, a praiseworthy comparison.

Within the narrative, hospitality is a core value and notable "frame of reference."[33] In various ways, the Lukan Jesus demonstrates that he appreciates its everyday and symbolic meanings, respects its conventions, and understands its obligations. First, there are multiple meal scenes where he shares table-fellowship with assorted dining companions. He is thus

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used in a variety of circumstances and by a diversity of characters: of people welcoming missionaries, δέχομαι (9:5; 10:8, 10); of crowds welcoming Jesus, ἀποδέχομαι (8:40); of individuals like Martha and Zacchaeus welcoming Jesus, ὑποδέχομαι (10:38; 19:6); and of Jesus welcoming crowds, ἀποδέχομαι (9:11) and sinners, προσδέχομαι (15:2). In Acts, Jason welcomes Paul and Silas, ὑποδέχομαι (17:7); Publius welcomes Paul and his companions, ἀναδέχομαι (28:7); and, in several scenes, a welcome is extended to the Pauline missionaries, ἀποδέχομαι (18:27; 21:17; 28:30). The implied author uses one other "welcoming" verb, προσλαμβάνω. In Acts 28:2, he describes how the people of Malta showed Paul and his companions unusual kindness, kindling a fire and welcoming them around it.

[30] Louw, *Semantics*, 63. Of the four instances of ὑποδέχομαι in the New Testament, four are found in the Lukan writings. Martha (10:38) and Zacchaeus (19:6) each welcome Jesus, and Jason welcomes Paul and Silas in Acts 17:7. The verb also occurs in the Letter of James where the audience is reminded how Rahab the prostitute welcomed the spies sent by Joshua (Jas 2:25). It is a rare occurrence in the Septuagint, appearing positively in Jdt 13:13 and Tob 7:8 (LXX), and negatively in 1 Macc 16:15–17. There, Ptolemy son of Abubus received Simon and his sons treacherously, murdering them during a banquet, the very antithesis of hospitality.

[31] Some of the technical words for "hospitality," ξενία (hospitality, guest room) and ξενίζω (to receive as a guest, to entertain) never appear in the Gospel, but they do feature in Acts (10:6, 18, 23, 32; 21:16; 28:23).

[32] Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 58; David McCracken, *The Scandal of the Gospels: Jesus, Story, and Offence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 143. There, the patriarchal couple generously hosted (killing a calf) three unexpected heavenly visitors and, in return, were promised a son (18:10). By conveying their message about a son, the guests returned a favour to their host, evidence of the reciprocity that was typical of stories of hospitality in the ancient world. See Koenig, "Hospitality," 299.

[33] Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 4.

characterized as a "convivial man" (7:34), who both enjoys social interaction and realizes its benefits.[34] Connected with this, he narrates four parables concerning food and dining, showing how he, his narrative audience, and the implied readers all understand how important are eating rituals in the human experience.[35]

Second, in the parable of the good Samaritan (10:30–37), Jesus emphasizes unhesitating, radical care of the needy stranger, the person-to-person duty that lies at the core of the hospitality ethic. Third, in his instructions to the twelve (9:3–4) and the seventy (10:3–5), Jesus lays down the three essential requirements of mission hospitality—food, drink, and accommodation. Thus Martha, in opening her home, is not only giving a "positive example" on how to receive a missionary, but she actually welcomes Jesus himself, providing an antithesis to the Samaritans who refused to welcome him at 9:52–56.[36] Finally, during his difficult visit to the house of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus was explicit in his expectation that a gracious host would go beyond the minimum requirements in receiving him: by providing the extras of water for his feet, a kiss in greeting, and oil to anoint his head (7:44–46). It may be presumed that the implied author, with ὑποδέχομαι, is indicating that Martha understands the requirements of hospitality, and that she greets Jesus with all the honour and respect that he (and the implied audience) expects. In return, based on the commission to the seventy, the audience anticipates that the promised fruits of a proper reception will be forthcoming: any sick cured, the kingdom proclaimed and, above all, that peace, εἰρήνη, will imbue the household (peace is re-iterated three times at 10:5, 6, 6).[37]

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[34] Clines, "*Ecce Vir*, 363. Meal scenes, both implicit and manifest, include eating in Simon Peter's house (4:39), Levi's banquet (5:29), Simon the Pharisee's dinner (7:36), feeding the five thousand (9:14–17), unnamed Pharisees' dinners (11:37; 14:1), staying with Zacchaeus (19:5–7), the Passover meal/Eucharist (22:14–20), and dining with the Emmaus disciples (24:30). Green notes how "shared meals symbolized shared lives," and contain within them dimensions of intimacy, identity, kinship, inclusion, unity, mutuality, solidarity, and commonality, all kingdom of God principles enunciated by the Lukan Jesus. See Green, *Luke*, 246, 287. Some recent work by Grace Brennan has underlined that, although Jesus attends various meals, he is noted as actually eating only after the resurrection (24:42–43).

[35] The parables that involve or imply meal scenes are the friend at midnight (11:5–6), the great dinner (14:16–24), the lost sons (15:23–24), and the rich man and Lazarus (16:19–20).

[36] Jennifer Wyant, "Giving Martha Back Her House: Analyzing the Textual Variant in Luke 10:38b," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* (2019): 1–11, here 10; Robert J. Karris, *Eating Your Way Through Luke's Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2006), 87.

[37] Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 296. The implied audience does not yet recognize the irony of this promise of peace. At 12:51, Jesus declares: "Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!" And he goes on to elaborate how even close family members will be divided among themselves (12:52–53).

### 3.2.4 Martha: Receptive Follower

Within the broader narrative, δέχομαι is used, not only to refer to the proper reception of a guest, but also in terms of receiving, hearing, and understanding the word and work of God.[38] Thus, Simeon took Jesus in his arms, δέχομαι, and praised God (2:28); Anna speaks about Jesus to all those who anticipate, προσδέχομαι (2:38), the redemption of Jerusalem; in the parable of the sower, the word is received, δέχομαι, with joy (8:13); Jesus states that whoever welcomes him, welcomes the one who sent him (he repeats δέχομαι four times at 9:48), like the crowds that greet him at 8:40, ἀποδέχομαι. Therefore Martha, in receiving Jesus into her home, ὑποδέχομαι, is not only presented to the audience as a welcoming hostess, laudable in itself, but also as a disciple of Jesus, who is doing what the implied author has prepared his audience to expect from Jesus' followers.[39]

## 3.3 Mary (10:39)

The audience now learns that there is another person in the encounter. Mary is introduced in relation to Martha, not only as her sister, but in a grammatical construction that retains the focus on Martha: "and *to this [woman]*, καὶ τῇδε, was a sister named Mary," thus seeming to give Martha the dominant position.[40] No detail is provided about the sisters' ages but, because Martha welcomed Jesus, Mary is likely to be the younger.[41] Like Martha, the introduction to Mary is very positive. Her position at Jesus' feet depicts her in the role of a pupil-disciple, and "hearing" the word is, like hospitality, a core Gospel value.[42] (God himself urges the narrative audience to "Listen to him," αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε at 9:35 and, in the parable of the sower, 8:4–15, receptive listening features seven times in verbal and participle forms.[43]) However, a gap has opened up in the text. Just as Mary was absent from the opening scene of welcome (understandable given Martha's role of head of household), so Martha is conspicuously missing

[38] Carter, "Getting Martha Out of the Kitchen," 218; Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?* 156.

[39] Wyant, "Giving Martha Back Her House," 10.

[40] Wolter, *Luke II*, 83; Ernst, *Martha from the Margins*, 194; Thimmes, "Language of Community," 237.

[41] Levine and Witherington, *Luke,* 296; Ernst, *Martha from the Margins,* 194.

[42] See Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A New Commentary for Preachers* (London: SPCK, 1982), 125.

[43] These occur at 8:8, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15.

from this image of intimacy and closeness (an absence that is less easy to explain).[44] In terms of Luke's values, both sisters are doing the correct thing, but they are doing it separately. This hints that something may be awry between the sisters.

### 3.3.1 Sibling Rivalry

The presence of two sisters under the same roof "evokes the motif of both women's rivalry and sibling rivalry familiar from Israel's Scriptures. Women in the same household are frequently at odds, and at odds over a man's attention."[45] Thus, Sarah and Hagar, as Abraham's first and second wives, each bear sons for him, and eventually a jealous Sarah has Hagar banished (Gen 16:1–16; 21:1–14); sisters Leah and Rachel compete for Jacob's attention (Gen 29:16–35); Peninnah and Hannah are Elkanah's co-wives, in competition with one another regarding childbearing (1 Sam 1:2–2:21); and Bathsheba and Abishag feature in the fraught positions of older official wife and younger attendant to David (2 Sam 11:2, 27; 1 Kgs 1:4, 15).[46] But not all biblical female relationships are troubled: the connection between Naomi and Ruth, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, is one of congeniality and solidarity (Ruth 1:16–17). Similarly, in the Gospel, where there might be potential jealousy between Elizabeth and Mary on account of their respective sons, their association is also harmonious.[47] Therefore, with Jesus (seemingly) alone within the house with the two women, the audience cannot be certain whether it is discord or cordiality that will unfold. Already in the narrative, Jesus has cautioned

[44] Some manuscripts omit the relative pronoun ἥ (Nestle-Aland include it in brackets). The NRSV reads, "She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet," a translation that depends on the omission of the pronoun. If the pronoun is included, the sentence changes to, "She had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet …" In this version, both sisters are understood as sitting and listening. Martha gets called away to duties of hospitality but, to her irritation, Mary fails to help her and continues listening to Jesus. See Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Women Partners in the New Testament," *JFSR* 6 (1990): 65–86, here 78–79; Ernst, *Martha from the Margins*, 196.

[45] Levine and Witherington, *Luke,* 296. These motifs represent type-scenes, where a "tacit contract" exists between narrator and implied audience. Under the terms of the contract, the reader recognizes the codes and conventions being presented. See Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 55–61.

[46] Male siblings are similarly in conflict: Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1–8); Ishmael and Isaac (Gen 21:9–13); Zerah and Perez (Gen 38:27–30); Esau and Jacob (Gen 25–27); Joseph and his brothers (Gen 37:3–35); Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 48:17–20); David and his brothers (1 Sam 16:10–13); and Solomon and his brothers (1 Kgs 1:5-53). The theme also surfaces in the Gospel with brothers in dispute over an inheritance (12:13); in the parable of the two lost sons (15:11–32); and in Jesus' peremptory dismissal of his own brothers (8:21). On the other hand, the relationship between James and John, sons of Zebedee, appears harmonious (5:10).

[47] Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?* 161; F. Scott Spencer, *Salty Wives, Spirited Mothers, and Savvy Widows* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 163–65.

about disputes between siblings, warning that a sense of proportion can be lost in family disagreements (6:41–42).

### 3.3.2 Mary's Sitting

The exact verb that describes Mary's sitting, παρακαθέζομαι, is extremely rare, found only here in the New Testament and never in the Septuagint.[48] Throughout the Gospel and Acts, the usual verbs that express the simple act of "sitting" are καθίζω, κάθημαι, and (less frequently) καθέζομαι.[49] On the few occasions where more precision is required, the implied author introduces a compound verb, where the preposition intensifies or clarifies the basic meaning. Thus, ἀνακαθίζω describes how the widow's son (Luke 7:15) and Tabitha (Acts 9:40) each sit up when brought back from the dead; συγκαθίζω expresses the idea of sitting with another, as when Peter sits in the courtyard with the high priest's retainers (Luke 22:55); and συγκάθημαι illustrates how king Agrippa and his retinue sit together to hear Paul defend himself (Acts 26:30).

Because Mary's παρακαθέζομαι is part of this nuanced use, its tone and shading work rhetorically, operating on the discourse level of the narrative, where the implied author communicates with the implied reader. As παρά hints of being near, close, or beside someone or something, the readers are being guided to visualize the (narratively) unusual physical proximity of Mary to Jesus.[50]

### 3.3.3 Mary: Pupil and Disciple

Mary's pose evokes diverse images for the audience. Because a man and woman are involved, Mary resembles a traditional, silent wife of the Greco-Roman-Judeo world seated at the feet of her husband.[51] But, since the audience knows that Mary is not such a wife, her comportment

[48] "παρακαθέζομαι," to sit down near or beside someone, to sit down by: L&N 1, §17.14; BDAG, 764.

[49] καθίζω occurs seven times in Luke and nine times in Acts; κάθημαι appears thirteen times in Luke and six times in Acts; καθέζομαι is used once in Luke and twice in Acts. Some instances include, "He sat down and taught the crowds from the boat," καθίζω (5:3); "Take your bill, and sit down quickly," καθίζω (16:6); "The Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting down," κάθημαι (5:17); "They are like children sitting in the marketplace," κάθημαι (7:32).

[50] "παρά," BDAG, 756–58.

[51] Corley, *Private Women*, 137; Thimmes, "Language of Community," 239.

might better fit the position of a student sitting at a teacher's feet.[52] Such an attitude was typical of pupils.[53] Moreover, following the parable of the good Samaritan, where Jesus taught the lawyer an effective lesson on neighbourliness, Mary's position underlines Jesus' status as an authoritative διδάσκαλος.[54] Mary-as-pupil is a culturally incongruous image. In a patriarchal society where it was customary for women to support their menfolk in their study of Torah, Mary-as-student is taking on a role ordinarily assigned to the males of a family.[55] In crossing the boundary between female and male domains, Mary thus resembles Martha who, in acting as householder and host, is also depicted in a usually male role.[56]

However, because Jesus is more than a teacher, Mary, by sitting at Jesus' feet, is additionally being presented as his pupil-disciple.[57] In this, she resembles the disciples of 2 Kgs 4:38 (4 Kgs 4:38 LXX) who, having attached themselves to Elisha, sit before him when he returns to Gilgal, καὶ υἱοὶ τῶν προφητῶν ἐκάθηντο ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ.[58] Like the role of pupil, first-century women would not generally be expected to undertake discipleship.[59] The reader, of course, knows from 8:1–3 that a group of women already act as disciples, not just in the privacy of their homes, but actually accompanying Jesus on his mission.

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[52] Seim, *Double Message*, 101; John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, WBC 35B (Nashville: Nelson, 1993), 603; Marshall, *Luke,* 452; Evans, *Luke*, 473; Thimmes, "Language of Community," 239.

[53] In Acts, Paul's position at Gamaliel's feet, παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιὴλ (Acts 22:3) evokes the pupil-and-disciple image that Mary projects in the current pericope. In the Gospel, the young Jesus is described as sitting *among* the teachers in the temple, not at their feet, ἐν μέσῳ τῶν διδασκάλων (2:46), as though to emphasize that he is, in one sense, already their equal. See Green, *Luke*, 155. The "at the feet" expression also features in Acts 4:35–37; 5:2, 10; 10:25; 22:3.

[54] Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 133.

[55] Seim, *Double Message*, 102–3; Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?* 150.

[56] Alexander, "Sisters in Adversity," 199.

[57] Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 297; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: Volume 2: 9:51–24:53*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 1037; Robert W. Wall, "Martha and Mary (Luke 10.38–42) in the Context of a Christian Deuteronomy," *JSNT* 35 (1989): 19–35, here 25.

[58] Wolter, *Luke II*, 83

[59] Green, *Luke*, 343.

### 3.3.4 The Lord's Feet

Mary's position at the Lord's feet recalls other Gospel characters in a similar pose, with multiple connotations.[60] First, the anointing woman who tended Jesus' feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee is presented as a "model disciple" whose demeanour is imbued with respect, love, gratitude, recognition of, and honour for Jesus.[61] Second, the once-afflicted Gerasene demoniac is found clothed, sane, and sitting at the feet of Jesus, παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (8:35). He is depicted as a new disciple who wants to go (to be) with Jesus, εἶναι σὺν αὐτῷ (8:38). Third, and immediately following the Gerasene incident, Jairus falls at the feet of Jesus, παρὰ τοὺς πόδας [τοῦ] Ἰησοῦ (8:41), in recognition of Jesus' authority, and in supplication for a cure for his daughter. Later in the Gospel, the Samaritan who was cured of leprosy (17:16) falls at Jesus' feet in a gesture of gratitude, respect, and acknowledgement of his power. Therefore, within this matrix of respect, recognition, humility, submission, affection, and discipleship, Mary's position may also be interpreted.[62]

In addition, "the feet" of Jesus recall Isa 52:7, "how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'" While Isaiah's themes of salvation (σωτηρία) and kingship (βασιλεύω) resonate with the Gospel audience, it is the "good news" that is relevant for Mary's listening and position. The "good news," expressed in Isaiah (and throughout the Gospel) within the linguistic domain of εὐαγγελιστής/εὐαγγελίζω, is described in the current pericope as λόγος.[63]

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[60] Johnson notes how, in the Jewish Scriptures, physically "'being at the feet' of another means to be in a state of submission or obedience," while to lay something at the feet of another is to acknowledge the power and authority of the other and the self-disposition of self. He cites Josh 10:24; 1 Sam 25:24, 41; 2 Sam 22:39; Pss 8:6; 99:5; 110:1; 132:7 as examples. See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, SP 5 (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992), 87.

[61] Wyant, *Beyond Martha or Mary,* 52.

[62] Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 227; Green, *Luke,* 434.

[63] Εὐαγγελίζω features in the Gospel at 1:19; 2:10; 3:18; 4:18, 43; 7:22; 8:1; 9:6; 16:16; 20:1.

### 3.3.5 Listening to the Word

Mary's listening to the λόγος is another marker of her status as a disciple.[64] Λόγος is a multivalent term witnessed widely throughout Luke's narratives.[65] When used in relation to Jesus, and in the right context, the "word" generally denotes an "instruction, teaching … or message to be accepted," an imperative all the more pressing because, early in Jesus' mission, the implied author establishes that he is proclaiming "the word of God," ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (5:1).[66] Proper attention to the word is a theme familiar to the reader (5:1; 6:47, 49; 7:29; 8:5–15, 21; 10:16) who understands from the parable of the sower at 8:11–15 that receptive listening is the necessary foundation of faith, salvation, and discipleship.[67]

The imperfect ἤκουεν signifies the intensity and concentration of Mary's listening.[68] In the narrative, ἀκούω frequently describes the desired response to Jesus and his teaching (for example, 7:29; 8:8, 15, 21; 9:35). However, the role of a disciple or student is not simply to listen; it is also to query, to interact, and to be actively engaged in learning.[69] The audience recalls the boy Jesus sitting among the teachers in the temple, "listening to them, and asking them questions" (2:46).[70] And Jesus' own disciples, unable to understand the parable of the sower, question him, ἐπερωτάω, about its meaning (8:9).[71] The audience therefore waits to see whether Mary, having listened, will engage in creative dialogue with Jesus, or whether she is merely an "audience," receptive but listless.[72]

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[64] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 893; Green, *Luke,* 435; Wyant, *Beyond Martha and Mary*, 52.

[65] Sometimes λόγος can signify a mere word or expression, "All were amazed at his gracious words" (4:22); or a report or rumour, "This word about Jesus spread throughout Judea" (7:17). But often it signifies the proclamation, instruction, or teaching of Jesus. "λόγος," L&N 1, §33.98, §33.99, §33.260; BDAG, 598–601.

[66] Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 301; Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 603. In the Gospel, "the word, the word of God, and the word of Jesus" are generally treated as one. See E. Jane Via, "Women, the Discipleship of Service, and the Early Christian Ritual Meal in the Gospel of Luke," *SLJT* 29 (1985): 37–60, here 56.

[67] See Wall, "Christian Deuteronomy," 25; Green, *Luke*, 324–30.

[68] See Bovon, *Luke 2*, 70; Smyth, *Grammar*, §1890, §1892, §1898, §1909.

[69] Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 297; Ringe, *Luke*, 161.

[70] Καὶ ἀκούοντα αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπερωτῶντα αὐτούς (2:46).

[71] Immediately after the Martha and Mary pericope, in another instance of active learning, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray (11:1).

[72] Jane D. Schaberg and Sharon H. Ringe, "Luke," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, rev. and upd. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 493–516, here 508.

In addition, the narrative Jesus emphasizes that listening to the "word" is not a passive, cerebral pursuit, but one that leads to action (6:47; 49) and the production of good fruit (8:15), enabling people to become part of his true family (8:21). Although Mary's silence, immobility, and submissiveness seem to contradict the call to action that Jesus advocates, it may be that her decision to sit and listen represents her first bold act of discipleship.[73] And it is to be supposed that Mary will not sit and listen forever: before she can act, she must first be taught, therefore her silent attention may be all that is required for now.[74]

### 3.3.6 The Lord (ὁ Κύριος)

The narrative carefully notes that Mary sits and listens to "the Lord." This is only the fourth time that the implied author has the narrator refer to Jesus in this absolute way (7:13, 19; 10:1). He normally designates him as "Jesus" or "he" (at the start of this pericope, there is no explicit subject of the verb εἰσῆλθεν). Κύριος is a multivalent word that appears one hundred and four times in the Gospel across a range of secular and theological meanings. As a material noun, it can denote one who owns land (20:13, 15), property (19:33), or slaves (12:42, 43); or a person who exercises authority, patronage, or benefaction (Tiberias, Pilate, Herod, the high priests, and the centurion are all examples of high-status Gospel κύριοι). It may also designate an individual whose honour or standing in the eyes of others is acknowledged by the respectful κύριε vocative.[75]

In the theological sense, in the opening chapters of the Gospel, κύριος is used interchangeably with θεός as an unequivocal designation for God, meaning the Lord God of Israel.[76] Jesus, from the moment he enters the narrative (still in the womb at 1:43) is depicted as "Lord," an understanding of his identity that the implied author intends the readers to carry

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[73] Tannehill, *Luke*, 186.

[74] Seim, *Double Message*, 112; Wall, "Christian Deuteronomy," 25; Carter and Levine, *New Testament*, 70. The Book of Sirach, a wisdom book, advises, "Before you speak, learn," πρὶν ἢ λαλῆσαι μάνθανε (Sir 18:19).

[75] "κύριος," L&N 1, §12.9, §57.12, §37.51, §87.53; BDAG, 576–79.

[76] Κύριος: 1:9, 11, 15, 17, 25, 28, 38, 43, 45, 47, 58, 66, 76; 2:9, 9, 11, 15, 22, 23, 23, 24, 26, 39. Θεός: 1:8, 19, 26, 30, 35, 37, 64, 78; 2:13, 14, 20, 28, 38, 40. Sometimes the two titles appear in the same sentence (used by the narrator and Mary respectively at 1:6, 47), and the double expression κύριος ὁ θεὸς is deployed on four occasions (by the angel of the Lord, the angel Gabriel, Zechariah, and Jesus at 1:16, 32, 68, 4:12).

with them throughout the Gospel.[77] Thus, it is as κύριος that he is acknowledged by the Spirit-filled Elizabeth (1:43), and how he is proclaimed after his birth by the angels (2:11). What being "Lord" means is elaborated by the angel Gabriel who describes Jesus as "Son of the Most High," υἱὸς ὑψίστου (1:32), an exalted status that God himself confirms when he calls him "My Son, the beloved," σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (3:22).[78]

Despite such acclamation, the narrator is slower than any of the characters, either heavenly or human, to adopt the κύριος title for Jesus. The first to do so, in direct address, is Peter (5:8), soon followed by a variety of characters who may be addressing Jesus along a range of material and theological meanings.[79] This ambiguity is deliberate on the part of the implied author who, engaging in dramatic irony, sometimes has characters say more than they realize.[80] But the narrator, for a considerable period at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, consistently refers to him as "Jesus" (4:14, 35; 5:10, 12, 31; 6:11; 7:4), as if the implied author has him waiting to see how characters will respond of their own accord. Thus, it is only before the miracle at Nain that the narrator designates Jesus as "the Lord," ὁ κύριος (7:13), an absolute title that he will repeat at intervals throughout the remainder of the Gospel.[81] (The Lukan Jesus

[77] See C. Kavin Rowe, "Acts 2.36 and the Continuity of Lukan Christology," *NTS* 53 (2007): 37–56, here 37. Rowe notes how "for Luke, there was no moment at which Jesus was not κύριος." Ibid., 51.

[78] The otherworldliness and glory of Jesus is revealed at the transfiguration (9:32), and the voice from the cloud confirms him as "My Son, my Chosen." The Lukan implied author never accords Jesus three terms that the narrative reserves solely for God: "the Mighty One," ὁ δυνατός, pronounced by Mary (1:49); "the Most High," ὁ ὕψιστος, voiced by Gabriel, Zechariah, and Jesus (1:32, 35, 76; 6:35); and "Lord or Master," ὁ δεσπότης, articulated by Simeon (2:29). See Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 203. While God and Jesus are thus distinguished from one another, the implied reader understands that, in the person of Jesus—as Messiah, Saviour, Son of David, Son of God, and "Lord"—God's expected visitation is taking place, and therefore the "theologically freighted" title κύριος is appropriate. See Parsons, *Luke*, 276. In this elevated sense, κύριος reflects the "agency of God" at work in Jesus, and speaks of his profound status, "his otherness, [and] his transcendent character." See Green, *Luke,* 233; Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 203.

[79] These characters are Peter on three occasions (5:8; 12:41; 22:33); the first man cured of leprosy (5:12); the centurion through his friends (7:6); James and John (9:54); two would-be followers (9:59, 61); the seventy missionaries (10:17); Martha (10:40); various disciples and apostles (11:1; 17:37; 22:38, 49); someone in the crowd (13:23); the blind man of Jericho (18:41); and Zacchaeus (19:8).

[80] C. Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 149.

[81] The narrator calls Jesus ὁ κύριος at 7:19; 10:1, 39, 41; 11:39; 12:42; 13:15; 17:5, 6; 18:6; 19:8; 22:61; 24:34. In Acts, a new combined title is introduced for Jesus, where he is described as "the Lord Jesus," ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς, by both Peter (Acts 1:21) and the narrator (Acts 4:33; 8:16).

confirms ὁ κύριος at 19:31, using it as a self-designation, but no character adopts it as a referent for him.[82])

Therefore, in the current pericope, when the narrator designates Jesus as "Lord," he emphasizes the status of this visitor. Rowe suggests that Mary, in her posture and receptiveness, demonstrates "at least an inchoate awareness of her guest's identity."[83] If so, her stance sets her apart from Martha, who is not reported as being present.

### 3.3.7 Where is Martha?

In spite of Mary's characterization as an idealized figure who behaves faultlessly in the presence of the Lord—by assuming a respectful position, by listening to him, and by giving him her undivided attention—the reader wonders, where is Martha? With the formalities of welcome completed, Jesus appears to have begun to engage with Mary. Martha's absence is disconcerting. It might be expected that Jesus and Mary would wait for her to join them. Instead, Mary is seemingly oblivious to the absence of her sister, while Jesus appears discourteous to proceed without his host. Neither notices that, of a household of just two people, one is missing.[84] Furthermore, contrary to the great focus on "seeing" that the Gospel projects, Martha is invisible to those closest to her.[85] The disquiet that this causes the reader is the first hint of σκάνδαλον in the pericope, the sense that Jesus, "by his very nature, his presence, his words, and his actions" poses the possibility of shock, surprise, offence, or anger both in the characters and in the audience, implied and real.[86]

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[82] Jesus adopts the title when he sends two disciples to commandeer a colt for the ride into Jerusalem. They are to tell its owners, οἱ κύριοι (19:33), "The Lord needs it," ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ χρείαν ἔχει (19:31). This is the only occasion when Jesus employs ὁ κύριος in reference to himself. His preferred self-designation in the Gospel is "the Son of Man," ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, adopted on fifteen occasions (5:24; 6:5; 7:34; 9:22, 44, 58; 11:30; 12:8, 40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8; 19:10; 21:27; 22:22, 69, and used by no one but Jesus himself.

[83] Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 149. Byrne, on the other hand, deems that Mary has recognized Jesus for who he is. See Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 103.

[84] Similarly, in the parable of the two lost sons, the father fails to notice that the elder of his sons is "missing," in both the physical and metaphorical senses (15:11–32). As in the current pericope, the "party" starts without him. See Amy-Jill Levine, *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi* (New York: Harper One, 2014), 49, 67.

[85] Professor Séamus O'Connell has remarked that this may mirror the invisibility of Jesus to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

[86] McCracken, *Scandal of the Gospels*, viii. "σκανδαλίζω," to give offence, to anger or shock: L&N 1, §25.179; BDAG, 926. "σκάνδαλον," a snare, a trap, something that causes offence or revulsion and results in opposition, disapproval, or hostility: L&N 1, §6.25, §25.181; BDAG, 926. That Jesus understands the effect of

### 3.4 Martha is Distracted: περισπάω (10:40a)

The audience now discovers Martha's whereabouts: she is occupied with her ongoing household duties.[87] The implied author controls how the audience receives this information about Martha in two ways. First, before Martha speaks, he designates her demeanour with περισπάω, another rare verb that occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and therefore lacks any contextual clue to help with its meaning.[88] It is, however, to be found in the Septuagint, especially in the pragmatic wisdom literature of Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) and Sirach (Ecc 1:13; 2:23; 3:10; 5:19; Sir 41:2).[89] There, περισπάω connotes "being distracted by the inevitable trials and worries of life, given to humanity by God."[90] Such vexations are depicted as an inevitable part of the human condition, especially as relating to property, work, and family.[91] What matters is not that they occur, but that one reacts properly to them (a typically wisdom and Stoic attitude). While the Lukan περισπάω suggests that the term seeks to convey what Bovon terms Martha's "hyper-busyness" and irritation, its nuancing is open to interpretation.[92] At its most pejorative, περισπάω gives an impression of disproportion, of

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his words, actions, and presence is clear from 7:23, "Blessed is the one who takes no offence at me," καὶ μακάριός ἐστιν ὃς ἐὰν μὴ σκανδαλισθῇ ἐν ἐμοί. Almost immediately after this statement, he caused offence in Simon the Pharisee's house by accepting the ministrations of the anointing woman.

[87] There is a presumption that, after welcoming Jesus, Martha turned to the preparation and presentation of food, a chore all the more demanding if Jesus arrived unexpectedly. In doing so, she follows the logic of Jesus' commands to the missionaries at 10:8–9: first they are welcomed, then they eat, next they cure any who are sick, and then they proclaim the kingdom. In Martha's house, Jesus appears to be subverting his own decree: after the welcome, he moves straight to the word, λόγος, or the proclamation.

[88] "περισπάομαι/περισπάω," to be overburdened, worried, or anxious; to have one's attention directed from one thing to another; to be distracted, quite busy, to draw off from around: L&N 1, §25.238; BDAG, 804. The basic verb is σπάω, meaning to exert force so as to pull or to draw: BDAG, 936; "σπάομαι," to pull or drag: L&N 1, §15.212.

[89] The verb's flavour of troubled busyness or preoccupation can be seen in Ecc 1:13, "it is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with" (NRSV translation), ὅτι περισπασμὸν πονερὸν ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεὸς τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῦ περισπάσθαι ἐν αὐτῷ. Ecc 3:10 strikes a similar note, "I saw all the preoccupation which God has given humans to be preoccupied with" (NETS translation), εἶδον σὺν πάντα τὸν περισπασμόν, ὃν ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεὸς τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῦ περισπᾶσθαι ἐν αὖτῷ. That human busyness is an unhappy lot is evident in Ecc 2:23: "Their work is a vexation (NRSV translation), "their preoccupation is of anger" (NETS translation), καὶ θυμοῦ περισπασμὸς αὐτοῦ. Sir 41:2 envisages death as a welcome release for a person worn down by age, and "anxious about everything," καὶ περισπωμένῳ περὶ πάντων. On the other hand, and on a positive note, Ecc 5:20 (LXX 5:19) describes how God troubles humankind with the joy of the heart, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς περισπᾷ αὐτὸν ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ καρδίας αὐτοῦ.

[90] Wyant, *Beyond Martha and Mary*, 48.

[91] Ibid., 49.

[92] Bovon, *Luke 2*, 71; Matteo Crimella, "Notes Philologiques: À propos de περισπάομαι en Luc 10,40 entre Philologie et Narratologie," *RB* 117 (2010): 120–25.

agitation, of being pulled in all directions at once, preventing Martha "from experiencing what was most important at that moment."[93] Understood less negatively, περισπάω indicates that Martha is anxiously consumed with her domestic responsibilities, a preoccupation with which the audience might empathize as they recall Jesus' negative reaction to his poor reception in Simon the Pharisee's house. Either way, it adds a shading to Martha's character and disposition that might be different if the implied author had chosen a less judgmental description.

The second way that the implied author controls audience reception of Martha is through the δέ participle which opens v. 40, ἡ δὲ Μάρθα περιεσπᾶτο. A marker of contrast, meaning "but," or "on the other hand," the δέ unfavourably juxtaposes Martha's apparent disarray with the calm demeanour of Mary, who is giving her undivided attention to their guest.[94] Mary's concentration recalls the anointing woman, another silent character who was totally focused on Jesus in her enactment of the commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart" (10:27).

### 3.4.1 The Internal Dispositions of Characters

The reader is accustomed to the implied author labelling the internal dispositions of characters. (This might call into question the lack of "inner depths" attributed to first-century people. See §1.3.3.) They are constantly filled with awe and fear, θάμβος (4:36; 5:9), φόβος (5:26; 7:16); are amazed, θαυμάζω (1:63; 4:22); and astonished, ἐκπλήσσω (2:48; 4:32). They can be confused, διαπορέω (9:7); lack understanding, οὐ συνίημι, ἀγνοέω (2:50; 9:45); or be filled with expectation, προσδοκάω (3:15), and astonishment, ἔκστασις (5:26). Only two characters to this point in the narrative have expressed, in direct speech, their own inner feelings. When Mary found the boy Jesus safe in Jerusalem, she told him that she was anxious, ὀδυνάω (2:48). And God, contemplating Jesus after his baptism, declared himself to be pleased with him, εὐδοκέω (3:22). Jesus, in direct speech, has not articulated any inner emotions, but the implied author attributes interior sentiments to him on two occasions. He is amazed at the faith of the centurion, θαυμαζω (7:9), and has compassion on the widow of Nain, σπλαγχνίζομαι (7:13).

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[93] Bovon, *Luke 2*, 71. Bovon notes how περισπάω has the "complementary meanings of withdrawing oneself from one reality and being absorbed by other realities." Ibid.

[94] See Elizabeth V. Dowling, *Taking Away the Pound: Women, Theology and the Parable of the Pounds in the Gospel of Luke*, LNTS 324 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 162. "δέ," but, on the other hand: L&N 1, §89.124; BDAG, 213.

In virtually all these cases, the reader is given an opportunity to witness why the characters are responding as they do. For example, Mary is anxious because the twelve-year-old Jesus is missing (2:43–48); Jesus is compassionate because he sees a widow whose only son is dead (7:7–13); the disciples are amazed because Jesus calms the storm (8:23–25); and various witnesses are fearful or astounded because of Jesus' remarkable cures (5:26; 8:37, 56; 9:43). But Martha is declared to be περιεσπᾶτο without the reader having any opportunity to observe the cause of her agitation, save being informed that she is concerned with her many obligations, περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν. Having just observed the personal scene between Mary and Jesus, there is a suspicion that more might be involved in Martha's agitation than merely her "much service." Reading between the lines, the audience understands that she also has to contend with Mary's lack of assistance and her monopoly of Jesus' attention.[95]

### 3.4.2 Martha's διακονία

The narrator states that it is Martha's "much service," περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν, that has her agitated and upset. Like περισπάω, διακονία is another rare term, found only here in any of the gospels.[96] However, in its verbal form, διακονέω, it features widely throughout the New Testament. While words with the διακον- stem—διακονέω, διακονία, διάκονος—are complex terms with no agreed meanings, one of the connotations of διακονέω is to wait upon, to take care of, or to serve.[97] Thus, διακονέω has already appeared twice in the narrative, first to describe how Simon's mother-in-law began to wait upon Jesus and Simon following her cure (4:39), then how the women at 8:3 were providing for Jesus out of their resources. From this, the implied audience, reading in the context of the narrative to date, understands that Martha's

[95] This reflects an insight of Sternberg, who states how the "the narrator does not tell the whole truth … his statements about the world—character, plot, the march of history—are rarely complete, falling much short of what his elliptical text suggests between the lines. His *ex-cathedra* judgments are valid as far as they go, but then they seldom go far below the surface of the narrative, where they find their qualification and shading." See Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 51.

[96] It is found throughout Acts, in various Pauline letters, and in 2 Tim and Revelation. "διακονία," service, aid, support, assistance, ministry, provision, monetary contribution: L&N 1, §35.19, §35.21, §35.38, §46.13, §57.119; BDAG, 230.

[97] "διακονέω," L&N 1, §35.19, §35.37, §46.13; BDAG, 229–30. John N. Collins discusses how words in the διακον- cognate group occur along a "progressively expanding field of meaning," conveying notions of messenger, agency, servant, and attendance, with the implication of free and honourable toil. Because of this gradation of meaning, context is the primary determinant of their semantic content. See John N. Collins, "A Monocultural Usage: διακον- words in Classical, Hellenistic, and Patristic Sources," *VC* 66 (2012): 287–309, here 299, 291, 295.

διακονία refers to her table service/household service to Jesus, in the sense of providing food and hospitality, and that this is the cause of her agitation.[98]

### 3.4.3 Martha Takes Action

Martha breaks into Mary's respectful listening to the λόγος of Jesus. The hitherto summary material in the passage changes to slower and more expansive scene material, allowing the audience to feel that they are now on-the-spot, real-time witnesses to what is occurring. The verb ἐφίστημι, with its suggestion of suddenness, suggests that Martha materializes unexpectedly to stand beside her sister and their guest.[99] When ἐφίστημι is combined with περισπάω, Martha's sudden appearance is imbued with an agitation entirely at odds with the serenity that prevails with her sister and Jesus. But ἐφίστημι also denotes a sense of "authoritative standing," as when the prophetess Anna stood and proclaimed in the temple (2:38) or when Jesus stood over Simon's mother-in-law to rebuke her fever (4:39).[100] In addition, a Septuagint-literate implied reader would understand that ἐφίστημι can have a confrontational or combative tone.[101] The image thus presented of Martha's entrance is a dramatic one—her standing, forceful, over-stretched, contentious, close-contact demeanour contrasting sharply with the sitting, focused, tranquil attitude of Mary (and Jesus).

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[98] Later in the Gospel, Jesus uses διακον- language in his own teaching about the kingdom of God. At 12:37, a κύριος allows his slaves to sit while he serves them, διακονήσει αὐτοῖς, and, at 22:27, during the Last Supper, Jesus describes himself as the one who serves, ἐγὼ δὲ ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν εἰμι ὡς ὁ διακονῶν. See Wyant, *Beyond Mary or Martha*, 46–47. In Acts, διακονία features several times in the context of a male ministry (1:17, 25; 20:24; 21:19). Because of this, some modern commentators retroject this διακονία-as-ministry into the pericope of Martha and Mary and interpret it as the participation of women in the early church's leadership, preaching, and mission. For example, see D'Angelo, "Women Partners," 68, 80; Carter, "Getting Martha Out of the Kitchen," 222. On a broader canvas, the real first-century audience may reasonably be assumed to have some awareness of the tensions existing within the ministerial demands of the early church.

[99] "ἐφίστημι," to stand at or near a particular place, often with the implication or connotation of suddenness: L&N 1, §17.5, §85.13; BDAG, 418–19. With this verb, the angel appears suddenly to the shepherds (2:9) as do the men at the tomb (24:4).

[100] Ernst, *Martha from the Margins*, 197. This air of authoritative standing is widespread in the Septuagint, for example, "David stood over [the Philistine] … and killed him," καὶ ἔδραμε Δαυὶδ καὶ ἐπέστη ἐπ' αὐτὸν … καὶ ἐθανάτωσεν αὐτὸν (1 Sam 17:51 [1 Kgs 17:51 LXX]); "in a controversy they shall stand to judge," καὶ ἐπὶ κρίσιν αἵματος οὗτοι ἐπιστήσονται τοῦ διακρίνειν (Ezek 44:24). Other examples include Exod 1:11; Jdt 8:3; Ruth 2:6.

[101] The aggressive tenor of ἐφίστημι is evident from Lev. 17:10; 20:3, 5, 6; 26:17, where God, in handing down various prohibitions, repeats a litany of "I will set my face" against you," καὶ ἐπιστήσω τὸ πρόσωπόν μου, a formula that is repeated at Jer 51:11 (in the LXX). It also becomes clear later in the Gospel at 20:1 where enemies of Jesus stand by in the temple to challenge him while he teaches there.

Despite her demure manner, Mary's bearing exudes its own power, with the possibility that she is exercising leverage over her sister. Calmly sitting in the company of Jesus may be viewed as an independent and possibly subversive choice, particularly when Martha, theoretically in a superior position as householder, host, and elder sibling, is being presented to the audience at a disadvantage, in her anxiety, distraction, and exclusion.[102] However, if there is a latent power struggle taking place between the sisters, Mary might not anticipate that Martha will expose it before their guest.

### 3.4.4 Martha Gets a Voice

In addressing Jesus, Martha becomes the first woman recorded as speaking to him in his adult life.[103] By deferring to him as κύριε, she sets the right tone of deference. This is the verbal equivalent of Mary's humble position at Jesus' feet, and emulates the narrator's "Lord" of the previous verse. It is a respectful address, and signifies the courtesy due by a host to a guest of his status.[104] It also shows how Martha, herself a figure of some eminence as householder and host, defers to Jesus as the authoritative figure in the scene.[105]

## 3.5 Martha's Grievances (10:40b)

This deference makes what follows all the more unexpected, surprising the audience as much it must disconcert both Jesus and Mary. For the first time in the pericope, the narrator steps back and lets the reader "hear" a character's voice, allowing Martha to explain her περισπάω, in "vivid words" and "direct speech."[106] Left to serve on her own, she not only characterizes

[102] See Veronica Koperski, "Women and Discipleship in Luke 10.38–42 and Acts 6.1–7: The Literary Context of Luke-Acts," in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, with Marianne Blickenstaff (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 161–96, here 195.

[103] Jesus has had other interactions with individual women—Simon's mother-in-law (4:38–39); the widow of Nain (7:12–16); the anointing woman (7:36–50); Jairus's wife and daughter (8:51–56)—but none of them speak to him. The woman with the flow of blood addresses Jesus but her words are not recorded in direct speech (8:47). The only other woman in the narrative to address Jesus directly is an anonymous individual who calls out to him from the crowd (11:27), and whom he quickly corrects (11:28). Otherwise, Jesus speaks to the woman with the bent back (13:12) and the daughters of Jerusalem (23:28), but they do not address him.

[104] Rowe considers that, although Martha calls Jesus κύριε, she has no understanding of "the larger significance of her address." See Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 149.

[105] Spencer, *Salty Wives*, 186.

[106] Turid Karlsen Seim, "The Gospel of Luke," in *Searching the Scriptures, Volume Two: A Feminist Commentary*, ed. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (London: SCM, 1994), 728–62, here 745.

her sister as idle, but Jesus as indifferent, and she herself as one taken for granted by both. (Martha's viewpoint is at variance with the narrator's earlier characterization of the sisters, where both were depicted in idealized terms, Martha as willing hospitality-provider and Mary as model listener.) Underlying Martha's vexation is her displeasure that Mary sits with their guest while she toils, and that Jesus does not take note of this.[107] (There is a suspicion, however, that part of Martha's annoyance is that Mary enjoys Jesus' company without her.) The implied audience empathizes with Martha's irritation because, given the societal expectation that women assist one another in attending to a guest, the story is engaging in defamiliarization, overturning the "perception of how things ought to be."[108] However, in counterpoint to this, the readers appreciate that it is inappropriate of Martha to raise these issues now and involve Jesus in a domestic disagreement.

### 3.5.1 A Family Dispute

Instead of suffering in silence (whether gracious or sullen) and challenging Mary after Jesus had departed, Martha voices her frustrations immediately. And, rather than admonishing Mary, an "exasperated Martha" berates Jesus that it is partly his fault that she is left on her own to make all the preparations.[109] While the lack of a personal name—"my sister"—indicates some of Martha's annoyance, it even more strongly emphasizes the obligation to family that Martha feels Mary has relinquished. The "my sister" highlights the interrelatedness and interdependency that underlay the dyadic, group-embedded personalities of first-century people. For them, group well-being and solidarity, not individuality, were always primary, and no group cohesion was as strong as the family unit.[110] From Martha's point of view (and that of the implied audience who understand such matters), Mary's dereliction of her responsibilities dishonours her family because, according to Martha, what needs to be done for their guest cannot properly be done. The "my sister" therefore reprimands Jesus, reminding him that Mary's obligations to her family (that is, to Martha) outweigh any relationship she has with him. Unspoken but clear is the accusation that Jesus engages her sister in conversation when

[107] Wolter, *Luke II*, 84.

[108] Malina and Neyrey, "Honor and Shame," 62.

[109] Harrington, *Reading Luke*, 65.

[110] Malina and Neyrey, "First-Century Personality," 72–76.

"he ought to have reminded Mary to help Martha."[111] Given the tacit rules that govern the relationship between guest and host, Martha would feel confident of Jesus' support for her position.[112]

By involving Jesus (Lord and guest) in an unseemly family conflict, Martha forfeits some reader sympathy for her valid complaints. This is for various reasons. First, in a society concerned with "conventionality and formality," family disputes are best suspended in the presence of a guest.[113] Second, in implicating Jesus, Martha fails in one of her specific duties as a host: she infringes on the code of hospitality which holds that a guest's honour must be protected.[114] She compromises Jesus by putting him in the seemingly impossible and unenviable situation of being asked to choose between the two women.[115] Third, instead of authentic hospitality being invisible and seemingly effortless, she places her guest in a socially awkward position "by an obvious demonstration of the trouble to which his visit has put her."[116]

### 3.5.2 Martha's Certainty … or her Isolation and Abandonment?

By speaking up in this manner, Martha demonstrates her conviction that she has right on her side, and her οὐ μέλει σοι indicates that she expects Jesus to agree with her. While οὐ anticipates an affirmative answer, μέλει denotes being concerned or caring about something, and σοι intensifies Martha's focus on Jesus.[117] She takes it for granted that priority belongs,

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[111] Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 133.

[112] Malina, *Social World of Jesus*, 232.

[113] Thimmes, "Language of Community," 238; Ranjini Rebera, "Polarity or Partnership? Retelling the Story of Martha and Mary from Asian Women's Perspective," *Semeia* 78 (1997): 93–107, here 101; Johnson, *Luke*, 175–76. Malina and Neyrey note how an honourable man, "if he could ever become aware of it, would never expose … his inner self with its difficulties, weaknesses, and secret psychological core … He is adept at keeping his innermost self concealed with a veil of conventionality and formality, ever alert to anything that might lead to his making an exhibition of himself, to anything that would not tally with the socially expected and defined forms of behaviour that have entitled him to respect." See Malina and Neyrey, "First-Century Personality," 79. Presumably, the same inhibitions apply to Martha in her male roles of householder, head of family, and host.

[114] Malina, *Social World of Jesus*, 232–33.

[115] The audience will soon learn that Jesus is largely indifferent to family disputes (12:13–14) and will not intervene in them.

[116] Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 133.

[117] Οὐ expects an affirmative answer. See BDF, §427; L&N 1, §69.13; BDAG, 734.3. "μέλει," to think about something in such a way as to make an appropriate response, to think about, to be concerned about: L&N 1, §30.39, §25.223; BDAG, 626–27. Μέλει is the third person singular of the verb μέλω, meaning to be an object of care, or to be a care to. Μέλει can be used personally or impersonally, but is found only impersonally in the

not only to the hospitality that she offers, but also to the principle of family primacy and solidarity.[118] Martha's forthright words can characterize her as determined, eloquent, outspoken, independent, industrious, protective of her own interests, confident in the value of her work, her role as hospitality provider, and defender of family solidarity.[119] She demands to be treated with the same respect and care that she accorded to Jesus with her ὑποδεχομαι, and refuses to be taken advantage of in her own home by either her "Lord" or sibling.[120] In this, she echoes Jesus' own outspokenness at Simon the Pharisee's dinner when he felt he was not treated with the courtesy he deserved. The "me" language which dominates her alliterative complaint, ἡ ἀδελφή μου μόνην με, indicates how firmly she is convinced of the rightness of her case. However, her candid expression jars somewhat. In particular, it intensifies the contrast with Mary's quiet concentration on Jesus and his λόγος.[121] And, in her concern with herself, Martha re-contextualizes Mary's attitude, calling it, not "listening" (as the narrator does), but "leaving me alone."[122] In other words, she relates Mary's behaviour, not to Jesus, but to herself, and therefore evinces an inability to see any point of view but her own.[123]

But while Martha's οὐ μέλει σοι demonstrates the assertive and forceful aspects of her character, it simultaneously reveals her vulnerability and sense of isolation. It clearly matters to her that Jesus "cares," that he "takes notice of her distress and her need."[124] She is pleading not to be invisible or have her work rendered negligible and unimportant.[125] As he did with the

New Testament. See L&N 1, §30.39; BDAG, 626. While μέλει appears nine times in the New Testament (Matt 22:16; Mark 4:38; Luke 10:40; John 10:13; 12:6; Acts 18:17; 1 Cor 7:21, 9:9; 1 Pet 5:7), the idiom οὐ μέλει is found only at Matt 22:16, Mark 4:38, and Luke 10:40. The construction and sentiment behind Mark 4:38 is almost identical to Luke 10:40, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" Διδάσκαλε, οὐ μέλει σοι ὅτι ἀπολλύμεθα; In this case, Jesus proves that he does care by immediately calming the storm, although he berates the disciples for their display of fear.

[118] See Seim, *Double Message*, 103.

[119] See Thimmes, "Language of Community," 238; Alexander, "Sisters in Adversity," 200; Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A Study in Jesus' Attitudes to Women and their Roles as Reflected in his Earthly Life*, SNTSMS 51 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 115.

[120] Spencer, *Salty Wives*, 334.

[121] Seim, "Gospel of Luke," 746.

[122] Wolter, *Luke II*, 84.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Holly E. Hearon, "Between Text and Sermon: Luke 10:38–40," *Int* 58 (2004): 393–95, here 394.

[125] In this, she resembles the elder son in the parable of the two lost sons, who also feels overlooked and unappreciated (15:29–30).

hospitable anointing woman, Martha wants Jesus to "see" her and appreciate her (7:44). Left "alone" by Mary, Martha does not want Jesus to forsake her too. Martha's choice of καταλέιπω to describe Mary's abandonment affects the audience in two opposing ways.[126] On one level, it supports their sympathy for Martha, toiling unaided to provide for their guest. But, within the contours of the narrative, it recalls the only other incident where καταλέιπω has occurred. At the call of Levi, the tax collector "left everything," καταλιπὼν πάντα, and followed Jesus (5:28). In the sense that Levi left his ordinary life to become a disciple of Jesus, Mary is doing likewise, discounting the usual domestic rituals because something greater has manifested itself.[127] For her, a visit from the Lord surpasses everything, even hospitality and family solidarity.

### 3.5.3 The Implied Reader Takes Stock

Martha's opening remarks to Jesus garner considerable reader support, even if their timing and tone are questionable. It is evident that Martha is striving, albeit irately, to fulfil the expectations of hospitality so valued by first-century people and expected of followers of Jesus. Viewed from this perspective, a work-shy Mary is clearly in the wrong. However, despite Mary's inactivity, her indifference to Martha, and her lack of interest in the practical requirements of entertaining a guest, the reader is also, almost unwillingly, drawn into admiration of her. She is more attuned than Martha to the extraordinary event that is occurring in her home.[128] For it is not just a missionary who has arrived and for whom the rules of 10:8–9 were laid down. Instead, it is Jesus himself who has come to visit. Mary shows great sensitivity to his presence and "interrupts daily life," while Martha, who has lost sight of the uniqueness of the situation, continues with her everyday tasks.[129] With her "better sense of the moment," Mary recognizes this as a day when the normal routines do not apply.[130] (The implied

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[126] "καταλείπω," to leave, leave behind, abandon; to leave someone without help: L&N 1, §85.65, §35.17; BDAG, 520–21.

[127] As Jesus himself says, "someone greater than Solomon [and Jonah] is here" (11:31, 32).

[128] Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 602.

[129] Wolter, *Luke II*, 84; Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 604.

[130] Spencer, *Salty Wives*, 174. In his consideration of this pericope, John Chrysostom regards timing as critical and that, for all disciples, there is a time to work and a time to listen. See Spencer, *Salty Wives*, 174. As Blake R. Heffner interprets Chrysostom, "When the Lord comes to one's house declaring the in-breaking of the kingdom, then it is time to drop everything and be attentive." Heffner's quotation is from "Meister Eckhart and a Millennium with Martha and Mary," in *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective: Studies in Honor of*

audience understands, however, that a hungry Jesus still needs—and probably expects—to eat.[131]) As the narrative moves on, the reader is torn between empathy for busy Martha in her domestic dilemma and an intuition that focused Mary has her priorities right.[132] This deliberate tension—one that provokes, frustrates, and engages the reader—is part of the rhetoric or discourse of the narrative, where the implied author and the implied audience interact. The interaction of the characters, Martha, Mary, and Jesus, on the other hand, is part of the story.[133]

### 3.5.4 Martha Requests Help

Oblivious to any undertones, Martha continues to importune Jesus, and her request for help is delivered as a brisk command, "Speak to her, then, that she may help me." The sharpness of Martha's language suggests a deliberate contrast on the implied author's part between Martha "as she tells Jesus what he *must* say and Mary who *listens* to what Jesus *wishes* to say."[134] The verb put on Martha's lips, συναντιλαμβάνομαι, is yet another rare term, found in the New Testament only here and at Rom 8:26. It signifies the provision of help in a co-operative manner.[135] The implied author has already deployed another verb with a similar meaning, συλλαμβάνομαι, at the great catch of fish, where Peter signalled the other fishermen to come and help with the nets, συλλαβέσθαι αὐτοῖς (5:7). In this instance Peter, like Martha, overwhelmed by his task, requested (and was granted) assistance from his partners in the other boat. It signifies the mutual effort that Martha (and the reader) feels her due on this occasion.[136]

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*Karlfried Froehlich on his Sixtieth Birthday*, eds. Mark S. Burrows and Paul Rorem (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 117–30, here 120.

[131] Alexander notes that, "At the most mundane level, this type of practical service was absolutely vital for Jesus' mission ... Where would Jesus have been if all his hosts had asserted their right, like Mary, to leave the dishes and sit at his feet?" See Alexander, "Sisters in Adversity," 199.

[132] As Craddock states, "there is a time to go and do; there is a time to listen and reflect." See Craddock, *Luke*, 152.

[133] See Malbon, "How Does the Story Mean?" 34.

[134] Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 606.

[135] "συναντιλαμβάνομαι," to help by joining in an activity or effort, to join in helping, to come to the aid of, to be of assistance to: L&N 1, §35.5; BDAG, 965. It is a verb known from the Septuagint where, at Exod 18:22 and Num 11:17, God promises Moses that he will send him assistants to help him in his work and with his burdens. Thus, Exod 18:22, "And they will make it easier for you and they will help you," καὶ κουφιοῦσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ καὶ συναντιλήψονταί σοι. And Ps 89.21 (88:22 LXX) promises God's own support and help, "my hand shall always remain with him," ἡ γὰρ χείρ μου συναντιλήψεται αὐτῷ.

[136] A similar verb, ἀντιλαμβάνομαι, found at 1:54 in Mary's Magnificat, describes how God helped Israel his servant, ἀντελάβετο Ἰσραὴλ παιδὸς αὐτοὺ, remembering his promises to her.

### 3.5.5 … and Issues a Command

It is unusual for Jesus to be at the receiving end of an imperative. This happened on just one previous occasion, when the apostles requested him to "Send the crowd away," ἀπόλυσον τὸν ὄχλον, to go and find lodgings (9:12), a directive that Jesus declined (9:13). It is generally Jesus who issues the commands, for example: "Be silent, and come out" (4:35); "Put out into the deep water" (5:4); "stretch out your hand" (6:10); "Child, get up" (8:54). When characters do make a request of Jesus, it is in the language and/or posture of deference. Thus the man with leprosy falls to the ground and, in a circumlocutory way, asks for a cure, "Lord, if you choose," κύριε, ἐὰν θέλῃς (5:12); the centurion is similarly courteous, "Lord, do not trouble yourself," κύριε, μὴ σκύλλου (7:6); Jairus falls at Jesus' feet and appeals to him, πεςὼν … παρεκάλει αὐτὸν (8:41); and the father of the boy with the demon begs him, διδάσκαλε, δέομαί σου (9:38).

The Lukan Jesus is therefore unaccustomed to being confronted by an "insider" in this blunt manner (although he is verbally assaulted by his detractors on a regular basis). The last character to do so was his mother who, having located the missing twelve-year-old in Jerusalem, berated him with a "confusing swirl" of relief and frustration (2:48).[137] That Martha feels free enough to challenge Jesus in a similarly emotive way shows them at a familiar level that is rare in the narrative. However, in addition to displaying informality and ease, Martha's plain-speaking also represents a challenge to Jesus' honour that is unexpected from a woman. As householder and host, both typically male roles, Martha clearly believes herself in a position to confront Jesus in this way. But a first-century man would not appreciate being pressed by a woman and consider it unseemly to get involved in a woman's dispute.[138] Instead, he would likely deem it entirely appropriate that Mary pays attention to him while Martha sees to his needs.

From the point of view of the narrative Jesus, both Martha's role as host and her directness are unusual: he is accustomed to visiting householders who are men, where meals

[137] Spencer, *Salty Wives*, 330. Mary chides Jesus, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety."

[138] In the gendered norms of the first century, the man must be dominant, active, and self-controlled. Above all else, he "must not act like a woman." See Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 48.

"belong to men's space, not women's space."[139] If Jesus' male disciples were present to hear Martha accost him, the affront would be all the more stinging. Even without them, the implied readers, who understand the dynamics of the honour and shame culture, do not expect that Jesus will allow the challenge to pass unchecked. Therefore, while they anticipate a riposte, the readers might consider that Jesus is facing a dilemma: can he quash Martha's affront to him while also upholding the rightness of her complaint?

Mary, being such a good listener (v. 39), on hearing Martha's plea, might be expected to rise immediately to help her.[140] This gesture would simultaneously pacify Martha and release Jesus from the social awkwardness of having either to respond or mediate. But the reader never knows if Mary intends to act, because the narrative adopts a different resolution, whereby Jesus unhesitatingly takes up Martha's challenge.

### 3.6 Jesus Makes a Judgment (10:41–42)

There is no equivocation on Jesus' part following Martha's approach, and no attempt to distance himself from the domestic tension. On the contrary, "the Lord" responds instantaneously, and continues to speak to the end of the pericope, uninterrupted by the narrator or either of the sisters. This third mention of κύριος (a concentration rare in the narrative) reminds the reader that Jesus is the authoritative figure whose reply will be definitive.[141]

#### 3.6.1 "Martha, Martha"

As there is no way to assess the vocal tone of "Martha, Martha," the reader cannot yet decide how Jesus is reacting to her appeal.[142] While the repetition of her name "intensifies the

[139] Neyrey, "Ceremonies in Luke-Acts," 376. Thus, on previous dining occasions, Jesus was hosted by men (Simon Peter, Levi, Simon the Pharisee), when the women either served (Simon's mother-in-law at 4:39), were invisible (Levi's banquet at 5:29), or were silent (the anointing woman at 7:38).

[140] Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?* 145.

[141] Rowe examines other instances where there are concentrations of κύριος/κύριε in Luke's narratives: Luke 12:41–42; 14:21–23; 19:8; Acts 9:10–11; 22:10; 26:15. See Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 146–48.

[142] Parsons notes the repetition of Martha's name as "an example of a *conduplicatio*, a rhetorical device used to indicate compassion or pity," citing Cicero, *Rhet. Her* 4.28.38. See Parsons, *Luke*, 182–83. The Loeb translation of the *Rhetorica* describes conduplicatio as "repetition of one or more words for the purpose of amplification or appeal to pity." See Cicero, *Rhet Her*. 4.28.38 [Caplan, LCL]). Reich, on the other hand, considers that "Martha, Martha" is an *epanalepsis*, or a simple repetition of the same word. See Reich, *Figuring Jesus*, 153. If Parsons is correct, the pericope needs to develop before the reader can decide whether compassion or pity describe Jesus' approach to Martha. Previous double vocatives in the narrative may suggest that amplification

emotional force of the address," Jesus could be addressing Martha along a range of responses ranging from kindness and concern for her upset to exasperation and vexation at her outspokenness.[143] In the narrative to this point, Jesus is recorded as calling just one other individual by name and, when he addressed Simon the Pharisee at 7:40, it was to deliver a sharp object lesson (ironically, on hospitality) to him.

### 3.6.2 "You are Worried and Troubled"

In his choice of the verbs μεριμνάω and θορυβάζω to describe Martha's demeanour, Jesus offers a judgment on Martha, and becomes the third characterizing agent of the pericope.[144] Virtual synonyms, μεριμνάω and θορυβάζω reinforce one another, corroborating and elaborating the περισπάω previously used by the narrator.[145] While not directly addressing either Martha's busyness or her complaint, all three verbs substantiate her anxiety, distraction, and distress.

This is the first time in the narrative that μεριμνάω has featured but, as a noun, μέριμνα figured in the parable of the sower (8:5–15), a passage to which the reader is especially attuned because of its emphasis on the hearing of the word, and hence its relevance to this pericope.[146] In Jesus' explanation of the parable, some people are choked, συμπνίγω, by the anxieties (ὑπο

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better defines his attitude. Thus, during the storm on the lake, when the disciples call out "Master, Master" to Jesus, terror might best style their demeanour, while Jesus attributes their fear to lack of faith (8:24–25). And, at 6:46, when Jesus cites would-be followers calling out "Lord, Lord" to him, he regards the expression as hollow and worthless. Later in the narrative, at 22:31, Jesus begins his prediction of Peter's betrayal with a double "Simon, Simon" that must be read as reproof and disappointment. Double vocatives are common in the Septuagint, where God frequently calls on those with whom he is in a friendly relationship: Abraham (Gen 22:11), Moses (Exod 3:4), Samuel (1 Sam 3:4). That repetition of a name can portray loss and poignancy is evident in 2 Sam 18:33, where David mourns his son Absalom.

[143] The comment that the repetition of Martha's name "intensifies the emotional force of the address" is from Culy, Parsons, and Stigall, *Handbook*, 371.

[144] The narrator characterized Martha (v. 38) and Mary (v. 39); then Martha characterized Jesus and Mary (v. 40).

[145] "μεριμνάω," to be anxious, apprehensive, worried, concerned about something: L&N 1, §25.225; BDAG, 632. "θορυβάζω/θορυβάζομαι," to be emotionally upset by a concern or anxiety, to be troubled, distracted, or distressed: L&N 1, §25.234; BDAG, 458. L&N 1, §25.234 calls attention to how μεριμνάω and θορυβάζω underpin one another.

[146] Μεριμνάω appears throughout the Septuagint in the senses of to be preoccupied (Exod 5:9); disturbed (2 Sam 7:10); vexed or angry (Ezek 16:42); and anxious (Sir 30:24; 31:1–2; 42:9).

μεριμνῶν), riches, and pleasures of life (βίος), and therefore never bear good fruit (8:14).[147] The association with being choked, συμπνίγω, in the sense of being overwhelmed and smothered, further reinforces Martha's turmoil.[148] Remembering the parable, the implied audience understands that μεριμνάω tells Martha that the concerns of life (her hospitality) are overwhelming her to such an extent that they are proving impediments to her discipleship.[149] In contrast, Mary, by her focused listening to the word, ἤκουεν τὸν λόγον (10:39), is doing exactly what Jesus extolled in the parable about those who bear good fruit, ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον (8:15).

The verb θορυβάζω is another rare choice on the part of the implied author, found only here in the New Testament and never in the Septuagint. It does, however, figure as a noun, θόρυβος, in both.[150] Because it refers each time to noise, tumult, and confusion, often associated with a riotous situation, it adds a further insight into Martha's disposition.[151] In addition to her upset and distraction, it appears that, according to Jesus, she is also loud and somewhat out of control.[152] She shows nothing of the peace that Jesus promised at 10:6 and that should distinguish one who has come to experience in his ministry "the immediacy of God's presence and provision."[153] As such, θορυβάζω is derogatory, and works rhetorically to lower Martha in the estimation of the reader. She now displays some of the inferior, intemperate, excessive attributes associated in the first-century mind with women, having previously assumed the male roles of householder and host.[154]

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[147] At 21:34, the concerns of life, μερίμναις βιωτικαῖς, feature again, this time associated with dissipation, κραιπάλη, and drunkenness, μέθη.

[148] "συμπνίγω," to cause plants to die by choking their growth, to crowd around and crush, to oppress and overwhelm: L&N 1, §23.120, §19:48, §22.22; BDAG, 959.

[149] At 12:22, 25, 26, Jesus elaborates on the futility of worrying, especially about the daily concerns of life, because life is more than food, the body, or clothing. Life, says Jesus, should be focused on the kingdom, and everything else will follow (12:31).

[150] In the New Testament, θόρυβος features in Acts 20:1; 21:34; 24:18; Matt 26:5; 27:24. Mark 5:38; 14:2. In the Septuagint, it appears in 3 Macc 5:48; Jdt 6:1; Esth 1:1d; Prov. 1:27; 23:29; Wis 14:25; Ezek 7:11.

[151] "θόρυβος," noise, clamour, confusion, unrest, turmoil, commotion, disorderly behaviour, excitement, uproar: L&N 1, §14:79, §39.42; BDAG, 458.

[152] Johnson describes θορυβάζῃ as a colourful expression on Jesus' part, "You are putting yourself in an uproar." See Johnson, *Luke*, 174. Professor Séamus O'Connell describes Martha's demeanour as "frazzled."

[153] Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 604.

[154] See Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 40.

Jesus states that Martha is troubled by "many things," περὶ πολλά. While this is a linguistic echo of the narrator's "much service," περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν, of v. 40, it is also a recognition that Martha's distraction is broader than the διακονία professed by herself (v. 40) or declared by the narrator (v. 40).[155] Here Jesus probes into Martha's character, currently simmering with unrest, frustration, and turmoil. Because of this, Jesus might be expected to extend explicit words of reassurance to her. Instead, he offers a piece of advice evocative of the wisdom literature of the day, including the Septuagint, and the tenets of popular Stoic philosophy. In a truism that can be read on many levels, he recommends that, rather than being distracted by "many things," she should focus on just one.[156]

### 3.6.3 "Only One Thing is Necessary," ἑνὸς δέ ἐστιν χρεία [157]

Jesus narrows the language of the pericope from "much " to "many" to "one," περὶ πολλὴν … περὶ πολλά … ἑνὸς δέ, thus encouraging Martha to channel her myriad concerns into one clear priority, one particular necessity, χρεία.[158] The single-mindedness that Jesus advocates is one of his own most defining traits. This is evident from the onward thrust of his peripatetic mission, "I must proclaim the good news … for I was sent for this purpose" (4:43). It is clear when, following his passion predictions (9:22, 44), he immediately sets "his face to go to

[155] Marshall considers that Jesus is talking about external matters, referring to Martha's "excessive preparations for a meal." See Marshall, *Luke*, 453. It is likely that, even if Jesus is referring on one level to food, he is also addressing deeper concerns. See Wyant, *Beyond Martha or Mary*, 63.

[156] Like Jesus with Martha, and using identical περί πολλὰ language, the wisdom writer of Sirach advises his reader "not to busy yourself with too many matters," τέκνον, μὴ περὶ πολλὰ ἔστωσαν αἱ πράξεις σου (Sir 11:10). Epictetus' approach to excessive busyness is similar, as is the εἷς, μία, ἕν/πολύς, πολλή, πολύ idiom, "But now, although it is in our power to care for one thing only and to devote ourselves to but the one, we choose rather to care for many things and to be tied fast to many," νῦν δ'ἑνὸς δυνάμενοι ἐπιμελεῖσθαι καὶ ἑνὶ προσηρτηκέναι ἑαυτοὺς μᾶλλον θέλομεν πολλῶν ἐπιμελεῖσθαι καὶ πολλοῖς προσδεδέσθαι (*Discourses,* 1.1.14 [Oldfather, LCL]). Seneca is similarly concerned with the need to focus, "No one pursuit can be successfully followed by a man who is busied with many things," Denique inter omnes convenit nullam rem bene exerceri posse ab homine occupato (*De Brevitate Vitae*, 7.3 [Basore, LCL]). And Seneca also advises on distinguishing what is necessary from what is not, "This first of all—see clearly for yourself what is necessary and what is superfluous," sed hoc primum, ut tecum ipse dispicias quid sit necessarium, quid supervacuum" (*Epistulae Morales*, Letter 110.7 [Gummere, LCL]).

[157] The manuscript tradition provides three possible variants: is there need for "one thing," (ἑνὸς); "a few things," (ὀλίγων); or "a few things or only one," (ὀλίγων …ἢ ἑνὸς)? See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1994, 1998, 2000), 129; Marshall, *Luke*, 452–53; Bovon, *Luke 2*, 73–74; Corley, *Private Women*, 138. This study deals only with the Nestle-Aland text.

[158] "χρεία," that which is lacking or particularly needed and necessary: L&N 1, §57.40, §71.23, §42.22; BDAG, 1088.

Jerusalem" (9:51), where the idiom τὸ πρόσωπον στηρίζω indicates firmness of purpose.[159] And Jesus' own sense of urgency is manifest in his radical expectations of disciples, who are called to follow him (5:11, 27–28; 9:59) and not look back (9:62). Jesus now commends the same undivided concentration on the essential to Martha: she is to focus on one χρεία.

### 3.6.4 Jesus Sides with Mary

Having characterized Martha, the "Lord" (still the speaking subject of the sentence) now addresses her request to him, and the directness of his reply matches the forthrightness of her challenge. In his response, he refers to Mary by her name, a contrast to Martha's categorization of her as "my sister." Furthermore, by placing Mary's name at the beginning of the phrase, Jesus emphasizes his endorsement of her. Mary, he tells Martha, has chosen well. By "choosing," ἐκλέγομαι, Mary becomes part of a very select group of characters who have hitherto made choices in the narrative: Jesus chose his twelve apostles (6:13), and God describes Jesus as "my chosen," ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος, to whom people are to listen (9:35). By including Mary in this company, her choice is presented as the worthy act of one who got her priorities right.[160]

Although the "good part," ἡ ἀγαθὴ μέρίς, that Mary has chosen is not identified by Jesus, the audience understands it as her exclusive focus on him and his word.[161] The adjective ἀγαθός positively associates Mary with the seeds that fell in "good soil," εἰς τὴν γῆν τῆν

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[159] "τὸ πρόσωπον στηρίζω," to decide firmly, to resolve, to denote firmness of purpose: L&N 1, §30.80; BDAG, 945.

[160] As already noted, the ability of the human to make proper choices and so achieve a well-lived life was at the core of much ancient thinking, reflected in Jewish wisdom teaching of the Two Ways and in the tenets of Greek moral philosophy. See §1.3.1, §1.3.2.2. The Two Ways emerges in Deuteronomy where the author sees life as made up of choices and decisions, and he presents the commandments as a guide to choosing and deciding well (Deut 30:15–20). See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 86. In a similar way, Greek philosophy, both classical and popular, held that humans are rational beings, capable of achieving a good human life, εὐδαιμονία. See Rubenstein, "Aristotle and Christianity," 72; C. C. W. Taylor, "Eudaimonia," in *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 544. In his ethical teaching, Epictetus continuously emphasizes that the capacity to choose, προαίρεσις, is the human's most distinguishing feature, "You are not flesh or hair but what you choose," ὅτι οὐκ εἶ κρέας, οὐδὲ τρίχες, ἀλλὰ προαίρεσις (*Discourses* 3.1.40).

[161] The positive degree of the adjective, ἡ ἀγαθὴ, could be used for the comparative, "the better" (of two), or the superlative, "the best" (of several). See Zerwick and Grosvenor, *Grammatical Analysis*, 222; BDF §245; Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 894. In his discussion on how the "one thing" is not identified, but is left for the audience to decide, McCracken cites David Patterson, who is himself echoing Bakhtin, "Nothing is more deadly to the spirit than a ready-made answer." See McCracken, *Scandal of the Gospels*, 143, citing David Patterson, *Literature and Spirit: Essays on Bakhtin and His Contemporaries* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1988), 58.

ἀγαθὴν, and bore their consequent fruit (8:8).[162] This is the only occasion that μερίς appears in Luke's Gospel, but it features widely in the Septuagint. Its introduction here is apposite and perhaps deliberately ironical on the Lukan Jesus' part. This is for various reasons. First, in the context of the present hospitality scene, where the preparation of a meal has generated a crisis, the reader appreciates that the Septuagintal use of μερίς often denotes an actual portion of food (Gen 43:34; Deut 18:8; 1 Sam 1:4).[163] On a more elevated level, μερίς features in the Psalms in the higher sense of "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance" (Ps 16:5, LXX 15:5), κύριος μερὶς τῆς κληρονομίας μου, an association that once again validates Mary's choice.[164]

### 3.6.5 Jesus Has the Last Word

Affording the hitherto-vocal Martha no opportunity for a counter-challenge, Jesus continues without a pause. He will not deny Mary the choice she has made, and will neither command nor exhort her to rise and help Martha.[165] The implication for Martha is that she should "get her priorities right" so that she too can have the one thing that matters.[166] Following Jesus' curt dictum to Martha, the audience might expect that he would direct a word of commendation to Mary, but this is not forthcoming.[167] Instead, the idealized Mary disappears from the narrative and the pericope concludes abruptly, leaving the audience with an edgy sense of incompleteness and lack of closure. This ending in mid-stream is part of the literary strategy of the implied author: it compels the audience to engage with the text's open-endedness and its many difficulties, including the shock of the rebuke to Martha and the resistance it generates, the problematic characterization of Jesus, the juxtaposition of "hearing and doing," and the question, what happens next?

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[162] The adjective ἀγαθός can have both a practical and moral dimension. Thus, soil can be "good" in that it works well to perform its purpose of producing a good crop. And Mary's choice can be "good" in the sense of being praiseworthy and positive. Sometimes, the meanings overlap, as when the "good soil" is a metaphor for receptive hearing (and doing) of the word of God. "ἀγαθός," L&N 1, §88.1, §65.20; BDAG, 3–4.

[163] Evans, *Luke*, 474. The implied reader, as a re-reader who is reading diachronically and understands the overall thrust of the Gospel, recognizes the eucharistic overtones here.

[164] See also Ps 119:57 and Lam 3:24; Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 894.

[165] Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 605.

[166] Marshall, *Luke*, 454.

[167] This reminds the implied audience of the distance that Jesus seemed to create between himself and the anointing woman in Simon's house. See §2.10.

## 3.7 The Audience Reviews and Evaluates

Because the pericope is structured around the artificial opposition of two kinds of good Gospel behaviour, listening and hospitality (or hearing and doing), the implied readers understand that it depicts a deliberately paradoxical situation where the issue at stake is one of prioritization. This juxtaposition recalls the episode of the anointing woman (7:36–50), where the qualities love and forgiveness were likewise placed in a tensive relationship. Like that passage, the elements in this pericope cannot satisfactorily be reconciled, but it is in the reader's effort to do so that the implied author achieves part of his purpose.

### 3.7.1 The Self-Contradictory Jesus

On the human level, this pericope characterizes Jesus in his dismissal of Martha as contradictory and unfeeling.[168] Although the implied audience is expected to side with him and to value his opinion of Mary, it has a sensitivity for Martha, because the hospitality that Jesus dismisses is a core value for Jesus himself, for the Gospel, and for the first-century world. Thus, in rejecting Martha's διακονία, he appears to be applying double standards. In addition, the implied reader recognizes the inconsistency between Jesus' sharp reprimand of Martha and the compassion, σπλαγχνίζομαι (10:33), that he has just advocated in the parable of the good Samaritan, itself part of the narrative frame of the present pericope.[169] Jesus is not characterized as very compassionate when he refuses to engage with Martha's legitimate protest.[170] The disjuncture between the parable and the pericope shows how the idealized, literally constructed, paradigmatic world of the parable clashes with the more chaotic "real" world of Martha, struggling to balance domestic responsibilities with a visit from Jesus.[171] Even for Jesus, Lord

[168] In a similarly insensitive way, Jesus dismisses his mother and family, leaving them standing outside when they want to see him (8:19–21). Like the Martha and Mary pericope, prioritization is also the issue at stake—that of hearing the word of God *and* doing it.

[169] Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?* 145.

[170] "Compassion," σπλαγχνίζομαι, features three times in Luke's narrative. It is ascribed to two parabolic figures, the good Samaritan (10:33) and the father of the lost sons (15:20). Jesus is the only Gospel character who is reported to feel compassion, as he does for the widow of Nain when he raises her son (7:13). "σπλαγχνίζομαι," to experience great affection and compassion for someone, to have pity, feel sympathy: L&N 1, §25.49; BDAG, 938.

[171] There are different narrative (or diegetic) levels at work here. Narration of the main (first-level) narrative takes place on the *extradiegetic* level. On this level, the main plot, that is, the story of Jesus, is related. Within the main story, the implied author can embed other short narratives, here the parable of the good Samaritan told by Jesus. The parable is on the *intradiegetic* level of the overall narrative, and Jesus acts as intradiegetic narrator. See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 25–28.

of the pericope, Martha's "real" world has its unexpected pitfalls, an arena where he suddenly finds himself embroiled in a domestic dispute and is asked to act as arbiter.[172]

### 3.7.2 "Rescuing" Jesus

The harshness of Jesus' treatment of Martha and his own difficult characterization can be negotiated in a variety of ways. One is to consider that whatever Jesus considers is Martha's error, it cannot be her διακονία, since διακονία, especially of him, is a positive value in the narrative discourse.[173] Viewed like this, it is Martha's anxiety and distraction, not her service, that is being critiqued. Thus, while Jesus rejects her "hustle and bustle," the antithesis he draws is not between hearing and serving, but between hearing and agitated toil.[174] This, of course, does not solve Martha's problem in that she is still left to do all the work by herself.

Another way to temper Jesus' approach is to consider that, while he does not doubt Martha's wish to serve or deny that domestic tasks are necessary, he is merely proposing a "hierarchy of values and actions."[175] In this view, where the magnitude of listening to the word of God is highlighted, Jesus is concerned with priorities, and "only one thing can come first and be absolutely necessary."[176] To underscore this, a harsh exaggeration is required, and Martha is the casualty.[177] Taken to its logical conclusion, this approach means that no one eats today, which is contrary to common-sense and to Jesus' own dictum concerning the labourer who deserves his wages (10:7). It does, however, represent Jesus' commentary on and ranking of two previous pericopae: his instructions to the missionaries (10:1–10), where he emphasized hospitality, and the parable of the sower (8:5–15), where he gave precedence to hearing the

[172] There is another tension in the pericope. At 22:26, 27, 27, Jesus iterates how he has come among the people as one who serves (διακονέω). In the current pericope, however, he does not defuse the tension by helping Martha himself (an unlikely-verging-on-the-impossible gesture for a first-century man to consider), opting instead to distinguish his teaching and serving ministries. See Spencer, *Salty Wives*, 189.

[173] See Alexander, "Sisters in Adversity," 210.

[174] Bovon, *Luke 2*, 77; Danker, *Jesus and the New Age,* 133; Seim, *Double Message*, 105.

[175] Bovon, *Luke 2*, 77.

[176] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 892; Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, 103.

[177] Harrington describes how "life's most painful choices are not between good and evil but between the good and better way." See Harrington, *Reading Luke*, 67–68.

word. In his reply to Martha, Jesus explicitly and unequivocally prioritizes receptive listening over hospitality.

A more elaborate explanation is that, employing a "literary and ideological sophistication," Jesus is depicted as engaged in a deliberate process of contradicting himself.[178] The audience is already familiar with such an inconsistency from the tension between ὅτι conjunction and the parable in the anointing woman pericope (7:47). Now, in order that the narrative Jesus can retain the elusiveness and unfinalizability (or mystery and unknowableness) that exist at the core of actual humans, the implied author introduces into the Martha and Mary pericope a calculated rupture between the Gospel themes of hearing and doing (the listening and hospitality of the pericope).[179] Thus, on several previous occasions, Jesus emphasizes "the necessity of combining hearing of the word with doing" (6:47–49; 8:8–15, 21; 11:28), that is, he gives an equal prominence to both.[180] Then, in the parable of the good Samaritan (10:30–37), Jesus vividly narrates the "doing" of the Samaritan in a way that could not fail to make an impression on his audience. The emphasis on "doing" is iterated with a four-fold repetition of ποιέω, including Jesus' forceful closing words, "Go and do likewise," πορεύου καὶ σὺ ποίει ὁμοίως (10:37).[181] However, following this seemingly propositional pronouncement, "there is a danger that his audience might define him in finalizing terms to suggest that, in Jesus' view, doing is more important than hearing [that action, διακονία, is more important than mission, λόγος]. He anticipates and seeks to thwart such finalizing definitions by altering his own words from the previous pericope."[182] Martha becomes the locus of this recalibration because, to

[178] Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 31.

[179] A character's "unfinalizability" is a concept from Bakhtin. See Nadella: *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 66. See also §2.9.3, footnote #195. "Mystery" and "unknowableness" are from McCracken, "Character in the Boundary," 39.

[180] Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, 137. The same balance is found in the Septuagint. In Deut 28:13–14, the Lord commands his people to obey (hear) and do his commands, while in Ezek 33:31–32, he inveighs against those who hear his words, but will not obey them. Ibid.

[181] Ποιέω appears in 10:25, 28, 37, 37. The lawyer's question at (10:25), "what must I do?" τί ποιήσας; is already familiar to the audience, having been raised by the crowds and soldiers at 3:10, 14, τί ποιήσωμεν;

[182] Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 85. The pericope that follows Jesus' response to Martha opens with the image of Jesus praying, προσεύχομαι (11:1), then teaching the disciples how to pray (11:2–4). Rather than setting off in a new direction, it thus reinforces Mary's "good part" of listening, and develops it into dependence on and trust in God. The implied reader notices how the implied author has linked the three adjoining pericopae—the parable of the good Samaritan, Martha and Mary, and the Our Father—not only thematically, but linguistically through the indefinite pronoun, "a certain," τὶς, τὶ. Thus, a certain lawyer, νομικός τις (10:25); a certain man, ἄνθρωπός τις (10:30); a certain village, εἰς κώμην τινά (10:38); a certain woman, γυνὴ δέ τις (10:38); and a certain place, ἐν τόπῳ τινὶ (11:1). In addition to connecting the three passages, the lack of specificity of the τὶς, τὶ seems

make his point effectively, there can be no compromise and no explanation. For the audience, this shifting of emphasis leads to the disorientation and modification of expectations from scene to scene, a literary technique that sometimes generates exasperation with the always-elusive and apparently inconsistent Jesus.[183] It reflects the complexity of the text, the narrative Jesus, his mission, the kingdom, and ultimately, perhaps, the tensions of the Lukan characterization of God (see §4.15.2).

### 3.7.3 Jesus is Lord

All efforts to "rescue" Jesus are ultimately futile because, as "Lord" of the pericope, he eludes every attempt "to tie him into the stratagems of others," whether of Martha or the audience.[184] In the difficulties of his characterization, his rejection of Martha, and the resistance of the implied reader to his absolute approval of Mary, Jesus is the stumbling-block, the trap, the snare, or the σκάνδαλον that he predicted about himself at 7:23, when he warned of the possibility of causing offence or shock to all who encounter him (characters and readers alike).[185] Frequently, part of his offence is that, instead of a conventional and reputable man, he is a marginal one, who often consorts with the less respected members of society.[186] But the part that is relevant today is his insistence on "a gaping difference between the word and the kingdom of God on the one hand and the normal, established world on the other."[187] While Mary is the paradigm of the "new vision of reality" that Jesus brings, and therefore suspends her habitual activity, Martha gets caught in the trap, as do the readers who identify with her.[188] Martha is presented as a "doer," who understands the rules of a stable, respectable,

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to emphasize their paradigmatic and universal qualities. See Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, 135; Wyant, *Beyond Martha or Mary*, 67–68.

[183] See Adele Reinhartz, "From Narrative to History," 171. Given the very human ability to hold two contradictory opinions at the same time, Craddock suggests that, if Jesus were asked whether one should follow the example of the Samaritan or Mary, he would answer "Yes." See Craddock, *Luke*, 152.

[184] See Green, *Luke*, 437.

[185] See §3.3.7, footnote #86.

[186] See McCracken, "Character in the Boundary," 34.

[187] McCracken, *Scandal of the Gospels*, 138.

[188] Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, 139.

"conventional" world—here the code of hospitality—and defends them vehemently.[189] But Jesus overturns all her certainties (and those of the audience) by subverting the "doing." Martha's old world is shattered and a new one must be constructed around her relationship to Jesus.[190] Therefore, in his presence, serving her guest is not the better part.[191] That the reader continues to resist this, even overtly, is a tension introduced by the implied author that is not capable of a final resolution.[192] This is because the implied author, who is in control of the entire narrative and its ideology, portrays Jesus as the one whose status as Lord allows him to transcend all conventional plans and human expectations, including those of hospitality, fairness, and compassion.[193]

### 3.7.4 What Happens Next?

At a pragmatic level, the reader asks, what follows?[194] The narrative that has brought Martha to a "threshold of decision" now abandons her there, poised in mid-crisis, her response undeterminable but critical. She is left "frozen in a state of eternal suspense," without the reader knowing how she exists.[195] In this, she resembles Simon the Pharisee, who is also left in this liminal state, hovering on a boundary between two places.[196] But, because the implied audience has invested more in Martha than in Simon—due to her sharp characterization, her liveliness, her certainty of purpose, her friendship with Jesus, and the sting of his rebuke—it finds the interruption to her story more challenging. It is in this open ending with its lack of resolution

[189] McCracken, *Scandal of the Gospels*, 141–42. In this, Martha is like the lawyer of the previous pericope, another character who is part of the established order, and who believed he had the "right" answer in citing the two great commandments, a certainty that, as with Martha, Jesus immediately challenged. Ibid., 143.

[190] Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 124.

[191] McCracken, *Scandal of the Gospels*, 143.

[192] See Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 243, 255 on these tensions.

[193] See Green, *Luke*, 437.

[194] Nolland states how "it is typical of Jesus' laconic approach that there is no actual resolution of the practical question about the provision of food! The shock value provided by such violation of common sense is part of what etches his teaching upon the mind." See Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 605.

[195] McCracken, "Character in the Boundary," 33.

[196] Crabbe, "A Sinner and a Pharisee," 250.

that the power of the narrative rests because the reader, like Martha, is "suspended in the between" and if there is to be any response, she or he must provide it.[197]

### 3.8 Conclusion

This short but complex pericope, set in the mundane environment of Martha's and Mary's home, amid a domestic squabble between the sisters, with Jesus caught in the middle, raises various aspects of the human condition, including friendship, hospitality, time, family solidarity, sibling rivalry, listening, recognition, choice, prioritizing, gender, tension, and the real versus the ideal. All this is indirectly achieved through the artificial opposition of the Gospel values of "doing" and "hearing," and the unexpected conflict that arises. The readers get involved at a visceral level because well-drawn characters like Martha and Mary have an empathic, often partisan appeal for them.

In his rebuff of the realistic, down-to-earth Martha and his extolling of the idealized, parabolic Mary, Jesus is depicted as self-contradictory, awkward, and lacking in compassion. This presents a great challenge to the reader, generating a level of disquiet and resistance that is unusual in the narrative. The implied author makes no effort at explanation or reconciliation, and instead allows the tensions to stand. In this way, the pericope, with its acrimony and dissonance, its undercurrents and unfairness, and its lack of satisfactory conclusions, mirrors the discord and ambiguity of "real" life, even when it is the experience of the—very human—Lord himself.

[197] McCracken, *Scandal of the Gospels*, 136.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# ZACCHAEUS AND THE "GRUMBLERS" (19:1–10)

## 4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four examines the ambivalent characterization of Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector whom Jesus encounters in Jericho, shortly before his arrival in Jerusalem. The meeting with Zacchaeus represents Jesus' final engagement with an individual before the focus shifts to his approaching death. In addition to the narrator, there are three characters in the passage: Jesus, Zacchaeus, and the crowd, also designated as "all," πάντες (19:7). The portrayal of Zacchaeus is complex. On one level, he is characterized in unusually well-defined terms but, on another, in a manner that is so equivocal that the audience is unsure about how it is expected to respond to him. An impression arises of two Zacchaeuses, both equally sustained by the text. This effect is achieved by the narrator's technique of suggestion and innuendo, where the unfolding characterization of Zacchaeus leads the audience first to lean in one direction, then to reverse course and consider other possibilities. In a text where little is as straightforward as it seems, there are many gaps to be negotiated, and attempts to correlate the various pieces of information prove difficult. Overall, it is an example of how the Gospel's anthropology is partly predicated on the understanding that complexity and opacity exist at the core of the human being, and that readers must contend with the uncertainties involved.

## 4.2 Jesus Enters Jericho (19:1)

In a terse statement, the narrator reports that "he" entered Jericho, εἰσέρχομαι, and was passing through, διέρχομαι, the town. Given the lack of a personal noun, the reader assumes that Jesus is the "he" of the referent and not the beggar who was the subject of the previous sentence.[1]

[1] Yamasaki, "Point of View," 96–97.

However, the reader must visualize, not a lone "he," but a reasonably substantial group that includes not only the crowd and the apostles (18:31) that accompanied Jesus on his approach to Jericho (18:35), but that now also includes the beggar, the λαός (18:43), and anyone else who joined along the way, some praising God (18:43) and others making the general commotion that drew the attention of the beggar at the start of the previous pericope (18:36). The town of Jericho is familiar to the implied reader from the incident with the blind beggar (18:35–43), the parable of the good Samaritan (10:30–37), and various references in the Septuagint.[2] The concentration of active verbs (18:35, 36, 37; 19:1)—ἐγγίζω, διαπορεύομαι, παρέρχομαι, εἰσέρχομαι, and διέρχομαι (approach, enter, go through)—give an impression that Jesus is "on the move," with no intention of delaying in the town.[3]

### 4.3 Zacchaeus is Introduced (19:2)

Abruptly, the narrator draws the reader away from the distant view of the hurrying Jesus and slows down the narrative to focus on a new character, Zacchaeus. His unusually detailed introduction—name, occupation, and socio-economic standing—gives the audience the impression of actually being in Jericho and observing him at close quarters.[4] However, the combination of character markers also presents the implied reader with "mixed signals" regarding him.[5] Positively, Zacchaeus's name individualizes him and makes him interesting. It

[2] Jericho was a major town at the southern end of the Jordan valley, with a fortress to guard the important trade route between Perea and Jerusalem. See Evans, *Luke*, 658. It was the residence of about half the priestly orders (the priest and Levite of the parable of the good Samaritan) for whom Jerusalem and its temple were conveniently close. See E. Earle Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke*, NCB Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 161; Lieu, *Luke*, 147. Jericho was the first city claimed by Joshua and the Israelites from the Canaanites after twenty-eight years wandering in the desert (Josh 5:10–6:27). A Septuagint-aware implied reader may hear in the Lukan travel narrative echoes of Elijah's journey towards Jericho in 2 Kgs 2:1–18 (4 Kgs 2:1–18 LXX). See Timothy A. Brookins, "Luke's Use of Mark as παράφρασις: Its Effects on Characterization in the 'Healing of Blind Bartimaeus' Pericope (Mark 10.46–52/Luke 18:35–43)," *JSNT* 34 (2011): 70–89, here 77–79.

[3] Green, *Luke*, 668; Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1223. While Jesus is bound for Jerusalem since 9:51, his progress is circuitous and, by 17:11, he is "still at the starting place," in the region between Samaria and Galilee. See Harrington, *Reading Luke*, 21. The reference to Jesus "passing by," παρέρχεται (18:37), foreshadows his royal entry into Jerusalem (19:37–39) in the manner of Greco-Roman kings and rulers. See John Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, WBC 35C (Nashville: Nelson, 1993), 900; Evans, *Luke*, 658; Lieu, *Luke,* 146. The παρέρχεται presents this final stage of Jesus' journey as a "triumphal procession." See Lieu, *Luke*, 146. To underline this, his entry to the city will be accompanied by the words from Ps 118:26 (117:26 LXX) once used to greet the king on his arrival in the temple, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." See Evans, *Luke*, 659.

[4] The "behold, look," ἰδοὺ, and the twice-mentioned pronoun, "he," αὐτὸς, direct particular audience attention on Zacchaeus. See Yamasaki, "Point of View," 99. The καὶ ἰδοὺ probably represents a "popular story-telling method." See Thomas Landon Galloway, "The Centrality of Zacchaeus in Luke's Gospel: An Exegetical Study of Luke 19:1–10" (MA thesis, Oral Roberts University, 2011), 11.

[5] Tannehill, *Luke*, 275.

is rare for the narrator to name a character whom Jesus encounters casually, and he has done this previously only with Levi, another tax collector (5:27), and Jairus (8:41). Because they both respond well to Jesus, the reader might anticipate a similar reaction from Zacchaeus. However, any positivity is immediately relativized by the information that Zacchaeus is a *chief* tax collector and he is *rich*.

### 4.3.1 Tax Collectors in the Greco-Roman World

It is around Zacchaeus's character tag as a chief tax collector or toll collector, ἀρχιτηελώνης, that much of the pericope pivots. This weighted word casts the reader into a dilemma, torn between the stereotypical view of tax collectors from the Greco-Roman-Jewish world, and their nuanced portrayal in the narrative. In the Roman Empire, where revenue collection was an essential function, there were myriad direct and indirect taxes levied on almost everyone, rich and poor alike.[6] In Palestine, taxes were imposed either by the Jewish tetrarch in semi-autonomous Galilee or by the Roman prefect in Judea, and their collection was generally farmed out to the highest bidder.[7] Because Jericho was situated in Judea, Zacchaeus may be visualized as a retainer employed by Rome.[8] While taxation as a principle was predictably unpopular, and tax collectors in general were suspected of dishonesty and corruption, those working for Rome were additionally regarded as collaborators with an occupying power.[9]

### 4.3.2 Tax Collectors in the Gospel

Given the distain and suspicion with which tax collectors were popularly held, their characterization in the Gospel is surprisingly varied. Much depends on whose point of view is

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[6] On the land tax, *tributum soli*, and poll tax, *tributum capitis*, see Brian Campbell, *The Romans and Their World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 136; Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 318. The third form of taxation was indirect—the sales, customs, and transport taxes that were the responsibility of toll collectors. These were generally positioned at fixed locations, *stationes*, like Levi sitting at his tax booth, τό τελώνιον, at 5:27. See John R. Donahue, "Tax Collectors and Sinners: An Attempt at Identification," *CBQ* 33 (1971): 39–61, here 42, 50; Campbell, *Romans*, 136.

[7] There were two periods of taxation in first-century Palestine. During the period of the historical Jesus' ministry, Judea (comprising Samaria, Jerusalem and its environs) and Idumea were under Roman control, while Galilee was under the quasi-independent rule of Herod Antipas. After 44 CE, all of Palestine came under direct Roman control. See Donahue, "Tax Collectors," 45.

[8] Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *The New Testament in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2007), 80.

[9] Bock, *Luke 2*, 1516.

being presented. The implied author depicts the narrator as decidedly ambivalent. Positively, he includes tax collectors as among those who come to John to be baptized (3:12) even if, by mentioning them at all, he seems to find it surprising that they should seek baptism (members of other professions or trades are not singled out like this). The narrator again makes them exceptional at 7:29 when he recounts how, as they listen to Jesus, "all the people and the tax collectors," acknowledge the justice of God, as though it is unusual that the tax collectors have the capacity to recognize God's justice. In contrast, however, he presents Levi in an unambiguously affirmative manner, portraying him as an outstanding role model who, in the discipleship vocabulary of the Gospel, leaves everything to follow Jesus (5:27–28).[10]

The Lukan John the Baptist shares much of the reserve exhibited by the narrator. Even as he baptizes the tax collectors, John admonishes them not to collect more than the amount prescribed (3:13), clearly reflecting the general belief that tax collectors are intrinsically extortionate.[11] The Pharisees and scribes (whose opinion the implied reader might not ordinarily value but who may agree with them on this) are portrayed as unequivocally negative about them. At Levi's banquet, the guests whom the narrator describes as "tax collectors and others," the Pharisees and scribes label as "tax collectors and sinners" (5:30), as though the two groups are automatically associated. The narrator joins the Pharisees in this correlation at 15:1, describing how "all the tax collectors and sinners" gather to listen to Jesus. This is another two-edged statement: positive that tax collectors come to hear Jesus, negative because they are the only group singled out to join the "sinners."

Jesus, the most important point-of-view character in the Gospel, never links "tax collectors and sinners" in the manner of the Pharisees, scribes, and narrator. The only time they occur together on his lips is when he ironically cites the derision of his opponents, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (7:34). In his programmatic declaration that he has come to call "sinners" to μετάνοια (5:32), he is not specific about who

[10] Within the idiom of the Gospel, "to follow" means to become a disciple, a μαθητής. See Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 241. For example, 5:27–28; 9:23, 49, 57, 59, 61; 18:22, 28. To become a disciple involves orienting one's life "around God's purpose as manifest in Jesus' mission." See Green, *Luke*, 246. The implied author uses the verb ἀκολουθέω in two interlinked ways: as a term for people following Jesus physically, as the twelve apostles or the women of 8:1–3, and as a figurative expression for discipleship, as Levi the tax collector.

[11] Donahue, "Tax Collectors," 58; Joel B. Green, "A Cognitive Narratological Approach to the Characterization(s) of Zacchaeus," in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, eds. Frank E. Dicken and Julia A. Snyder, LNTS 548 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 109–20, here 113–14.

might belong to this category. Finally, as a counterbalance to the distrust of tax collectors found in the worlds behind and of the text, Jesus, just prior to the Zacchaeus incident, relates the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.[12] Here, he chooses a tax collector (who happens to be a self-confessed sinner) as an exemplar of great piety who returns home justified (18:9–14). As the parable represents part of the narrative frame of the present pericope, this is last—very positive—image that the audience has of an individual tax collector before they are introduced to Zacchaeus.

### 4.3.3 The Implied Audience's Dilemma

This nuanced image of tax collectors, from the real and narrative worlds, hinders the implied audience from making an immediate judgment about Zacchaeus. Because tax collectors were so distrusted, the audience might support the derogatory "tax collector and sinner" identification that appears three times in the narrative (5:30; 7:34; 15:1). They might even relate to the parabolic Pharisee who deems tax collectors worse than swindlers, thieves, and adulterers (18:11), while conceding that the idealized tax collector of the parable is the exception. But the evidence of the narrative, when stripped of pejorative narratorial and Pharisaic comment and innuendo, is that tax collectors as a group are open to the work of God; that, as individuals, they can follow in discipleship; that Jesus chose one as a role model; and that, in selecting such an exemplar, he chose an occupation guaranteed to needle his audience (both his auditors within the narrative and the implied readers on the text's boundary).[13] This reader hesitation about tax collectors, bordering on resistance to the evidence of the text, presents a "teasing provocation," compelling them to engage with the uncertainties surrounding Zacchaeus.[14]

[12] Some of the groups to whom Jesus ministers frequently appear in fictional form in parables, which function as his commentary on them and on societal attitudes towards them. See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 110. For example, the parable of the great dinner (14:15–24); the rich man and Lazarus (16:19–31); the widow and the judge (18:2–8); the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9–14).

[13] Malbon describes how the implied audience exists on the "border between the internal world of the text and the external world of its hearers and readers." See Malbon, "Minor Characters," 83.

[14] The expression "teasing provocation" is from Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 152.

### 4.3.4 Zacchaeus is a "Chief" Tax Collector

Zacchaeus's designation as a "chief" tax collector, ἀρχιτελώνης, adds an additional nuance to his characterization, veering it towards the negative.[15] It leads the audience to consider that Zacchaeus may, after all, be in a different position to Levi, an underling who sits at a toll booth "helping to make people like Zacchaeus rich."[16] As an ἀρχιτελώνης, Zacchaeus is a man of relatively high status (although merely among tax collectors) who can be associated in Luke's Gospel with a company of others similarly elevated: the emperor and those who rule Palestine in his name (3:1); high priests (3:2; 22:50, 54); synagogue leaders (8:41, 49; 13:14); chief priests (9:22; 19:47; 20:1, 19; 22:2, 4, 66; 23:4, 10, 13; 24:20); the ruler of the demons (11:15); governmental authorities or sovereigns (12:11, 58; 20:20); a leading Pharisee (14:1); a "certain ruler" (18:18); and the Jerusalem elite as a group (23:35).[17]

But, instead of elevating such "leaders," people of high worldly honour and status, the Gospel consistently portrays them as hostile to Jesus and his mission.[18] And when Mary voices God's attitude towards them at the beginning of the narrative, "He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly" (1:52), the audience is on notice that a reframing and redefinition of honour is under way.[19] With Zacchaeus's pointed introduction as a person of relative power and privilege, the reader wonders whether he is about to be taught an object lesson on status reversal, or whether other, less predictable dynamics, will apply.

### 4.3.5 Zacchaeus is Rich

Zacchaeus's third character marker, that he is rich, καὶ αὐτὸς πλούσιος, reinforces the negativity associated with being a "chief" tax collector. The audience is alerted that

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[15] As this is the only appearance of ἀρχιτελώνης in the New Testament and is otherwise unattested in Greek, it is uncertain to what it refers—perhaps to one who was in charge of farming the taxes in a given area, or to a senior agent in the taxation system. See Evans, *Luke*, 662; Bock, *Luke 2*, 1516. As "chief" tax collector, Zacchaeus resembles Pharaoh's "chief cupbearer," ἀρχιοινοχόος, (Gen 40:1, 2, 5, 9, 13, 21, 23) and his "chief baker," ἀρχισιτοποιὸς, (Gen 40:1, 2, 5, 16, 22). A "leader of the synagogue," ἀρχισυνάγωγος, appears in the pericopae of Jairus' daughter (8:49) and the woman with the bent back (13:14).

[16] Tannehill, *Luke,* 275.

[17] Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 113.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Jesus emphasizes this reversal of worldly "givens" in his Nazareth proclamation (4:18), the blessings and woes of the Sermon on the Plain (6:20–26), and the focus of his mission on life's unfortunates.

Zacchaeus's wealth is important for the story in the manner that it is highlighted in v. 2. While the narrator might have chosen to describe Zacchaeus as a "rich chief tax collector," he instead notes the wealth as a separate item and thus he emphasizes it.[20] The implication is that Zacchaeus's riches are the result of success in his profession, and that he has abused his position.[21]

Like tax collection, the subject of wealth is significant in the worlds behind and of the text. In the Greco-Roman-Judeo historical context, being rich was "an ambiguous characteristic."[22] Those with the status of "old money" (usually accumulated through generations of vast land-holding) would despise Zacchaeus as an upstart whose "new money" was acquired from the detested activity of tax gathering.[23] At the other end of the social scale, the poor regarded someone like Zacchaeus as inherently evil because the theory of "limited good" held that wealth, like most advantages in life, could only be gained at the expense of others.[24] For the poor, any material or social mobility was usually downward, and their struggle was to maintain what they had, not to gain more.[25] From their point of view, and probably that of many of the implied audience, Zacchaeus was wealthy because he had plundered the poor, and he would be resented for it.

[20] Robert C. Tannehill, "The Story of Zacchaeus as Rhetoric: Luke 19:1–10," *Semeia* 64 (1993): 201–11, here 202; Green, *Luke*, 668.

[21] Bovon, *Luke 2*, 596; David H. Sick, "Zacchaeus as the Rich Host of Classical Satire," *BibInt* 24 (2016): 229–44, here 231.

[22] Green, *Luke*, 668.

[23] Green, *Luke*, 668; Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 114. The recently advanced *nouveau riche* who flaunted their wealth in feasts and banquets were despised by the elite holders of old money, and were frequently satirized as generic types or stock characters in ancient literature. See Sick, "Rich Host," 231–32.

[24] Bruce J. Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus: The Kingdom of God in Mediterranean Perspective*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 104, 106–7; Lawrence, *Reading with Anthropology*, 11.

[25] Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "The Pre-industrial City in Luke-Acts: Urban Social Relations," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 125–49, here 128.

### 4.3.6 Wealth and the Gospel

While the rhetoric of the Gospel is "less interested in condemning all wealth than insisting on its appropriate use," it is largely negative in its portrayal of individual rich people.[26] Thus, Jesus pronounces a woe upon the rich, πλὴν οὐαὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς πλουσίοις (6:24), and their fate, can be a dreadful one (16:19–31). Wealthy people are presented as fools (the farmer building his barns at 12:16–21); callous (the rich man who ignored Lazarus at 16:19–31); smug (the rich people putting their gifts into the treasury at 21:1); and unable to respond to Jesus' call (the rich ruler at 18:18–23). Wealth chokes faith (8:14) because it tempts people to seek security apart from God (12:13–21, 33–34). To erase any doubt on the subject, Jesus pronounces that "You cannot serve God and wealth," οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ (16:13).[27] Most recently, in his encounter with the rich ruler, Jesus hyperbolically implies that it is humanly impossible for a wealthy person to enter the kingdom of God (18:25). The reader ponders whether Zacchaeus will resemble him, rich in worldly goods but losing the kingdom, or like the once-blind beggar of the immediately preceding pericope who gains salvation (18:42).

### 4.3.7 A Hermeneutical Interlude

The "collocation of terms" used in the lengthy introduction to Zacchaeus leaves the audience in a state of some confusion.[28] Given his "mixed and indeed clashing status indicators," the narrative seems to be pointing in two directions at once.[29] As a tax collector, Zacchaeus might be expected to be responsive to Jesus, but as a leader, a "chief" tax collector, and one who is rich, the anticipation is that he will either resist Jesus or be unable to follow him. A tension is thus introduced whose outcome is not foreseeable.[30] While the implied readers await the reason for Zacchaeus's appearance in the narrative, they engage in a flow of anticipation and conjecture, trying to find a category for him.[31]

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[26] Carter and Levine, *New Testament*, 63. In this, it resembles the Septuagintal approach to wealth where there is little tendency to denounce it *per se*, but where is also a strong call to share with the poor and needy (Deut 15:11). See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 132; Harrington, *Reading Luke*, 99.

[27] Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 114.

[28] Green, *Luke*, 669.

[29] Carroll, *Luke*, 371; Wolter, *Luke II*, 245.

[30] Wolter, *Luke II*, 245.

[31] Petri Merenlahti describes how given "only sparse and ambiguous information, the reader simply has to infer, make guesses and interpretations, and correct those guesses and interpretations whenever his or her

Is Zacchaeus like Levi, whom Jesus sees and calls from his tax booth? Or the well-intentioned rich ruler whose wealth prevents him from following Jesus? Or is he like Jairus, the blind beggar, and many other supplicants who want something from Jesus and who waylay him to procure it? Can the audience expect him to fall before Jesus like the man with leprosy at 5:12, or shout to him like the τυφλός at 18:38, 39? Or is Jesus, despite his obvious hurry, going to notice Zacchaeus and recognize a need, as he did with the widow of Nain (7:13), the woman with the bent back (13:12), and the man with dropsy (14:2)? Or is Zacchaeus planning to invite Jesus to a meal, providing the hospitality that other leaders, notably the Pharisees, have already extended to him (7:36; 11:37; 14:1)? In the explanatory sentence that follows, the narrator manages to surprise the reader, revealing Zacchaeus's purpose as something new in the narrative: he simply wants to see Jesus, καὶ ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τίς ἐστιν (19:3). The implied reader, of course, understands that "seeing" is a major motif in the narrative and appreciates that its inclusion may signal an important development in the pericope.

### 4.4 The Quest (19:3)

In his desire to see, Zacchaeus is on a quest, like many others before him in the Gospel.[32] By providing Zacchaeus's motivation, the narrator gives a view of his interiority, thus shifting the audience from a position of observing Zacchaeus externally to a position inside his head (internal focalization). It is not as explicit as an interior monologue, but it broadly serves the same purpose: since the reader now looks out through Zacchaeus's eyes, some rapport is established with him to counter his mixed characterization.[33]

Because the underlying character of Zacchaeus's quest is unclear at this stage (*why* would he want to see Jesus?), the audience gets involved because they must try to fathom his deeper purpose, if he has one.[34] In trying to fill the gap, the audience asks, what did Zacchaeus

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expectations are not fulfilled in the course of the narrative." See Petri Merenlahti, *Poetics for the Gospels? Rethinking Narrative Criticism* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), 80.

[32] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 112. Tannehill identifies other questers in the Gospel—the man who was paralyzed (5:17–26); the centurion (7:1–10); the anointing woman (7:36–50); the Samaritan who suffered from leprosy (17:11–19); the second wrongdoer at the crucifixion (23:39–43); and the rich ruler (18:18–25), the only character whose quest is unsuccessful. Ibid., 112.

[33] Yamasaki, "Point of View," 100.

[34] Tannehill, *Luke*, 276. Whitenton describes how "human beings, across time and culture … seek out intentions." See Whitenton, *Configuring Nicodemus*, 26.

know of Jesus so that he wanted to see who he was?[35] There are two possibilities. On the one hand, because tax collectors have been connected to the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus, and it is clear that Zacchaeus has not seen Jesus before, Zacchaeus might be one of those who heard John or who knows something of his preaching.[36]

On the other hand, Zacchaeus could be driven by simple curiosity to see a well-known figure whose fame has spread before him (4:14, 37).[37] Curiosity as a motivation for seeking out Jesus has already featured in the narrative. In almost identical language, the narrator describes Herod's interest in Jesus, "and he was seeking to see him," καὶ ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν αὐτόν (9:9).[38] But Herod is not seriously interested like Zacchaeus.[39] Unlike the tax collector, Herod fails to take any practical steps to see Jesus until Jesus is brought before him for interrogation (23:7). At that point, the reader learns that what lies behind Herod's desire is his wish to be entertained with a sign, σημεῖον (23:8), like a trick or sleight of hand. But Zacchaeus's quest goes deeper: he is looking for Jesus himself, to discover "who he is," τίς ἐστιν.[40] From the implied audience's point of view, this is a commendable undertaking.

The question of who Jesus is reverberates through the narrative, and is the ultimate question that the implied reader (and real reader) must answer for her and himself. It is raised by the Pharisees at the healing of the paralyzed man (5:21); by Simon the Pharisee's guests (7:49); by Herod (9:9); and by the disciples (8:25).[41] The issue of Jesus' identity underpins his own question to the disciples, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" (9:18); and to Peter, "But

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[35] Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 110.

[36] Green considers that it is possible that Zacchaeus has had a previous encounter with "God's good news," an encounter to which the implied author gives his audience no access. In his view, the same might be said of the anointing woman and the second wrongdoer. See Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 112–13.

[37] Marshall, *Luke*, 696. Wolter deems this to be a "lukewarm curiosity" on Zacchaeus's part. See Wolter, *Luke II*, 345.

[38] The reader does not trust Herod's desire to see Jesus because, in the same pericope, Herod declares that he has beheaded John the Baptist (9:9).

[39] Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke*, trans. David E. Green (London: SPCK, 1984), 291.

[40] Bovon, *Luke 2*, 597.

[41] The question becomes more focused during Jesus' interrogations. The Sanhedrin ask, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" Σὺ οὖν εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ; (22:70); followed by Pilate's, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; (23:3).

who do you say that I am?" (9:20).[42] But what Peter knows from following (that Jesus is the Messiah of God [9:20]), and the reader knows from the angel (Jesus is saviour, Messiah and Lord [2:11]), and from the voice of God ("you are my son, the beloved" [3:22]), Zacchaeus is moved to explore for himself. This is the same level of seeing that Jesus encouraged in Simon the Pharisee when he invited him to see the anointing woman, not at a superficial level, but as Jesus saw her (7:44). Thus, in Zacchaeus's desire to see more deeply, τίς ἐστιν, he resembles Jesus himself, an identification that elevates him in the eyes of the implied reader.

### 4.4.1 Gospel Seeing

In naming Zacchaeus's desire to "see" Jesus, the narrator again employs a fundamental Gospel metaphor, where seeing is "neither physical nor purely rational but holistically experiential," and frequently represents spiritual insight.[43] At this point in the narrative, the audience is especially sensitive to any reference to "sight" or "seeing," as they have just witnessed the cure of the blind man (18:35–43), and they suspect that Zacchaeus's effort to "see" Jesus, following immediately on this dramatic incident, is not accidental.[44] On the contrary, a *synkrisis* or comparison is being established between the two characters.[45] In particular, the blind man's appeal to see ("Lord, let me see again") parallels the interiority of Zacchaeus's "trying to see." Based on the example of the τυφλός, the audience suspects (and hopes) that Zacchaeus's wish might be fulfilled. And, just as the blind man "saw" on two levels—when he physically saw Jesus, his response was to follow in discipleship and to glorify God (18:43)—so the audience

[42] There are, of course, various dimensions involved in Jesus' identity: his identity in and for himself, and his soteriological identity. It is multi-layered and non-"monal," that is, all the dimensions do not evenly map on to each other.

[43] Schneiders, "Biblical Spirituality," 425; Hamm, "Sight to the Blind," 457. See §2.7.4 for an earlier discussion on Gospel "seeing."

[44] The healing of a blind person was anticipated ever since Jesus proclaimed recovery of sight to be at the centre of his programmatic reading of the LXX version of Isa 61:1–2 at the start of his ministry (4:18). (Recovery of sight to the blind is found in the Hebrew Bible at Isa 29:18 and 35:6.) See Hamm, "Sight to the Blind," 459. Although the audience knows from summary material that such cures have taken place (7:21, 22), no individual healing of a blind person is actually described until Jesus' approach to Jericho.

[45] *Syncrisis* is an ancient rhetorical device that consists of "modelling the presentation of a character on another in order to compare them, or at least to establish a correlation between the two." See Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, 56. See also §2.8, footnote #144. While the Jericho setting and the theme of "seeing" links the two characters, there are significant differences between them. The blind man is poor, and Zacchaeus is rich. The beggar happens perchance to be on the road into Jericho when Jesus approaches, while Zacchaeus purposefully sets out to see Jesus. The blind man simply wants to see, while Zacchaeus specifically wants to see Jesus.

wonders whether, if Zacchaeus's desire to "see" Jesus is fulfilled, his response will be as fulsome as the beggar's.

### 4.4.2 He was Trying

Zacchaeus's combined yearning, quest, and effort are expressed in the multivalent verb ζητέω.[46] Searching, with its implication of something lost or missing, is another significant Gospel metaphor (made most explicit in the "lost" parables of Chapter 15). While characters in the Gospel search physically for Jesus (2:49); for health through Jesus (6:19); for lost possessions (15:4, 8); for a sign (11:29); and for self-preservation (17:33), Jesus advises that the true quest—the "proper object of seeking"—is not for lesser concerns (12:29), but for the kingdom, ζητεῖτε τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ (12:31).[47] When the kingdom is the goal—the kingdom that is already present in his person (17:21)—then Jesus promises that the search will be fruitful, "search and you will find," ζητεῖτε καὶ εὑρήσετε (11:9). Therefore, Zacchaeus's quest for Jesus, to see "who he is," is positive by Gospel standards. In spite of his disadvantages as "chief" tax collector and "rich," the merit of Zacchaeus's quest draws the reader to his side.

## 4.5 The Complications

In a typical quest story, an obstacle, or a complication, must be overcome.[48] A complication performs various functions in a narrative: it introduces tension into the story; it renders the prize more worthwhile; and it encourages audience identification with the questors, willing them success.[49]

[46] "ζητέω," to devote serious effort to realize one's desire or objective, to strive for, aim at, try to obtain: L&N 1, §27.41, §57.59, §68.60; BDAG, 428.

[47] William P. Loewe, "Towards an Interpretation of Lk 19:1–10," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 321–31, here 323–24.

[48] On obstacles and complications within plots, see Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 41–43. Booker notes that, within the domain of storytelling, ancient and modern, heroines and heroes encounter "conflict and uncertainty, because without some measure of both there cannot be a story." Booker, *Seven Basic Plots*, 18. Hagan comments how stories move from tension to resolution, while allowing for whatever complications arise. See Hagan, "Basic Plots in the Bible," 200.

[49] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 111–27.

### 4.5.1 The Crowd (19:3b)

For Zacchaeus, the first complication is the presence of the crowd, the ὄχλος.[50] The reader knows that large crowds invariably surround Jesus and press in on him (for example, 5:1, 15; 6:17; 7:11; 8:4, 19, 42, 45; 9:11, 14, 37; 11:14, 12:1; 14:25), making access to him difficult (8:45). In rendering Zacchaeus unable to see Jesus, the crowd may be behaving in either a neutral or malicious manner towards him.[51] On the one hand, the crowd may represent a normal physical barrier, the same one encountered by all in Jericho this day, straining to see a well-known figure as he passes by. On the other hand, Zacchaeus's inability to penetrate it may demonstrate its negative assessment of him. It refuses to make way for him, as it might do if he were a more respected member of the community.[52] If this is the case, the crowd's closing of ranks portrays Zacchaeus as one who is shunned socially, and the implied readers might consider that, from the crowd's point of view, its exclusion of him is plausible if mean-spirited. But the audience, knowing Zacchaeus's interiority and his positive motivation, is developing empathy with him and hopes that, like the paralyzed man (5:19), the woman with the flow of blood (8:42–44), and the blind beggar (18:39), he will find a way to surmount his difficulty. There is, however, a second complication.

### 4.5.2 Zacchaeus's Stature (19:3c)

Nascent reader responsiveness to Zacchaeus is shattered by the final clause of v. 3, because the narrator has withheld until now one crucial detail concerning him: he is small in stature, ἡλικίᾳ, too small to see over the heads of the crowd.[53] The physical description is surprising because,

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[50] What entered the outskirts of Jericho as the ὄχλος (18:36), and proceeded after the healing as the λαός (18:43), is now once again described as the ὄχλος (19:3). In this case, one seems to be used as a synonym for the other. The implied author employs ὄχλος and λαός in almost equal proportions in the narrative (forty-one times to thirty-five).

[51] The ἀπό of the prepositional phrase, ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου, used in the causative sense, supports either interpretation. It is because of the crowd, whether it is neutral or malicious, that Zacchaeus cannot see Jesus. "ἀπό," BDF, §210. See Marshall, *Luke*, 696; Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1223.

[52] Tannehill, *Luke*, 276; Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 150.

[53] ἡλικία has three possible meanings: the period of time during which a person is alive; the period of life during which one is mature and in one's prime; and bodily stature or height. "ἡλικία," L&N 1, §67.151, §67.156, §81.4; BDAG, 435–36. ἡλικία appears three times in Luke's Gospel, at 2:52, 12:25, and 19:3. At 2:52, it relates to Jesus increasing in age and maturity. At 19:3, it would appear to signify Zacchaeus's short stature (Green proposes that it might refer to Zacchaeus's youth and this is why the crowd would not make way for him. See Green, *Luke*, 669–70.) At 12:25, the meaning is more ambivalent but the lesson is the same: whether one is worrying about a life being cut short or about a physical debility such as lack of height, concern is futile.

other than those suffering from a disability related to Jesus' healing ministry—leprosy, paralysis, a withered hand, a bent back, dropsy, sores, blindness (5:12; 17:12; 5:18; 6:6; 13:11; 14:2; 16:20; 18:35)—no character in the narrative is accorded a gratuitous description, not even Jesus himself. Although Zacchaeus's smallness is a memorable and picturesque detail, it is not inserted merely for literary effect.[54] Instead, its inclusion is intentional and has a function in the narrative. It represents an *ekphrasis*, or a vivid depiction introduced for rhetorical effect and as a tool of characterization.[55]

#### *4.5.2.1 Lack of ἡλικία in the Greco-Roman World*

The description of Zacchaeus's smallness catches the implied audience unawares, and it jolts them from their growing identification with him. This is because, in the cultural stereotypes of the first century, the implied reader would hear the reference to Zacchaeus's stature as "something derogatory and demeaning."[56] This is for three reasons. First, a physiognomic consciousness permeated the Greco-Roman world, whereby outer physical characteristics were associated with inner qualities.[57] Specifically, there was a perceived correlation between short stature and a deviant personality.[58] Physical smallness was deemed to reflect littleness of spirit (μικροψυχία), pettiness, and greediness, all of which would concur with Zacchaeus's profession of tax collector.[59] Second, in contrast to the esteem accorded the idealized physique of the classical Greco-Roman male, lack of height rendered an individual a "nobody," a person of no consequence who could be overlooked or intimidated.[60] Because height was correlated with power and status, those who were taller were accorded more respect and influence.[61]

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[54] Loewe, "Towards an Interpretation," 325.

[55] Gregory E. Lamb, "Sinfully Stereotyped: Jesus's Desire to Correct Ancient Physiognomic Assumptions in the Gospel according to Luke," *WW* 37 (2017): 177–85, here 178. An *ekphrasis* is another rhetorical device found in the *Progymnasmata.* Aelius defines an *ekphrasis* as "descriptive language, bringing what is portrayed clearly before the sight." See Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 45.

[56] Mikeal C. Parsons, "'Short in Stature': Luke's Physical Description of Zacchaeus," *NTS* 47 (2001): 50–57, here 56.

[57] Ibid., 51.

[58] Anna Rebecca Solevåg, "Zacchaeus in the Gospel of Luke: Comic Figure, Sinner, and Included 'Other,'" *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* 14.2 (2020): 225–60, here 230. Holland notes how, in the Greek mind, "physical perfection and moral superiority were indissoluble." See Holland, *Dominion*, 14.

[59] Parsons, "Short in Stature," 53–54.

[60] Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 28, 50; Solevåg, "Zacchaeus in the Gospel of Luke," 229.

[61] Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 116.

Third, in a "rhetoric of ridicule," any physical deformity or oddity was a target in antiquity when a writer wanted to "get a laugh from his audience."[62] Therefore, the reference to Zacchaeus's lack of ἡλικία functions to lower him in reader opinion, because it is suffused with a combination of mistrust, derision, disrespect, and cruel humour at his expense.

#### *4.5.2.2 Gospel "Littleness"*

The Lukan Jesus understands the kind of negative attitude that Zacchaeus's shortness and perceived insignificance is generating in the implied audience because he meets it regularly in his disciples and tries to counter it. Thus, in a reversal of their worldly values and their regard for status and honour, Jesus prizes the qualities of littleness, powerlessness, and lack of pretension that are encompassed in μικρός.[63] This is evident in various ways. First, when the apostles argue about which one of them is the greatest (9:46), Jesus replies that the least among them, ὁ μικρότερος (9:48), is greater even than John the Baptist (7:28).[64] Second, when Jesus welcomes children and adopts them as models for those who best receive the kingdom (9:47–48; 18:15–17), he overrides the apostles' dismissal of their "littleness" and seeming lack of consequence (18:15). Third, in one of the three appearances of ἡλικία in the Gospel, Jesus warns that it is useless for followers to worry about their ἡλικία because there are some matters, whether span of years or physical stature, over which anxiety is useless and trust must be placed in the gracious care of God (12:22–31).[65] The narrator, however, seems to place more importance on ἡλικία than Jesus does. He is careful to note how the boy Jesus increased in wisdom and in years/height/stature, καὶ Ἰησοῦς προέκοπτεν ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ καὶ ἡλικίᾳ (2:52), and how John the Baptist physically grew, αὐξάνω, and was strengthened in spirit (1:80). Unlike these Gospel heroes, Zacchaeus did not grow in stature, nor did he increase in human favour (2:52).[66]

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[62] Parsons, "Short in Stature," 54. Parsons speculates that Luke may be hinting that Zacchaeus, rather than merely being well below average height, is a "pathological dwarf." Parsons, *Body and Character*, 102–4.

[63] μικρός is a multivalent word that could be understood by its audience on many levels. While it can mean little or short in terms of quantity, size, degree, time, or measurement, it also pertains to being young, unimportant, insignificant, and lacking in influence or power. "μικρός," L&N 1, §59.15, §79.125, §78.9, §67.106, §81.13, §67.116, §87.58; BDAG, 651.

[64] Loewe, "Towards an Interpretation," 325.

[65] Green, *Luke*, 492–93.

[66] Parsons, *Luke*, 279.

## 4.6 The Introduction to Zacchaeus is Completed

With the unusually long introduction to Zacchaeus completed, all of which took place in the diegetic mode of "telling," the audience awaits any real action to begin. They go forward with a four-tiered characterization of Zacchaeus: he is a rich, short, chief tax collector, and he has purposefully come to see Jesus. Of these four markers, Zacchaeus's shortness is the only one amenable to the visual imagination, allowing each reader to fashion her or his own image of Zacchaeus. Careful control and timing of information on the implied author's part has left the reader in a quandary, torn between laughing at Zacchaeus, dubious about his wealth and profession, and empathizing with his purpose, a complex response that maintains high audience involvement in the unfolding narrative.

## 4.7 Zacchaeus's Initiative (19:4)

The pace slows as the narrative moves from summary to scene material. Spatially, the audience is drawn close to Zacchaeus as they begin to follow him through Jericho. On the psychological plane, they get another glimpse into Zacchaeus's interiority, a sense of being part of his planning, and therefore of identification with him. The implied author shows the readers how Zacchaeus, deterred neither by the blocking presence of the crowd nor his physical shortcomings, adopts another strategy: he runs off to climb a tree. He is clearly thinking quickly. In this fast moving situation, with a mobile Jesus, if Zacchaeus does not act immediatly, the opportunity to see him will be gone. By refusing to give up, Zacchaeus resembles the blind beggar (18:36–39) and other characters who are determined to get close to Jesus. But, unlike the beggar's recent shouting that was heard by everyone, it is only the reader who observes Zacchaeus running off to get ahead of the crowd.

### 4.7.1 Zacchaeus Goes Running

It is very unusual for anyone to run or run ahead, τρέχω or προτρέχω, in Luke's Gospel. Only the father in the parable of the two lost sons has heretofore done so, running in his eagerness to greet his returning son (15:20). Like much else about Zacchaeus, his running leaves the audience ambivalent. On the one hand, it contradicts the masculine ideal of self-control so prized by Greco-Roman elites. In their view, it was considered undignified for a grown man to

run or hurry or fluster in the ordinary course of his affairs.[67] Thus, Aristotle holds that, for a high-minded man, ὁ μεγαλοψύχος, his gait is slow, κίνησις βραδεῖα, and he does not hurry, οὐ σπευστικὸς, because there are few things about which he is deeply concerned.[68] However, in contrast to this, the upper-classes also valued physical fitness very highly. Their sports and games provided opportunities for ἀρετή, or the pursuit of excellence aimed at the development of the whole person, body and mind.[69] (Zacchaeus, of course, with his short stature, does not represent an ideal of manhood. Instead, mention of his running suggests a "cruel mockery," a callous joke "deriding the deformed."[70])

On the other hand, for the Septuagint-aware implied reader, the LXX contains an important precedent for masculine haste. In Genesis 18, when Abraham is visited by the Lord in the guise of three heavenly messengers, he first runs to meet them, προσέδραμεν (Gen 18:2), then runs to his herd, ἔδραμεν (Gen 18:7), to select a calf in order to feast (another echo of the lost sons parable [15:23, 27]). And, later in the Gospel, Peter runs to the empty tomb, ἔδραμεν (24:12), with an urgency "to see" that matches that of Zacchaeus. Therefore, in the exigency of a spiritual quest, running is acceptable, and possibly even necessary.

### 4.7.2 Zacchaeus Climbs a Tree

Like Zacchaeus's lack of height, the information that he climbs a tree provides the implied audience with another vivid, if somewhat absurd, image (no reader would visualize Abraham climbing the oaks of Mamre). It compounds the mockery of his shortness with a sense of the farcical, almost tipping him into the realm of caricature. However, once again, the picture emerging of the tax collector is more complex than it first appears. On the one hand, the action endows Zacchaeus with a comical lack of dignity entirely at odds with his profession as "chief" tax collector—a person with considerable leverage over those in his jurisdiction who would be

[67] Zacchaeus's rushing and excitement would likely be interpreted as behaviour more suited to a female than to a male. To behave in an effeminate manner was the antithesis of how a "manly" man should comport himself. See Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 40–45.

[68] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 4.4.34. "His gait is measured, his voice deep, and his speech unhurried. For since he takes few things seriously, he is not excitable, and since he regards nothing as great, he is not highly strung; and those are the qualities that make for shrillness of voice and hastiness of movement." See Aristotle, *Ethics*, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (London: The Folio Society, 2003), 81.

[69] Kitto, *Greeks*, 173; Hall, *Ancient Greeks*, 21.

[70] Parsons, *Luke*, 279.

expected to exude an air of gravitas.[71] On the other hand, the childlike spontaneity of Zacchaeus's gesture recalls the recent scene where Jesus blessed the children and signalled that only those who received the kingdom of God as a little child could enter it (18:16–17). The seeming naïvety and guilelessness of Zacchaeus's action portray him as someone who recognizes the "kingdom" when it arrives in Jericho in the person of Jesus (17:21).

In addition, in climbing the tree, Zacchaeus "does something extravagant," joining other characters who perform dramatic gestures in the presence of Jesus.[72] Thus, the paralyzed man gets himself lowered through the roof (5:19); the men with leprosy prostrate themselves (5:12; 17:16); the anointing woman interrupts Simon's dinner (7:36–50); Jairus falls to his feet (8:41); the woman with the flow of blood reaches for his garment (8:44); and the man with the demon-possessed son (9:38), the ten men with leprosy (17:13), and the blind beggar (18:38, 39) all shout dramatically to get Jesus' attention. Like these characters, Zacchaeus's determination and resourcefulness are noteworthy.[73] However, while they all either want something from Jesus or seek to thank him for a favour received, Zacchaeus's stated purpose for his theatrical action is merely to see "who Jesus is."

### 4.7.3 A Sycamore Fig-Tree

The implied author's choice of a sycamore fig-tree, συκομορέα, appears designed to intensify the derision and sense of farce. This tree, with its short, wide trunk, and thick, low branches evokes multiple images for the audience, none of them flattering to Zacchaeus ("a small man in a small tree").[74] First, the tree produces a red or purple fruit when ripe, therefore likely to

[71] In a discussion of how "laughter flourished in Greco-Roman culture," Whitenton, following Stephen Halliwell, discusses the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), and specifically Incongruity Theory. The GTVH holds that, whether for contemporary or ancient audiences, humour arises "when two opposing scripts overlap one another to some degree … [and how] regardless of the opposition, it is the incongruity that creates humour." See Whitenton, *Configuring Nicodemus*, 121, 124; Stephen Halliwell, *Greek Laughter: A Study of Cultural Psychology from Homer to Early Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5–6. In the current pericope, the incongruity arises between Zacchaeus's official status as chief tax collector and his undignified position in the tree. Iverson notes how the humour inherent in any ancient text, including a gospel, would have been enhanced by a public performance (as opposed to a silent reading where people are less likely to laugh) because of the "dynamic, aesthetic exchange that takes place between audience and performer," where a "participatory response" is invited from the audience. See Kelly R. Iverson, "Incongruity, Humor, and Mark: Performance and the Use of Laughter in the Second Gospel (Mark 8.14–21)," *NTS* 59 (2013): 2–19, here 11, 15.

[72] Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 150.

[73] Ellis, *Luke*, 220. In their resolution and determination, they personify values that are important in the mindset of the Lukan implied author.

[74] A "small man in a small tree" is from Professor Séamus O'Connell.

stain Zacchaeus's clothes and skin.[75] Of itself, this makes him look undignified and dishevelled, unfitting to a man of his official standing and status. Second, because purple and red are the colours of royalty and nobility, such staining lends him an air of foolish arrogance, apt for a "chief" tax collector. Third, the audience remembers the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where the rich man, attired in purple (16:19), eventually receives his retribution. Fourth, the συκομορέα presents various possibilities for a play on words. The first half of the compound, συκο, is a reminder of συκοφαντέω, the verb used by John the Baptist to warn soldiers against blackmail, harassment, extortion, or intimidation, μηδὴ συκοφαντήσητε (3:14), misconduct which Zacchaeus would be suspected of committing in the course of his profession. It also foreshadows Zacchaeus's own use of συκοφαντέω at 19:8. Finally, the μόρον or mulberry in the second half of the compound calls to mind its near homonym, μωρός, meaning a fool or foolish, which sums up one aspect of reader opinion of Zacchaeus, now absurdly stationed in the tree.[76]

### 4.7.4 Seeing Without Being Seen?

In another glimpse into Zacchaeus's interiority, v. 4 restates his purpose in being out in Jericho this day, but also modifies it. Climbing the tree "that he might see him," ἵνα ἴδῃ αὐτόν, is less ambitious than to see "who Jesus is," τίς ἐστιν. It is as if, having been blocked by the crowds, Zacchaeus has withdrawn, his earlier optimism dissipated. While the tree functions as a new barrier, it also doubles as a protective instrument of his own choosing, establishing distance but retaining visibility.[77] Now Zacchaeus wants an "anonymous contact," shorn of any possibility of communication, to "see without being seen," either by the crowds or by Jesus.[78] This reveals Zacchaeus's sensitivity to the crowd's hostility to him, and his attempt to shield himself from it. From his vantage point, Zacchaeus appears determined to draw no attention upon himself, unlike the recent beggar who could not be silenced (18:38, 39).

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[75] Sick, "Rich Host," 234. Thus συκομορέα, συκοφαντέω, μόρον, and μωρός may be examples of the ancient rhetorical device of *paronomasia,* or a play on words that modern English usage calls a pun. Defined in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* at 4.21.29 and in *Institutio Oratoria* at 9.3.66–67, Reich describes paronomasia as "the figure in which by modification of sound or a change of letters, there is a close resemblance between verb or noun, so that similar words mean dissimilar things." See Reich, *Figuring Jesus*, 16.

[76] Sick, "Rich Host," 235.

[77] Wolter, *Luke II*, 346.

[78] Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 905; Bovon, *Luke 2*, 597.

Zacchaeus's concealment confirms that he seeks nothing from Jesus. He neither desires a cure from the only physical debility from which he is reported to suffer, his lack of stature, nor does he plan to invite Jesus to a meal. At this point, with Zacchaeus marooned in the tree, the implied reader may begin to intuit that he suffers from a different kind of infirmity: estrangement from a community that shares, to an extent, his desire to see Jesus, but that is unwilling to allow the tax collector to join them in realizing it. The implied reader understands the effect that this exclusion would have on Zacchaeus. For people of the ancient world, for whom notions of privacy and individualism were almost unknown, and whose lives were very public, "to be isolated and alone was for them the worst of fates, [because] full humanity was always a matter of 'being with' others, whether friends, family, fellow citizens, or personal slaves."[79]

The reader presumes that it is Zacchaeus's intention to stay in the tree until Jesus and the crowds have gone, then return to his ordinary activities.[80] This should not take long. The διέρχομαι of v. 4 repeats that of v. 1, reinforcing the impression that Jesus is moving swiftly, intent on being elsewhere. But Zacchaeus has not reckoned that, by running ahead and climbing the tree, Jesus is now in a better position to see him. With this, the focus of the pericope shifts, and the initiative passes from Zacchaeus to Jesus.

### 4.8 Jesus Assumes the Role of Protagonist (19:5)

The impression of Jesus taking control is signalled in three ways. First, the nominative ὁ Ἰησους marks him as the subject of the sentence, the first time this has happened in the pericope. Second, the precision of the phrase, "as he came to the place," καὶ ὡς ἦλθεν ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον, indicates that Jesus knows exactly what he is doing.[81] He has a destination in mind: the place where Zacchaeus is. Third, in his direct speech, Jesus combines a robust imperative addressed to Zacchaeus, "Come down," κατάβηθι, with a forceful "I must," δεῖ, directed to himself, with its overtones of divine necessity.[82]

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[79] Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 33.

[80] Marshall, *Luke*, 696.

[81] Bovon, *Luke 2*, 597. Jesus arrives on the Mount Of Olives with the same sense of purpose, ἐπὶ τοῦ τόπου (22:40), and at the execution ground of The Skull, ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον (23:33).

[82] "δεῖ," that which must necessarily take place, often with the implication of inevitability, sometimes with the connotation that the event is part of the plan and purpose of God: L&N 1, §71.21, §71.34; BDAG, 213–14.

### 4.8.1 Jesus Looks Up

With one spontaneous act evoking another, Jesus does the unexpected by (stopping and) looking up.[83] Zacchaeus, who came to see, is now seen, and the one who sought is found.[84] The audience may appreciate both the surprise of Zacchaeus who probably assumed that he was hidden from view, and of the crowd that believed it had successfully banished the tax collector from the occasion.

Contrary to his usual pattern, the narrator keeps the audience at a distance from what Jesus sees when he looks up. Generally, when Lukan characters see something and then speak or act, the narrator employs an aorist participle of ὁράω (I see), often followed by an aorist indicative.[85] With this format, the reader can see exactly what Jesus sees, for example, "having seen their faith, he said … ," καὶ ἰδὼν τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν εἶπεν (5:20); or, "having seen her [the widow of Nain], the Lord had compassion," καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὴν ὁ κύριος ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ᾽αὐτῇ (7:13); or, "having seen the city, he cried over it, " ἰδὼν τὴν πόλιν ἔκλαυσεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτήν (19:41).[86] But with Zacchaeus, the narrator opts for ἀναβλέπω so that, although the audience can visualize Jesus looking up into the tree, they have no idea what he sees (or perceives).[87] That is between Jesus and Zacchaeus, another instance of the opacity that surrounds the tax collector.[88]

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[83] Hamm, "Luke," 1085; Bock, *Luke 2*, 1517.

[84] Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 511.

[85] Yamasaki, "Point of View," 102.

[86] Other examples include 2:17, 48; 5:8, 12, 20; 7:39; 8:28, 34, 47; 9:54; 10:31, 32, 33; 11:38; 13:12; 17:14, 15; 18:43; 22:49, 56; 23:8. See Yamasaki, "Point of View," 102.

[87] "ἀναβλέπω," to direct one's vision upward, to look up to heaven; to gain sight, whether for the first time or to regain sight: L&N 1, §24.10, §24.42; BDAG, 59. The implied author of Genesis 18 also chose ἀναβλέπω to depict how Abraham looked up and saw his heavenly visitors (Gen 18:2).

[88] The only other examples of Jesus "looking up" occur at 9:16, where Jesus looked up to heaven, prior to blessing the five loaves and two fish, and at 21:1, where both ἀναβλέπω and ὁράω are employed, "he looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury. Ἀναβλέπω features in the sense of gaining one's physical sight in the summary material of 7:22 and throughout the τυφλός episode (18:41, 42, 43).

### 4.8.2 "Zacchaeus, Come Down"

There is nothing in the narrative to explain how Jesus knows Zacchaeus's name.[89] The implied reader's surprise that he does so mirrors how the ὄχλος must feel and thus aligns their points of view before the encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus begins. Jesus' command, "Come down," κατάβηθι, follows a pattern of imperatives issued by him in the course of the narrative, for example: "Put out into the deep water" (5:4); "Come, stand here" (6:8); "Young man … rise" (7:14); "Follow me" (5:27; 9:59); "Bring your son here" (9:41). The sharpness of these directives supports the witnesses who remark how Jesus speaks, teaches, and heals "with authority and power," ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ καὶ δυνάμει (4:36). From the recent pericope of the blind beggar, the reader appreciates how impressive a command of Jesus would *sound*. There the implied author introduced a verb new to the Gospel, κελεύω, to describe how Jesus decreed the τυφλός be brought to him (18:40). Κελεύω signifies purpose and confidence, and is ordinarily used to issue commands of an official nature.[90] It speaks of Jesus' imposing personality, and the sense of self-assurance that he projects. Zacchaeus, upon hearing the κατάβηθι imperative, feels impelled to obey.

### 4.8.3 Eschatological Urgency: "Hurry … I Must … Today"

Jesus combines the power of the command with the manner in which it is to be accomplished: Zacchaeus is to hurry. Hurrying, like running, is very rare in the Gospel. It occurs on just two other occasions, each in the infancy narrative, with overtones of eschatological urgency. There, spurred by good news brought by heavenly messengers (1:36; 2:10), Mary went with haste, μετὰ σπουδῆς, to visit Elizabeth (1:39), and the shepherds hurried to find the infant Jesus, καὶ ἦλθαν σπεύσαντες (2:16). While Zacchaeus's hurrying mirrors their exigency, telling the tax collector to "hurry" seems superfluous, since he merely has to come down from the tree. It

[89] Zacchaeus is one of just four individuals whom Jesus calls by name in the narrative, the others being Simon the Pharisee (7:40), Martha (10:41) and Simon Peter (22:31, 34), all of whom are already known to him on various levels of intimacy. In these three cases, Jesus proceeds to chide them, but this seems unlikely with Zacchaeus as they are strangers to one another.

[90] "κελεύω," L&N 1, §33.323; BDAG, 538. Although this is the only appearance of κελεύω in the Gospel, it features many times in Acts, where it is invariably attributed to characters in positions of power, both Jewish and Roman (4:15; 5:34; 8:38; 12:19; 16:22; 21:33, 34; 22:24, 30; 23:3, 10; 23:35; 25:6, 17, 21, 23; 27:43). In a world where the emperor, in the style of Alexander the Great, personified "manliness and greatness in terms of power over others, military power and courage, imperial grandeur, world rule as self-interest, and political supremacy," it was important for Gospel writers to present Jesus as a man of power and authority who "outpowers" and out-rules the representatives of Greece and Rome. See Warren Carter, *Seven Events that Shaped the New Testament World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 18–19.

does, however, underline the sense of urgency that suffuses the entire scene in Jericho. This is being generated in a variety of ways.

First, an impetus has been building with the verbs describing Jesus' constant movement since his approach to Jericho: ἐγγίζω, (18:35), παρέρχομαι (18:37), εἰσέρχομαι, διέρχομαι (19:1, 4), ἔρχομαι (19:5). Zacchaeus is drawn into this whirl by his running, προτρέχω (19:4) and climbing, ἀναβαίνω (19:4) into the tree, from where Jesus immediately orders him back down again, καταβαίνω. These verbs create such a sense of bustle on both the horizontal and vertical planes that the audience is induced to join in: their eyes follow Jesus on his brisk progress through the town, and their heads "bobble up and down" watching Zacchaeus's antics at the tree.[91] Second, given the emphasis on Jesus' forward impetus, it is remarkable that he suddenly halts his journey, although he is now so close to achieving his destiny in Jerusalem (18:31–33). (There was no delay after the healing of the blind man—Jesus simply swept onwards, leaving the entourage to follow at 18:43.) This abrupt stop creates an expectation that something significant is about to unfold.

Third, Jesus' use of σήμερον and δεῖ suggests that there is a divine necessity to his encounter with Zacchaeus. "Today," σήμερον, is a familiar word in the narrator's repertoire.[92] While "today" can sometimes be taken literally, as "this very day," it can also have the dual meaning of a chronological day that is also a day of eschatological significance.[93] The impersonal verb δεῖ appears sixteen times in Luke's Gospel on the lips of Jesus.[94] When Jesus uses δεῖ in relation to himself, it signifies a requirement conferred on him by God, with an implication that part of the divine plan is being worked out.[95] As this is the only time that

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[91] Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 115.

[92] Σήμερον features at 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 12:28; 13:32, 33; 19:5, 9; 22:34, 61; 23:43. In each case except 2:11 and 5:26, it occurs on the lips of Jesus. Σήμερον also appears in Acts 4:9; 13:33; 19:40; 20:26; 22:3; 24:21; 26:2, 29; 27:33. These usages compare to eight in Matthew and one in Mark.

[93] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1009. Both levels are evident from 2:11, "To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord," ὅτι ἐτέχθη ὑμῖν σήμερον σωτὴρ ὅς ἐστιν Χριστὸς κύριος ἐν πόλει Δαυίδ; from 4:21, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing," Σήμερον πεπλήρωται ἡ γραγὴ αὕτη ἐν τοῖς ὠσὶν ὑμῶν; and from 23:43, "Today you will be with me in Paradise, σήμερον μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ.

[94] Δεῖ features at 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 11:42; 12:12; 13:16, 33; 15:32 (Jesus is telling a parable); 17:25; 18:1 (indirect speech); 19:5; 21:9; 22:37; 24:7, 26, 44.

[95] Marshall, *Luke*, 697. The entire Gospel bears evidence of the "the thread of necessity that weaves Jesus' career." See Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 191. Since his boyhood, the Lukan Jesus recognized that he

σήμερον and δεῖ appear together in the same sentence spoken by the Lukan Jesus, their pairing intensifies the already weighty separate significance of each.

The combination of the various verbs of motion, Jesus' suddenly stopping, the urgency of the σπεύδω command, and the solemnity of the σήμερον and δεῖ create an anticipation that something momentous "must" follow. Instead, although there is a recognition of a boundary-breaking action on Jesus' part, his seemingly mundane request for accommodation generates a certain sense of anti-climax in the audience.

### 4.8.4 "I Must Stay at Your House"

Clearly, the sight of Zacchaeus causes Jesus to reconsider rushing on to reach Jerusalem this day. Instead, he resolves to overnight in Jericho, having decided that Zacchaeus is both willing to play host to him and has the economic means to do so.[96] In the context of the onward journey, it is implied that μένω involves no more than a meal and overnight accommodation.[97] While this incident is the only occasion where Luke's narrative records Jesus inviting himself to someone's house, within the conventions of ancient hospitality, it was appropriate for travellers to request hospitality from potential hosts.[98] From the point of view of the onlookers in Jericho, it would seem both wayward and provoking that, in a scene filled with townspeople, at least some of whom they might consider to be acceptable hosts, Jesus approached a mistrusted, ostracized man, bizarrely stationed in a tree (another instance of the σκάνδαλον that he predicted about himself at 7:23).[99] The implied reader, however, knows that the narrative presents Jesus as comfortable in diverse hospitality situations and that the unpopularity of Zacchaeus would present no particular problem for him.[100]

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"must" play his part in God's plan (2:49) and that, while he "must" proclaim the good news of the kingdom (4:43), he "must" undergo his passion, death, and resurrection (9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 24:7, 26), all guided by the "must" of the fulfilment of Scripture (22:37; 24:44). See Charles H. Cosgrove, "The Divine Δεῖ in Luke-Acts," *NovT* 26 (1984): 168–90, here 174–75; Loewe, "An Interpretation," 325–26; Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 57.

[96] Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 511.

[97] See §3.2.2, footnote #23 for a discussion on μένω.

[98] Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 145.

[99] See §3.3.7 and §3.7.3 for more on σκάνδαλον.

[100] Dennis E. Smith, "Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke," *JBL* 106/4 (1987): 613–38, here 638.

### 4.9 Zacchaeus's Response (19:6)

Zacchaeus is depicted as responding literally, unhesitatingly, and immediately to Jesus.[101] The narrator highlights this by repeating the language of the command, Ζακχαῖε, σπεύσας κατάβηθι, in the indicative, σπεύσας κατέβη.[102] Because σπεύσας modifies his manner of descent, the reader understands that Zacchaeus comes down with an attitude of haste and excitement, seemingly overwhelmed by the notice that Jesus has taken of him.[103]

After the detailed scene material of v. 5, the narrative now reverts to spare, summary description. The lack of detail results in a large gap, an ellipsis, which the reader bridges by visualizing that Jesus and Zacchaeus make their way to the tax collector's house. There, Zacchaeus's welcome, ὑποδέχομαι, can be read as his correct response to Jesus' self-invitation to stay, δεῖ με μεῖναι.[104] The ὑποδέχομαι, in addition to suggesting a meal, implies all the extras of ancient Mediterranean hospitality that Jesus listed in the pericope of the anointing woman: a kiss, water, and oil (7:44–46).[105] It also hints that Zacchaeus welcomes Jesus in the manner appropriate to the proper reception of the missionaries, listed by Jesus at 9:2–5 and 10:1–9.[106]

The narrator gives another insight into Zacchaeus's interiority, telling the reader that he welcomed Jesus "with joy," χαίρων.[107] Here the participle is placed at the end of the sentence for emphasis, in a manner similar to the joy of finding the lost sheep at 15:5, a pericope which

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[101] This resembles the instantaneous response of Levi who got up from his tax booth, left everything, followed, and immediately gave a great banquet for Jesus. Schweizer suggests that "what is concentrated in a single clause in the case of Levi (5:27) is here developed in detail." See Schweizer, *Luke*, 291–92. Méndez-Moratalla considers that Zacchaeus, in his haste, "is presented as acknowledging the divine plan of salvation in Jesus," signified by the δεῖ. See Méndez-Moratalla, *Paradigm of Conversion*, 165.

[102] Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 905; Marshall, *Luke*, 697.

[103] Yamasaki, "Point of View," 102–3.

[104] See Green, *Luke*, 670; Bovon, *Luke 2*, 598.

[105] A meal, although not specified, is implied. See Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness*, 153.

[106] Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 907.

[107] Dinkler urges caution on "vocabularies of emotion" (here joy) appearing in ancient texts, because "in addition to differences between source languages and the receptor languages into which they are translated, even ancient thinkers using the same language did not all share a common taxonomy of emotions." See Michal Beth Dinkler, "Reflexivity and Emotion in Narratological Perspective: Reading Joy in the Lukan Narrative," in *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions: Exploring Emotions in Biblical Literature*, ed. F. Scott Spencer, RBS 90 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 265–86, here 267.

will become increasingly relevant as the Zacchaeus episode proceeds.[108] The language of joy, χαρά, χαίρω, permeates the narrative. The horizons of joy in Luke's Gospel include messianic joy (1:14; 1:28; 2:10; 6:23); the joy of once being lost and now found (15:5, 7, 10, 32); the joy of the successful returning missionaries (10:17); and the joy of the crowds who witness the glorious deeds of Jesus (13:17; 19:37).[109] But Gospel joy sometimes comes with a caution: in the parable of the sower, Jesus warns how the seed that fell on the rock was initially received with joy but, in time of testing, it fell away (8:13).[110] Given their lingering reservations about Zacchaeus, the audience might be cautious about his evident enthusiasm during this meeting with Jesus. Zacchaeus has yet to prove himself. The reader recalls the other rich man who, when presented with the conditions of discipleship, could not participate and became sad, περίλυπος ἐγενήθη (18:23).[111]

### 4.9.1 Zacchaeus, Martha, and Abraham

The implied author's choice of ὑποδέχομαι raises a *synkrisis* with Martha, the only other character in the narrative reported to receive Jesus with this verb (10:38). The comparison is greatly to Zacchaeus's advantage. In recalling how Jesus chided Martha, the audience retrospectively realizes that she, unlike Zacchaeus, did not welcome Jesus "with joy" (nor did Jesus pronounce a δεῖ necessity to account for his visit to her home). Instead, while ὑποδέχομαι suggests that Martha fulfilled all the practical observances of hospitality, the narrator portrays her demeanour as deficient. Her distraction with her duties, περισπάω (10:40), led to an irritability with Jesus and her sister, an attitude that Jesus immediately reproved (10:41–42). (The implied readers, knowing the social conventions, understand that Martha's and Zacchaeus's divergent receptions of Jesus can be explained, at least in part, by differences of gender and financial status. Thus, while Martha's preoccupation hints that she is personally involved in female duties of hospitality, rich Zacchaeus may have servants do the work for him.) In contrast to Martha's tetchiness, the combination of Zacchaeus's literal obedience,

[108] Evans, *Luke*, 662.

[109] Later in the narrative, the reader encounters the joy of Jesus' post-resurrection appearance (24:41), and the Gospel ends with the joy of the disciples after his ascension (24:52).

[110] The audience later reads how the chief priests and temple police rejoiced when Judas agreed to betray Jesus to them (22:5), and how Herod rejoiced when he finally met Jesus at the time of his arrest (23:8).

[111] Bovon, *Luke 2*, 598.

immediate response, welcome, and joy, establish him as an ideal host who responds wholeheartedly "to the new situation created by Jesus."[112]

Zacchaeus's characterization as a model host recalls Abraham's famed "hospitality encounter" with the heavenly messengers of Gen 18:1–14.[113] The implied readers would make the connection with Abraham's theoxeny for two reasons. First, references to the patriarch already permeate the narrative (1:55, 73; 3:8, 34; 13:16, 28; 16:22–30) so that he almost functions as an offstage character.[114] Second, the similarity of setting—the running, a meeting under a tree followed by a meal (explicit in Genesis, implied in the Gospel)—and the correlation of language between the two pericopae—ἀναβλέπω, ὁράω, κύριος, προτρέχω, σπεύδω—is striking, and indicates that the implied author expects the Septuagint-aware audience to recognize the association between them.[115] Although Zacchaeus's "joy" is not elaborated upon in the Gospel and ὑποδέχομαι is never mentioned in the Abraham pericope, the patriarch's delight in receiving his visitors is expressed in a detailed vocabulary of running, bowing, deferential greeting, the proffering of water and rest, and abundant and generous feasting, all gestures that the reader might reasonably envisage in the Zacchaeus incident.[116] In contrast to Jesus' dismissal of Martha's harried efforts, Abraham's visitors reward his hospitality with an assurance concerning his long-promised son (Gen 18:10). The readers must wait and see whether Zacchaeus's ὑποδέχομαι will be similarly reciprocated. This resonance with the patriarch, a man whose hospitality is one of the cornerstones of his reputation, greatly favours Zacchaeus, and fosters audience empathy with him.

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[112] Tannehill, "Zacchaeus as Rhetoric," 203.

[113] Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 145.

[114] The story of Abraham is important for the Lukan writer, and God's covenant with Abraham (Gen 22:17) is even more fundamental than the one with Moses. See Johnson, *Luke*, 46. The evangelist composes the opening chapters of the Gospel "as though they were the continuation of the story" rooted in the Abrahamic covenant, with the same vocabulary of mercy, remembrance, favour, promise, and oath. He is "affirming that the God who has mercifully initiated relationship and acted in surprising and mighty ways is [now, in Jesus] acting in the same way, guided by the same purpose." See Green, *Luke*, 57–58.

[115] See Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited," 169.

[116] Like Zacchaeus, Abraham is rich and has others do the work for him. Thus, while the patriarch bustles to greet his visitors (Gen 18:2), Sarah bakes the cakes (Gen 18:6), and his slave prepares the calf (Gen 18:7). When all is ready, Abraham himself serves the guests (Gen 18:8), while Sarah remains in the tent (Gen 18:9) and the slave is unmentioned.

### 4.10 All Grumble (19:7)

In contrast to the tax collector's rejoicing, "all" the onlookers are reported to be complaining, διαγογγύζω.[117] The πάντες constitute the third character of the Jesus-Zacchaeus-"all" triad. They will now carry the scene forward as the three actants begin to interact.[118] The imperfect διεγόγγυζον gives a sense of the ongoing and continuous nature of the grumbling and hints that it may have started as soon as they spotted Zacchaeus out and about in Jericho this day, intent on his mission. The complaining represents the second blocking incident of the pericope: having physically prevented Zacchaeus from seeing Jesus, they now verbally assault him, indicating a double rejection by his fellow-townsfolk.[119] "All" the onlookers are outraged at the recognition (the σκάνδαλον) implied by Jesus' initiative because, from their perspective, toll collectors are shunned because they violate the welfare of the community.[120] In a society that rigidly classifies persons (and places and things), Jesus' choice of an "outsider" like Zacchaeus threatens chaos in a symbolic world that craves order and continuity.[121] And, in a culture that understands the sharing of food as a code for social bonding, Jesus' staying and dining with Zacchaeus represents an upheaval that jeopardizes the stability and predictability of their world. [122]

#### 4.10.1 Who Are the Πάντες?

It is unclear who the narrator intends by the πάντες. Generally, in his widespread use of πᾶς, πᾶςα, πᾶν, he is precise on who is included in this character group: "all in the synagogue" (4:28); "all in the crowd" (6:19); "all his opponents" (13:17); "all the tax collectors and sinners"

[117] "γογγύζω," "διαγογγύζω," to express discontent, to complain, to grumble, to express oneself in terms of disapprobation: L&N 1, §33.382; BDAG, 204, 227. In L&N 1, §33.383, διαγογγύζω has the additional meaning of "to express discontent in an emphatic way."

[118] The ὄχλος of v. 3 that blocked Zacchaeus's view is already part of πάντες, but there was no triangular interaction at that point in the pericope.

[119] Tannehill, *Luke*, 276.

[120] Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 907; Green *Luke,* 247; Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 410. Galloway describes Zacchaeus from the point of view of the "all" as chief tax collector, therefore "chief sinner, chief miscreant." See Galloway, "The Centrality of Zacchaeus," 65.

[121] Neyrey, "Ceremonies in Luke-Acts," 363.

[122] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 634; Green, *Luke*, 246.

(15:1); "all the people" (18:43).[123] Frequently, the "all" is understood as hyperbolic, selected for emphasis and embellishment ("all" can rarely mean everyone without exception).[124] Thus, one aspect of its current use indicates how pervasive is the hostility felt for Zacchaeus and how "all" unite to disparage and exclude him.[125]

But the reader, while acknowledging the probable exaggeration, also considers who specifically might comprise the πάντες. In addition to the obstructive ὄχλος (v. 3), the "all" suggests that everyone else present is also complaining. This implies the apostles and disciples, and anyone else on the scene who witnesses what occurs.[126] The πάντες may even involve the once-blind beggar and the λαός who followed Jesus into Jericho after the healing, then glorifying and praising God (18:43), and now grumbling.[127] So extensive are the possibilities of the "all" that the reader questions what, if anything, have they learned about Jesus and his ministry.[128] Even the implied audience, who understand what Jesus has come to do in his mission to "the poor," ὁ πτωχός (4:18–19), may identify somewhat with the disparagement of the πάντες.[129] This is because they are still perplexed by the mixed characterization of Zacchaeus, and are influenced by the strong anti-tax collector sentiment of the world behind the text (and behind the implied audience).

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[123] "All" appear at 3:16; 4:15, 20, 28, 40; 5:9, 26; 6:19; 7:16; 8:37, 40; 9:17, 43; 13:17; 15:1; 19:48; 20:45; 21:38.

[124] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1224; Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 905. For example, "he was praised by everyone" (4:15); "all the people of the surrounding country" (8:37); "all were astounded at the greatness of God (9:43); "all the people were spellbound" (19:48).

[125] Tannehill, *Luke*, 276.

[126] Johnson, *Luke*, 285. The audience knows how jealously both disciples and crowds guard access to Jesus. The disciples, οἱ μαθηταὶ, recently tried to prevent people bringing their infants to Jesus to be touched (18:15); and, as Jesus entered Jericho, those at the front of the crowd, οἱ προάγοντες, tried to silence the blind man as he called out to Jesus (18:39). In each case, the infants and the τυφλός are disparaged as unimportant and lacking in status.

[127] The narrator frequently portrays the crowds as fickle. The congregation in the Nazareth synagogue who were amazed at the gracious words of Jesus (4:22) almost immediately are filled with rage and seek to kill him (4:28–29). Later, the crowds who flock to Jesus in Jerusalem (19:37, 48; 21:38) soon are baying for his death (23:18, 21, 23), only to change their minds again when they witness the manner of Jesus' death (23:48).

[128] Green says that "In spite of Jesus' repeated attempts throughout the journey (9:51–19:27) to address disciples and Pharisees, and indeed all who would listen, on issues of status and membership among God's people, his message seems thus to have fallen universally on deaf ears." See Green, *Luke*, 671.

[129] In addition to the economically disadvantaged, πτωχός can also refer to those who, because they are oppressed or disillusioned, are in special need of God's help, and may be expected to receive it shortly. "πτωχός," L&N 1, §57.53, §65.16; BDAG, 896.

### 4.10.2 All grumble, διαγογγύζω

However, the implied author's choice of διαγογγύζω urges caution about any reader identification with the πάντες, because the memorably onomatopoetic verb has negative associations with earlier parts of the narrative and with the Septuagint.[130] On two previous occasions in the Gospel, γογγύζω and its compound διαγογγύζω describe the murmurings of the Pharisees and scribes in the context of Jesus' association with tax collectors and sinners and his table-fellowship with them (5:30; 15:2).[131] (The verb is so specific and the earlier settings so closely parallel the current situation that the reader is inclined to check the text to establish whether the Pharisees and scribes are explicitly mentioned as being present—they are not.[132]) The derogatory γογγύζω appears to be a deliberate borrowing from the Septuagint, where it describes the grumblings of the people against Moses and Aaron in their post-Egyptian testing in the wilderness (Exod 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num 11:1; 14:2, 36). Because its use in Torah is so pejorative (the implied reader would not countenance criticism of Moses), it was probably carefully selected by the implied author first to impugn the Pharisees and scribes in their carping against Jesus and, by analogy, to censure the πάντες in their grumbling in Jericho. The rhetorical impact of διαγογγύζω suggests that "they" have made a wrong judgment on this occasion and, whatever they are grumbling about, it is not warranted.[133]

### 4.10.3 The Complaint: Is it Valid? Is Zacchaeus a Sinner?

The "grumble" is directed at Jesus through Zacchaeus. (It indicates the growing resistance to him prior to his arrival in Jerusalem and thus is a foreshadowing of the events of the passion.) The "grumble" is twofold in nature: Zacchaeus is a sinner, ἁμαρτωλός ἀνήρ, and Jesus is castigated for associating with such a person (a charge akin to 5:30, 7:39, and 15:2).[134] The

[130] Sick considers that the "gog-gog" sound of the onomatopoetic γογγύζω may represent a "running joke" in the Gospel aimed at Jesus' detractors. See Sick, "Rich Host," 239.

[131] Tannehill suggests that γογγύζω and διαγογγύζω link the three episodes as "type scenes," where the implied audience recognizes the motifs common to all. See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 105.

[132] Hamm submits that the presence of the Pharisees and scribes "is strongly implied and naturally assumed within the flow of Luke's narrative." He believes that "it is most natural for the implied reader to assume that the ones who murmur once again about Jesus' sharing hospitality are those same Pharisees." See Dennis Hamm, "Zacchaeus Revisited Once More: A Story of Vindication or Conversion?" *Bib* 72 (1991): 249–52, here 250. But, surely it is the Pharisees' absence that makes the διαγογγύζω so interesting?

[133] See D.A.S. Ravens, "Zacchaeus: The Final Part of a Lucan Triptych?" *JSNT* 41 (1991): 19–32, here 24.

implication is that for Jesus to stay, καταλύω, in Zacchaeus's home is to share in his sin.[135] However, the branding of Zacchaeus as an ἁμαρτωλός by "all" does not necessarily make him one. [136] The reader must consider, whose perspective is being presented, and how reliable is it?[137]

The opinion of the crowd reflects the narrator's indirect characterization of Zacchaeus: although he never categorizes the tax collector as a sinner, he engages in tactical innuendo with the culturally loaded information of Zacchaeus's profession, his wealth, and his physiognomy. These details explain why the ὄχλοι label Zacchaeus an ἁμαρτωλός: they view him as an individual of dubious financial and moral integrity, and a presumed extortionist and collaborator.

In this regard, the crowds of the Gospel have not always proven themselves to be trustworthy judges of identity or character.[138] Thus, instead of recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, the ὄχλοι mistake him for a re-animated John the Baptist, for Elijah, or one of the ancient prophets (9:18–19). Other crowds believe that he is empowered by Beelzebub, ruler of

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[134] There is already an exploration of women and "sinning" at §2.3.1. "Sinner" was a polyvalent term used in the Jewish tradition to designate those known to be lawless, idolatrous, impious, violent, and oppressive to the poor. The content of sin was "anything that violated the commandments of God" and the act of sinning brought "dire consequences for both the individual and the community." To call a person a sinner was, in the context of Jewish sectarianism, to issue a "vituperative insult and an allegation of socio-religious deviancy." It was to imply that an individual had "violated a group consensus as to how one should live a law-abiding life before God." See Bird, "Sin, Sinner," 867, 864, 865. Thus, in describing Zacchaeus as a sinner, the πάντες indict him as "marginal to the community" because he does not follow its standards." See Green, *Luke*, 671. The practice of social ostracism of sinners, indicated by the crowd's double blocking of Zacchaeus, is a powerful means of deterrence. See Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 905.

[135] Marshall, *Luke*, 697; Alan C. Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited: Luke 19,8 as a Defense," *Bib* 71 (1990): 153–76, here 158. "καταλύω," to experience the hospitality of someone, with principal focus upon lodging with them; literally to unharness the pack animals: L&N 1, §34.61; BDAG, 521–22. For the Septuagint-aware implied reader, the καταλύω verb would evoke various resonances with Joshua Chapter 2. First, the verb describes Rahab's lodging of Joshua's two spies, sent by him to reconnoitre the city of Jericho (Josh 2:1). Second, for her perilous sheltering of the emissaries, Rahab came be regarded as a model of hospitality. Finally, in a third thread of connection, Joshua and Jesus share the same name in Greek, Ἰησοῦς. See Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited," 164–65.

[136] Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 110, 115.

[137] Ibid., 110.

[138] Ibid., 115. Joseph B. Tyson notes that the crowd in Luke, although a group character, does not function like the chorus in Greek drama, whose role is to guide the audience to make a response "that the author thought to be appropriate." With the possible exceptions of Luke 23:27, 48, Tyson considers that the crowd's judgment is not always presented as, from the [implied] author's point of view, appropriate. See Joseph B. Tyson, "The Jewish Public in Luke-Acts," *NST* 30 (1984): 574–83, here 577–78.

the demons (11:15). Furthermore, "all" can be remarkably fickle in their opinions: in the Nazareth synagogue, the πάντες, who are initially amazed at the words of Jesus (4:22) soon try to kill him (4:28–29). And neither Jesus nor John the Baptist has a high regard for οἱ ὄχλοι, John branding them a "brood of vipers" (3:7), and Jesus "an evil generation" (11:29). Therefore, whatever reservations the implied readers have about Zacchaeus, they might not take the "all's" designation of him as a sinner at face value.

Even if the πάντες are correct and Zacchaeus *is* a sinner, this should not alienate the audience from him, however equivocally he has been introduced. They know that it is Jesus' self-proclaimed mission to call sinners to μετάνοια (5:32), and that he scorns the self-righteousness of those who think themselves better than others (18:9–14).[139] Furthermore, if Zacchaeus is indeed a sinner, the readers' earlier experience of an almost identical phrase has taught them that sinners are among those closest to Jesus and can have profound insights. At his first meeting with Jesus, Peter identified himself as a "sinful man," ἀνὴρ ἁμαρτωλός εἰμι (5:8). The reader knows that Jesus not only disregarded this confession, but immediately called Peter to become his first particular follower. Peter is soon named first among the apostles (6:14) and has the great recognition of Jesus as Messiah (9:20).[140] Therefore, the narrative does not portray sinners as hopeless cases and Zacchaeus, even if he is one, cannot be dismissed as such.

### 4.11 Zacchaeus Mounts a Defence (19:8a)

On the two previous occasions of "murmuring," διαγογγύζω, Jesus reacted immediately. At Levi's feast, his reply was to state that his purpose in coming was to call sinners to μετάνοια (5:32). The second time, Jesus' rejoinder was to recount the three parables of the lost (15:1–32). The reader therefore anticipates that Jesus will now respond, because his reputation is again under challenge and failure to counter would mean a loss of honour for him.[141] This expectation is heightened since this is a very public occasion, a virtual royal progress through Jericho, and πάντες suggests that a substantial cross-section of the populace is pillorying him.

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[139] Μετάνοια involves more than the sorrow or contrition a person experiences because of sin. It refers to a total change, in both thought and behaviour, a turning about, a change of mind. "μετάνοια," L&N 1 §41.52; BDAG, 640–41.

[140] Nave describes this as "the crowning climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry." See Nave, *Repentance in Luke-Acts*, 176.

[141] Malina, *New Testament World*, 35. Jesus generally reacts immediately to a challenge, for example, 5:22, 34; 6:3, 9; 7:40; 11:17, 39; 13:15; 14:3; 15:3; 16:15.

Because so much is at stake, the reader is surprised that it is Zacchaeus, not Jesus, who defends, not just his own honour and reputation, but also that of Jesus.[142] In giving Zacchaeus a voice, the implied author grants him a privilege not accorded the sinners and tax collectors who were the targets of previous criticism. The implied author now switches from the abundant "telling" of the previous verses to his preferred technique of "showing," and he lets the characters speak for themselves.[143] The remainder of the pericope becomes a response to the crowd's objection.[144]

### 4.11.1 Zacchaeus Stood There

Having run, climbed, and hurried, Zacchaeus finally is described as stationary, ἵστημι.[145] The σταθεὶς participle is significant for various reasons. First, it takes priority as the opening word in the sentence and gives the reader another visual image of the tax collector. It is unclear whether the standing takes place on the street, or in Zacchaeus's home before, after, or during a meal, because the initial clear setting has faded away.[146] What is evident is that Zacchaeus's statement is made publicly, so that "all" can hear his rejoinder to the carping.[147] Second, ἵστημι contrasts keenly with the verbs of motion previously attached to Zacchaeus, and his new-found stillness bestows an air of decorum on one hitherto characterized as flurried and agitated. In the New Testament, σταθεὶς occurs only in Luke, three times each in the Gospel and in Acts.[148]

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[142] At the crucifixion, in a similar way, Jesus allows the second wrongdoer to speak for him.

[143] Mark Coleridge, "'You are Witnesses' (Luke 24:48): Who Sees What in Luke," *ABR* 45 (1997): 1–19, here 11, 15.

[144] Tannehill, "Zacchaeus as Rhetoric," 206.

[145] For a re-reader of the Gospel, the insertion of ἵστημι is a proleptic reminder of post-Easter events: the men in dazzling clothes stand at the empty tomb, ἐφίστημι (24:4); the Emmaus disciples stand, ἵστημι (24:17), when greeted by the risen Jesus; and Jesus himself stands, ἵστημι (24:36), among the disciples prior to showing them his hands and his feet.

[146] Robert F. O'Toole, "The Literary Form of Luke 19:1–10," *JBL* 110/1 (1991): 107–16, here 110; Wolter, *Luke II*, 347.

[147] Dennis Hamm, "Luke 19:8 Once Again: Does Zacchaeus Defend or Resolve?" *JBL* 107 (1988): 431–37, here 435; Marshall, *Luke*, 697; Johnson, *Luke*, 285.

[148] It occurs in Acts 2:14; 17:22; 27:21. Wolter notes how, with the exception of Luke 18:40, where it precedes the indirect speech of Jesus, it always serves as a preparation for [direct] speech. See Wolter *Luke 2*, 347. Thus, in Acts 2:14, Peter confidently stands up on Pentecost to address the Judeans after the coming of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 17:22, Paul stands in front of the Areopagus and eloquently addresses the Athenians. And, in Acts 27:21, Paul, during the storm at sea, rallies the courage of his shipmates while they drift across the Adriatic Sea.

It features in the Gospel in the recent parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:11), and in the immediate co-text of the blind beggar (18:40). In each case, it functions as a character marker for those to whom it is attached. In the parable, where it precedes the boasting of the Pharisee, σταθεὶς projects his arrogance and his assurance, however misplaced the latter may be. In the blind man pericope, σταθεὶς describes how Jesus stood prior to commanding that the τυφλός be brought to him, with all the authority implied by the κελεύω verb. From these instances, the reader understands that, whatever Zacchaeus has to say, his demeanour is one of confidence, and that he is neither self-effacing nor deferential before the criticism being levelled at him.[149]

### 4.11.2 And He Said to the Lord …

While the audience might expect Zacchaeus to answer the "grumblers," he instead addresses "the Lord," ὁ κύριος, with the understanding that the πάντες will hear.[150] This is an instance of enacted Lordship, where Zacchaeus acknowledges Jesus as the significant character in the scene, the one to whom he wishes primarily to explain himself. Κύριος is a designation that Jesus has not yet been accorded in the pericope. Instead, the narrator specified that it was Jesus whom Zacchaeus came out to see (v. 3), who called Zacchaeus down from the tree, and who invited himself to Zacchaeus's house (v. 5). Now, with the insertion of κύριος, a more profound level of identity is introduced and the reader awaits whether Zacchaeus, in his address, will follow (or even recognize) the lead of the narrator.

### 4.11.3 "Look … Lord …"

Zacchaeus takes up the narrator's cue and addresses Jesus as κύριε, becoming one of eleven individuals or groups in the Gospel to do so.[151] The fore-fronted ἰδοὺ reflects the fervour of his speech and the urgency with which he wants Jesus (and the πάντες, and the reader) to hear or "see" it. Given the prominence of verbs of vision in the pericope, it may also imply how

[149] Richard C. White, "Vindication for Zacchaeus?" *ExpTim* 91 (1979): 21, here 21.

[150] There is an extensive discussion of Jesus as Lord at §3.3.6.

[151] The others are Peter (5:8; 12:41; 22:33); the first man with leprosy (5:12); the centurion through his friends (7:6); James and John (9:54); a would-be follower (9:61); the seventy missionaries (10:17); Martha (10:40); and some apostles at the Last Supper (22:38).

Zacchaeus perceives Jesus, thus giving "Lord" a weighed significance.[152] What follows—care for the poor and restitution (two core Torah qualities)—at first seems like the introduction of a "competing issue," a *non sequitur* to the comment of the πάντες.[153] But Zacchaeus is clearly aware of the reputation that attaches to tax collectors, whose wrongdoing or "sinning" is deemed financial, and he is determined to address this matter.

### 4.12 The Grammatical Dilemma: δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι: Present Practice or Future Resolve? (19:8b)

Zacchaeus's present-tense declaration of alms and recompense perplexes the audience, raising the question whether δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι are intended as iterative (or durative or customary) present tenses, or as futuristic present tenses.[154] There are three possibilities. If the verbs are read as futuristic presents, then Zacchaeus was, until today, an extortionate and corrupt tax collector who, on meeting Jesus, has a spectacular change of heart, a μετάνοια, and promises a radical departure in his professional practice (in other words, a return to the economic strictures of Torah that were heightened, not abolished, by the "radical demands of the kingdom" Jesus preached).[155] If, however, the verbs are understood as iterative or durative present tenses, Zacchaeus is either a customarily charitable, virtuous, Torah-focused man who, because of his profession, is misunderstood by "all" (including the reader); or a previously dishonest τελώνης

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[152] Zacchaeus's calling Jesus "Lord" reminds the reader both of the recent rich ruler who could only address Jesus as "good teacher," διδάσκαλε ἀγαθέ (18:18), and was not able to follow him, and the blind beggar who called Jesus "Lord" (18:41) and received sight and salvation. Compared to the ἄρχων, Zacchaeus clearly manifests a deeper perception of "who Jesus is," τὸν Ἰησοῦν τίς ἐστιν (19:3). See Tannehill, "Zacchaeus as Rhetoric," 205. In this insight, Zacchaeus may have achieved part of his purpose in coming out today: he recognizes Jesus as "Lord."

[153] Ibid., 207.

[154] The iterative present tense describes an action that repeatedly occurs. See BDF, §318.3. The durative (linear or progressive) present tense is used to express an action that is in progress. It can be timeless or may refer to an action taking place in present time. See BDF §318.2. In a present tense of customary action, the present is used to express an action that regularly occurs. See Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §1876. When what is required is a confident assertion regarding the future, "a vivid, realistic present may be used." See BDF, §323. The NRSV translation, "I will give to the poor … I will pay back," is unhelpful as it cannot convey the nuances of the Greek. Professor Séamus O'Connell suggests that a better English translation would be, "Look, Lord … I'm giving to the poor … and I'm paying back ..." a version that retains much of the ambiguity of the original.
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[155] Greg W. Forbes, *The God of Old: The Role of the Lukan Parables in the Purpose of Luke's Gospel*, JSNTSup 198 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 181. Among the commentators who hold the futuristic present tense view are Bock, Bovon, Hamm, Evans, Marshall, Nolland, Parsons, Tannehill, Witherington, Méndez-Moratalla, and Wolter. See Bock, *Luke 2*, 1520; Bovon, *Luke 2*, 598; Hamm, "Zacchaeus 19:8 Once Again," 436; Evans, *Luke*, 661; Marshall, *Luke*, 697–98; Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 906; Parsons, *Luke*, 280; Tannehill, *Luke*, 277; Witherington, *Luke*, 512; Méndez-Moratalla, *Paradigm of Conversion*, 174; Wolter, *Luke II*, 347.

who, sometime prior to the "today" of this scene, had contact with the ministry of John the Baptist and whose conversionary practices of restitution and sharing with the poor (3:12–13) he now recapitulates.[156]

The ambiguity of the grammar, whether intentional or not, is a clever narrative strategy that plays on audience resistance to the possibility that Zacchaeus is an honest tax collector. In other words, the implied author may be encouraging the audience to "think the unthinkable" about him.[157] Had he wanted clarity, the implied author could have chosen a clear-cut future tense, as he did with the resolution of the younger son in the parable, who states unequivocally, "I will go to my father, and I will say to him …" πορεύσομαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ ἐρῶ αὐτῷ … (15:18). But to employ the same precision with Zacchaeus would be to close down the narrative for the reader. Instead, in his customary fashion, the implied author "appears to prefer complex rather than simple images, multiple rather than single meanings."[158] Therefore, the opacity of δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι (and the later εἰ) deepens the ambiguity of Zacchaeus's characterization, and compels the audience to weigh the various possibilities.[159]

### 4.12.1 Zacchaeus the Corrupt Tax Collector?

There are two points to support the view that Zacchaeus is a corrupt man (a "sinner") who is now experiencing a change of heart, μετάνοια. First, the rhetoric of the text, its playing "the implicit off the explicit," has been guiding the reader to understand Zacchaeus in a largely negative way.[160] In characterizing him as a small, rich, chief tax collector, the implied author insinuates that Zacchaeus is currently a dishonest man. The audience, familiar with tax collectors from the world behind the text, understands these inferences and, for them, as for

[156] Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 118. Others who take this view of Zacchaeus include Fitzmyer, Johnson, Levine, Lieu, Mitchell, and White. See Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1120; Johnson, *Luke*, 285–86; Levine, *Luke*, 512; Lieu, *Luke*, 147–48; Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited," 175; White, "Vindication for Zacchaeus?" 21. Ravens considers that the matter remains ambiguous, perhaps "intentionally so." See Ravens, "Lucan Triptych," 27.

[157] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited," 154.

[158] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 638.

[159] The audience recalls the ambiguities of the ὅτι in the pericope of the anointing woman, another instance of the implied author's liking for complexity. See §2.9.1.

[160] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Vindicated," 158; Parsons, *Luke*, 277.

the πάντες, Zacchaeus's occupation may be enough to stigmatize him in their eyes.[161] Second, Zacchaeus's character may be interpreted in light of Jesus' axiom concerning his mission, "I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to μετάνοια," οὐκ ἐλήλυθα καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν (5:32).[162] From this perspective, the tone of Zacchaeus's characterization and the opinion of the "all" suggests that Zacchaeus is a sinner in need of μετάνοια who encounters in Jesus the person and "today" (4:21) of salvation.[163] Viewed like this, the summons to Zacchaeus to come down from the tree constitutes Jesus' call, and the alacrity of Zacchaeus's obedience signifies his response, or the dawning (1:78) of his transformation.[164] Because the audience expects Zacchaeus's encounter with Jesus to change him, they understand Zacchaeus's declaration in v. 8 as the manifestation of his change of heart.[165] On this rationale, his promises of care for the poor and restitution may be likened to the "following" of Peter, Levi, and the blind man (5:11, 28; 18:43).[166] With these pledges, Zacchaeus is producing what John the Baptist calls "fruits worthy of repentance," ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας (3:8).

### 4.12.2 Or Zacchaeus the Misunderstood Tax Collector?

But the reader must also consider the possibility that Zacchaeus does not enter the pericope as a disreputable character in need of a transforming encounter with Jesus. Neither the "all" nor

[161] Green, *Luke*, 671; Alan C. Mitchell, "The Use of συκοφαντεῖν in Luke 19,8: Further Evidence for Zacchaeus's Defense," *Bib* 01 (1991): 546–47, here 547.

[162] Hamm states it thus, "Having presented the readers (or auditors) with scenes of Jesus' table-fellowship ministry for the conversion of sinners in 5:27–32 and 15:1–32, Luke has prepared his audience well for understanding the story of Zacchaeus as a climactic example of the same kind of *metanoia*. Given the story line and theme clusters (table fellowship, conversion, salvation, lost-and-found) running through the first eighteen chapters, Luke has no need to elaborate on Zacchaeus's disposition. In the immediate context of the childlike seeking (19:3–4; cf. 18:17), being found (19:5), and the joyful response (v. 6), the generous resolve of v. 8 says it all." See Hamm, "Luke 19:8 Once Again," 437.

[163] Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 906, 908.

[164] Evans *Luke*, 661; Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 907. Tannehill considers that the reference to Zacchaeus's rejoicing (19:6) reminds the reader of the joy that accompanies μετάνοια. See Tannehill, *Luke*, 277. However, if this opinion is based on the parables of Chapter 15, it is not the one who is lost or the "sinner" who rejoices, but the finder.

[165] Wolter *Luke 2*, 349; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 124; Hamm, "Zacchaeus Revisited Once More," 250. Hamm describes Zacchaeus as the "climactic example" of a man in need of μετάνοια. See Hamm, "Luke 19:8 Once Again," 437; Danker styles Zacchaeus "a living definition of the word "repentance." See Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 192.

[166] Evans, *Luke*, 660.

the audience may have been correct in their initial assessment, and the narrator might be engaged in clever misdirection. There are a number of factors to be considered.

#### *4.12.2.1 Appearances can Deceive*

The audience already knows that, because the Lukan implied author has a "taste for the strange and the surprising," caution is required in making premature or stereotypical judgments about characters.[167] Thus, the Roman centurion, agent of the occupying power, finances the building of a synagogue and Jesus lauds him for his trust, πίστις (7:1–10); the parabolic "good" Samaritan, member of an unpopular religious minority, proves to be the surprising neighbour (10:30–35); the parabolic tax-collector, representative of a despised profession, is the one who leaves the temple justified (18:10–14); the rich ruler, who meritoriously keeps all the commandments (18:21), is incapable of doing the one thing Jesus asks of him (18:22–23), while rough-and-ready Peter, a self-confessed sinner, unhesitatingly leaves everything and follows (5:8–11), and later has the great insight of Jesus as Messiah (9:20).[168] The anointing woman may also be included in this group of surprising characters. Indeed, in the detail and thrust of her characterization, she and Zacchaeus might be considered to be in *synkrisis*. Like him, she is labelled a sinner (7:37, 39), and is also the subject of considerable narratorial innuendo (7:37, 38). Recalling her, the readers must be open to the possibility that, just as the narrator and Simon (and they themselves) were wrong in their initial impressions of the woman, so may they, the narrator, and the "all" be mistaken about Zacchaeus, who might prove to be an exception to the expectations generated by his profession and his physical appearance.

#### *4.12.2.2 Tax Collectors are not Necessarily Sinners*

While first-century tax collectors were despised and shunned, the narrative does not substantiate their automatic association with corruption, fraud, and sinning (it is the scribes and Pharisees [5:30], and the narrator [15:1] who do this). If tax gathering were, of itself, a sinful occupation, then John the Baptist, instead of admonishing the τελῶναι to be fair and honest (3:13), would have commanded them to desist from their vocation.[169] Similarly, in the Levi

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[167] Coleridge, "You Are Witnesses," 3; Johnson, *Luke*, 287.

[168] Later, in the darkness at the crucifixion, the second Roman centurion will recognize the presence of God in what has happened, a startling recognition from a "most unlikely character in most unlikely circumstances." See Coleridge, "You are Witnesses," 3.

[169] Ravens, "Lucan Triptych," 24; Green, *Luke*, 246.

pericope, nothing suggests that Levi either abandoned his occupation, or was requested to do so by Jesus. Instead, still apparently a tax collector, he became a disciple, in the Gospel language of leaving everything and following (5:28).[170] The "great banquet" that he held for Jesus in his house (5:29) implies that, while Levi's life went on as before, it is now oriented "around God's purpose as manifest in Jesus' mission."[171] It can be presumed that he goes forward just in his dealings, as indeed he may have been before he was called by Jesus. On this understanding, the implied author may be exploding a stereotype, asking the reader to consider that Zacchaeus is "not a bad tax collector."[172]

#### *4.12.2.3 Is Zacchaeus Experiencing a Μετάνοια?*

Zacchaeus does not approach Jesus in any obvious spirit of contrition or penitence, or with any overt request for clemency or healing, aspects of a character that the implied author emphasizes when he can.[173] Thus, Zacchaeus does not beg Jesus for mercy (the ten men with leprosy [17:13], the blind beggar [18:38)]); does not prostrate himself (the men with leprosy [5:12; 17:16], Jairus [8:41]); does not admit to being a sinner (Peter [5:8], the parabolic tax collector [18:13]); does not overtly demonstrate love for Jesus (the anointing woman 7:38–39, 47).[174] Indeed, similar to Levi (5:27–28); the man with the withered hand (6:6–10); the raising of the widow's son (7:11–15); the crippled woman (13:11–13); and the man with dropsy (14:2–4), if Jesus had not spoken first, there would have been no interaction between them at all. But Zacchaeus, unlike these latter "casual" characters, came deliberately to see Jesus. In this,

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[170] Whether the following was literal or metaphorical, discipleship implied a radical self-commitment that had to surpass all other ties. For all who responded, discipleship involved "internal attachment and commitment to Jesus" and the cause that he preached. See Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 569. For some, like Peter, it meant journeying physically with Jesus on his preaching tours; for others, like Martha, Mary, and probably Levi, it involved being a disciple in one's ordinary place; while for those with wealth, whether travelling or stationary, it meant the "dispossession of possessions as symbolizing the correct response to God's visitation." See Johnson, *Luke*, 97.

[171] Green, *Luke*, 246.

[172] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited," 154; Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 151.

[173] Lieu, *Luke*, 148; Green, *Luke*, 672; Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 512; White, "Vindication for Zacchaeus?" 21. Szkredka approaches this from another direction, where the initiative rests entirely with Jesus. He postulates that Jesus' self-invitation to Zacchaeus's home constitutes an offer of forgiveness, which Zacchaeus accepts by welcoming Jesus joyfully. See Sławomir Szkredka, "'Father, Forgive Them" (Luke 23:34a): Conflicting Interpretations and the Lucan Territory of Forgiveness," *CBQ* 84/1 (2022): 80–96, here 94.

[174] See Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1220.

instead of a conversionary μετάνοια, he may be manifesting an already inchoate inner disposition that brought him out in Jericho "today."

#### *4.12.2.4 Is Zacchaeus's Name Significant?*

Proper names of minor characters are rare in the Gospel and, when they are present, they may serve a rhetorical purpose. Of these, the names of Simon, Lazarus, and Zacchaeus are especially relevant.[175] As if to emphasize them, the three are mentioned by name several times in their own pericopae: Simon at 7:40, 43, 44; Lazarus at 16:20, 23, 24, 25; and Zacchaeus at 19:2, 5, 8. Thus Simon, which means "listen" or "hearing" in Hebrew, is appropriate for Simon the Pharisee, as he listens both to Jesus' parable and to his long admonishment of him (7:41–47).[176] Lazarus, whose name derives from the Hebrew 'El'azar, means "God has helped," apt for one carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom (16:22) after a life of earthly misery.[177] Zacchaeus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Zakkai, Zaccai, or Zakkay, which means "clean" or "innocent," and is often used in parallel to *saddîq*, meaning "upright" or "righteous."[178] Either the implied author is indulging in irony at Zacchaeus's expense (an innocent name for a guilty man), or he is trying to balance the ambivalence of Zacchaeus's characterization with the symbolism attached to his name.[179]

#### *4.12.2.5 A Different Perspective: Economic Justice*

Instead of interpreting Zacchaeus from the perspective of one aspect of Jesus' mission, "I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to μετάνοια" (5:32), the reader might instead consider him in light of another (while granting that elements cannot be separated).[180] In the

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[175] Ravens considers that these three form a Lukan triptych, based on the significance of their names. See Ravens, "Lucan Triptych," 29–30.

[176] Ibid., 29.

[177] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1131.

[178] Ibid., 1223; Marshall, *Luke*, 696; Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 192; White, "Vindication for Zacchaeus?" 21. With the same spelling, Ζακχαῖος is found in the Septuagint at 2 Macc 10:19 while, at Neh 7:14 and Ezra 2:9 (Esdras II LXX), it appears as Ζάκχος.

[179] Nolland doubts that the etymology plays any role in the story of Zacchaeus. See Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 904.

[180] In 3:3–14, John the Baptist links a baptism of repentance (μετάνοια) with the forgiveness of sins and economic justice. In other words, an individual who experiences a true μετάνοια carries this into practice by treating others fairly and justly, which equates to the forgiveness of sins. For John, μετάνοια, in the sense of a reorientation of one's life, is the first and most important requirement for human beings as the reign of God on

programmatic statement in the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus announced how he came to bring "good news to the poor … to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free" (4:18). In other words, Jesus came to do more than call sinners to μετάνοια, and salvation consists of more than the forgiveness of sins.[181] From this viewpoint, rather than a statement of μετάνοια, Zacchaeus's declaration might be construed as demonstrating his knowledge (and practice) of the economic justice advocated by John the Baptist (and Jesus).[182] Zacchaeus's use of the unusual verb συκοφαντέω supports this.[183] Within the gospels, Luke alone uses this verb, placing it on the lips of the Baptist and Zacchaeus.[184] As such, it suggests Zacchaeus's familiarity with John's admonition to the soldiers regarding harassment, intimidation, and extortion (3:14), "do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation," μηδένα διασείσητε μηδὲ συκοφαντήσητε.

Of course, behind all the Lukan Jesus' (and Baptist's) teaching on economic justice—as so much else—the stipulations of Torah are taken "as the given, indeed, the divinely given."[185] From the Gospel's point of view, the Law in all its integrity remains in force, its

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earth begins, inaugurated by the coming of Jesus. Such a reorientation involves a radical and fundamental change in how people think about and interact with others. See Nave, *Role and Function of Repentance*, 132, 147. It is not sufficient that conversion/transformation/ μετάνοια "might remain an abstraction or be reduced to an interior decision." Instead, John the Baptist defines conversion "in terms of performance." See Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts*, 82. John's preaching thus shifts the focus of μετάνοια from any eschatological or next-world motivation onto its human and social implications. See Nave: *Role and Function of Repentance*, 160.

[181] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited," 159. Mitchell discusses how the forgiveness of sins did not become an explicit part of Jesus' work until the healing of the paralytic at 5:20. Prior to that, after his programmatic proclamation in the Nazareth synagogue, the narrator relates a series of healings where there is no mention of forgiveness (4:31–41; 5:12–16). When Simon Peter declares himself to be a sinful man at 5:8, Jesus disregards his statement. After 5:20, Jesus performs many healings without any reference to forgiving sins (6:17–19; 7:1–23; 8:26–32). The Beatitudes and Woes (6:20–26) have no mention of the forgiveness of sins and, when Jesus commissions the twelve and the seventy, he empowers them to cast out demons, to cure diseases, to heal, and to proclaim the kingdom of God, but he does not instruct them to forgive sin. See Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited," 159.

[182] Green, *Luke,* 671. For example, 3:10–14; 6:29–30; 12:33; 14:13; 16:19–31; 18:1–8, 22.

[183] "συκοφαντέω," to bring false charges against someone, especially with the intent of personal profit; to put pressure on someone for personal gain, to harass, squeeze down, shake down, blackmail, to secure something through intimidation: L&N 1, §33.434; BDAG, 955.

[184] In the Septuagint, it is found at Gen 43:18; Lev 19:11; Job 35:9; Ps 119:122 (118:122 LXX); Prov 14:31, 22:16, 28:3; Eccl 4:1. The three axioms in Proverbs warn against oppression of the poor. For example, Prov 14:31 notes that, "Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honour him," ὁ συκοφαντῶν πένητα παροξύνει τὸν ποιήσαντα αὐτόν, ὁ δε τιμῶν αὐτὸν ἐλεεῖ πτωχόν.

[185] John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew, Volume Four: Law and Love*, ABRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 26.

status unambiguous.[186] Zacchaeus's declaration reflects the pronouncements concerning economic justice found there, for example, Exod 22:1; Lev. 6:4–5; Num 5:6–7; Deut 15:11; 2 Sam 12:6 (2 Kgs 12:6 LXX); Prov 19:17; Isa 58:10. This reading of v. 8 presents Zacchaeus as a laudable character who not only understands something of Jesus' concern for the poor and defrauded, but is also living his life in accordance with Torah.

#### *4.12.2.6 The Enigmatic εἰ*

The conditional εἰ particle raises uncertainties similar to δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι, depending on whether Zacchaeus is understood as a villain, now experiencing μετάνοια; a one-time corrupt tax collector who has already changed his ways; or a misconstrued honest man mounting a defence of his habitual good deeds. In the first interpretation, the conditional clause does not put the fact of extortion in doubt, but only its extent.[187] It suggests that Zacchaeus is aware that he has defrauded some, and "if" becomes the semantic equivalent of "whomsoever."[188] The second construal submits that, whatever abuses occurred in Zacchaeus's professional life in the past, prior to his openness to the values of the kingdom, he is already in the process of putting them right. In the third interpretation, the εἰ does not imply that Zacchaeus committed any intentional extortion, but has the sense of "if I discover I have …"[189] In other words, if malfeasance or dishonesty occurs in the course of his work, it is not done deliberately and is customarily corrected.[190] Weighing the various possibilities of the εἰ in this way does not resolve the opacity of Zacchaeus for the audience. Instead, it functions to deepen it.

#### *4.12.2.7 A Question of Honour*

A first-century implied audience would interpret the exchange between the "grumblers" and Zacchaeus through the lens of honour and shame, effected through the "social tug of war" of

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[186] Marguerat, *First Christian Historian,* 60.

[187] This interpretation assumes that the εἰ clause (the prostasis) introduces a first-class condition with emphasis on the reality of what is being considered. See "εἰ," BDF, §371; Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 690.

[188] Marshall, *Luke*, 698; Bock, *Luke 2*, 1521; Evans, *Luke*, 663; Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness*, 155.

[189] Johnson, *Luke*, 286. Here the εἰ represents a simple condition, introduced by Zacchaeus as a response to something said, believed, or assumed ("as you say, as is believed, as you see") about him by the hostile crowd. See "εἰ," BDF §372; Mitchell, "Use of συκοφαντεῖν," 546–47.

[190] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1225; Lieu, *Luke*, 147; Mitchell, "Use of συκοφαντεῖν," 546–47.

challenge (v. 7) and riposte (v. 8).[191] It was Jesus who set this confrontation in motion when he publicly asked Zacchaeus to be his host. In doing so, he put his own reputation on the line, as demonstrated by the immediate challenge/complaint of the πάντες. In their eyes, for Jesus to consort with a "sinner" like Zacchaeus is to bring shame upon himself. This is of no account to Jesus because he freely mixes with those who are shunned socially, but it does matter to Zacchaeus. Under the code of hospitality, he has obligations to his guest, one of which is to defend him and his honour.[192]

Zacchaeus's riposte is that, on the contrary, Jesus is the guest of an honourable man whose status is beyond question because of his customary patronage of the poor.[193] In addition to safeguarding the reputation of Jesus, this public statement is also an "enormous claim" to honour made on his own behalf.[194] If Zacchaeus is misrepresenting himself about his current practices, he (and Jesus) will be disgraced, a further humiliation that he would hardly draw lightly upon himself.[195] The σταθεὶς participle supports the interpretation of Zacchaeus as being truthful. It indicates an assured deportment and a speech that is free of prevarication (see 18:11, 40). While his bearing and his claim might open him to an accusation of boasting like the parabolic Pharisee of 18:11–12, a true defence of his actions is hardly boasting, especially when it is not motivated by self-interest, but by the obligation to uphold the reputation of his guest.[196]

There is, of course, another dimension to the honour and shame thrust of this part of the pericope. Although Zacchaeus defends Jesus' honour by depicting himself as worthy man who will not shame his guest, the audience recognizes that the weight of honour is going in the

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[191] Malina and Neyrey, "Honor and Shame," 28, 29, 64.

[192] Malina, *Social World of Jesus*, 232.

[193] Rohrbaugh, *New Testament in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, 85–86.

[194] Ibid., 83.

[195] Zacchaeus's generosity is the only claim to honour that he appears to have. He has no entitlement to ascribed honour, that is, honour derived from birth status, power, or public position—the audience knows nothing about his family; he is despised as a tax collector; and his small stature is simultaneously comical and shameful in the eyes of his contemporaries. What Zacchaeus claims before the πάντες is acquired honour, or status gained by "achievement or laudable public behaviour," in this case his notable charity and sense of fairness. See Rohrbaugh, *New Testament in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, 79, 81.

[196] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1220.

other direction. It is Jesus who is honouring Zacchaeus, not the other way round, because the one to whom the Lord goes is honoured by him.[197]

Leaving v. 8, the implied readers are uncertain whether the rhetoric of the narrative is guiding them to join the "all" in considering Zacchaeus as a sinner in need of μετάνοια, or whether the πάντες are incorrect and another dynamic is shaping the pericope.[198] In v. 9, Jesus takes charge, and the audience anticipates a resolution.

### 4.13 Jesus Responds (19:9)

Having allowed Zacchaeus to speak for him in v. 8, Jesus now presents his own riposte to the challenge of the "all." In doing so, he does not engage with their objection, but takes the encounter in another direction. Despite the awkwardness of the syntax, Jesus addresses Zacchaeus, πρὸς αὐτὸν, within earshot of the grumblers, speaking of Zacchaeus in the third person, καὶ αὐτὸς … ἐστιν.[199] It continues the scene material of the previous verses, where the time of the narrative corresponds to reading time.

#### 4.13.1 "Today Salvation has Come to this House"

Virtually every word in Jesus' reply is laden with significance. For the second time in the pericope, Jesus invokes the significant "today," linking his "today" in Jericho with the manifestation of salvation, σήμερον σωτηρία τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ ἐγένετο. While this is a solemn pronouncement, it is also a clever play on words. When the narrator records that it is Jesus who speaks (not "the Lord" of v. 8), this is a *double entendre*, because the name Ἰησους signifies "the Lord saves," or "God is salvation."[200] Furthermore, since ἐγένετο is a multivalent verb that translates as "has come," or "has arrived," or "has happened," Jesus' statement can be understood alternately and simultaneously as, "today Jesus/salvation has come to this house;" or, "I, Jesus/salvation am in this house today;" or, "today Jesus/salvation has arrived in this

[197] This is something that the centurion recognized at 7:6, when he declared himself unworthy, οὐ γὰρ ἱκαωός, to have the κύριος come under his roof.

[198] See Ravens, "Lucan Triptych," 23.

[199] White, "Vindication for Zacchaeus?" 21; Tannehill, "Zacchaeus as Rhetoric," 207.

[200] Marshall, *Luke*, 698. On the etymology of Ἰησους, see John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Volume One: The Roots of the Problem and the Person*, ABRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 205–7.

house;" or, "Jesus/salvation has happened in this house."[201] In other words, v. 9 is a reminder that, where Jesus physically is, the "today" of salvation is also present, because Jesus is its embodiment, its personification, and its enactment.[202]

### 4.13.2 What is Salvation?

The noun σωτηρία is rare in the Gospel (1:69, 71, 77; 19:9), as are its cognates σωτήρ (1:47; 2:11) and σωτήριον (2:30; 3:6).[203] With the exception of the Zacchaeus pericope, all appear at the beginning of the narrative, in the context of prophesy and revelation (Zechariah [1:69, 71, 77]; Mary [1:47]; angels [2:11]; Simeon [2:30]; and John citing Isaiah [3:6]). However, as was explored in the pericope of the anointing woman, the verbal form σῴζω occurs throughout the Gospel in a variety of settings, many connected with physical healing.[204] These four expressions, σωτηρία, σωτήρ, σωτήριον, and σῴζω combine to present a complex picture of salvation that has both present and future aspects, embracing the physical and eschatological dimensions of life.[205] The Lukan Jesus places particular emphasis on salvation's present-day manifestations, in the sense of deliverance from current distress, and liberation from whatever prevents people from realizing the wholeness of life as God intends (that is, human

[201] Among its many meanings, γίνομαι can denote to happen, to occur, to be in a place: "γίνομαι," L&N 1, §13.107, §85.6, §85.7; BDAG, 196-99.

[202] Bovon, *Luke 2,* 599; Ellis, *Luke,* 221; Marshall, *Luke,* 873; Loewe, "Towards and Interpretation," 325.

[203] Salvation, σωτηρία, meaning deliverance or preservation, like the verb σῴζω, meaning to rescue, to heal, to save, to make whole, to give new life to, or to cause to have a new heart, has both a physical and transcendent aspect. "σωτηρία," "σῴζω," L&N 1, §21.18, §21.25, §21.26, §21.27, §23.136; BDAG, 985–86, 982–83. In the Septuagint, σωτηρία had a strong this-worldly nature. In return for keeping the covenant (exhibiting a trusting faith, fearing God, hoping in his steadfast love, caring for the poor, the stranger, and the weak, and obeying the cultic requirements of the laws of holiness), God helped individuals and groups to find deliverance from the problems and difficulties of this life. Although material, personal, and national prosperity were prominent in this aspect of salvation, there was a growing spiritual dimension that involved a religious relationship with God. After the trauma of exile and amid the insecurities generated by centuries of invasion and subjugation, salvation began to develop future and eschatological facets. These involved the anticipation of a new and extraordinary intervention from God, the expectation of a post-mortem, individual judgment, with blessings for the righteous and punishment for the ungodly, and apocalyptic hopes for the resurrection of the dead and a new life with God in a transformed world. See Gerald G. O'Collins, "Salvation," *ABD* 5, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 907–14, here 907–10.

[204] See §2.12.1. Σῴζω occurs at 6:9; 7:50; 8:12, 36, 48, 50; 9:24; 13:23; 17:19; 18:26, 42; 19:10; 23:35, 37, 39.

[205] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 88-89; Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 222–23; Troy M. Troftgruben, "Salvation 'Today' in Luke's Gospel," *CurTM*, 45/4 (2018): 6–11, here 9.

flourishing).[206] Thus, through his intervention, many characters experience salvation as restoration of health, recovery of sight, release from demons and magical powers, freedom from hunger, forgiveness of sins, reversal of fortune, restoration to the community and even, on two occasions, deliverance from death.[207]

The Lukan Jesus' own view of the multi-faceted salvation that he both personifies and brings are found, to this point in the narrative, in his three great summaries of mission: the Nazareth sermon with its good news for the poor and oppressed (4:18–19), recapitulated at 7:22 with an emphasis on healing; the statement that he must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God (4:43); and the declaration that he has come not to call the righteous but sinners to μετάνοια (5:32). These are all related realities that can be expressed in multiple ways without recourse to the same vocabulary.[208] Thus, particularly in the healings, the narrative Jesus interweaves the vocabulary of salvation with that of faith (7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42), love for him (7:47), and forgiveness of sins (5:20, 23; 7:48).[209] In turn, forgiveness of sins involves μετάνοια and conversion, or an "embodied transformation" where "emphasis falls on day-to-day life as the venue within which conversion is performed" and salvation is experienced.[210] In a further interweaving of terms, the recent exchange with the rich ruler shows that "inheriting eternal life" (18:18), "entering the kingdom of God" (18:24), and "being saved" (18:26) are also circumlocutions for one another.[211] Furthermore, as Nolland puts it, "the coming of Jesus is to be equated with the coming of the kingdom of God, which is in turn to be equated with the coming of salvation."[212]

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[206] Mark Allan Powell, "Salvation in Luke-Acts," *WW* 12/1 (1992): 5–10, here 5–8. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 94; Pennington, *Human Flourishing*, 290-91. Pennington calls this a state of "*makarios*-ness," drawing on the μακάριος language of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:3–11)/Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20–22). Ibid., 290.

[207] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 70, 75; Boring, *New Testament*, 513.

[208] Nave discusses how, in the narrative, "calling sinners to repentance is part of (if not identical with) preaching the good news." See Nave, *Role and Function of Repentance*, 37.

[209] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 296.

[210] Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts,* 53, 83.

[211] Rich ruler: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω; Jesus: "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" πῶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. Others: "Then who can be saved?" καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι;

[212] Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 908.

Within the context of salvation, all of these—the presence of Jesus, the good news, physical healing, liberation from oppression, full inclusion in the community, faith, trust, μετάνοια, eternal life, the kingdom, forgiveness of sins—are overlapping every-day and eschatological realities whose "imprecisions and inconsistencies" cannot be "pressed too hard."[213] Instead, the richness of the language and the parallelism of the discourse serve to bring out the many nuances of these inseparable realities. Somewhere within this complex matrix, the Lukan Jesus situates his encounter with Zacchaeus, and his own reason for being in Zacchaeus's "today."

## 4.14 Zacchaeus is a Son of Abraham (19:9b)

After the various character markers already assigned to Zacchaeus—tax collector, rich, ruler, small, sinner—Jesus chooses to characterize him as a "son of Abraham," υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ ἐστιν, and he gives this as his unexpected reason, καθότι, for stopping in Jericho today and bringing salvation to Zacchaeus and his household.[214] Unlike the ambivalence attached to the earlier tags, Jesus' description of Zacchaeus as a "son of Abraham" is unambiguously positive and, as the main point-of-view character in the Gospel, Jesus' word is definitive. Abraham has already been invoked by name (1:55, 73; 3:8, 34; 13:16, 28) and by appearance (16:22–31) in the narrative, and he has a palpable presence in the current pericope through Zacchaeus's running and hospitality (vv. 4, 6). Because Jesus does not elaborate on the designation, the audience is invited to consider how Zacchaeus is a "son of Abraham," and to begin to interpret the current pericope in light of it.

### 4.14.1 Zacchaeus is Heir to the Blessings of Abraham

As a Jew, a physical, blood descendant of the patriarch, Zacchaeus is heir to God's promises to Abraham (Luke 1:54–55; Gen 22:17–18; 26:3) however much his fellow-Jews might castigate him for his profession.[215] Like every other Israelite, he is entitled to the patriarch's

[213] See Evans, *Luke*, 871, 874.

[214] Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 119; Wolter, *Luke II*, 349. In the New Testament, the conjunction καθότι is found only in Luke (1:7; 19:9; Acts 2:24, 45; 4:35; 17:31). In the current case (and with Elizabeth at 1:7), it signifies the rationale for something—because, since, for, in view of the fact that. In Acts 2:45 and 4:35, it represents the extent or degree of something. "καθότι," L&N 1, §89.33, §78.53; BDAG, 493. If the καὶ here signifies "also" or "too," it situates Zacchaeus as one Jew among other Jews in Jericho, however disdainfully they regard him.

[215] Johnson, *Luke*, 286; Lieu, *Luke,* 148; Dorota Hartman, "The 'Children of Abraham' in Luke-Acts," *Hen* 39 (2017): 351–65, here 363.

blessings, and "especially to their form [i.e. salvation] now coming through Jesus."[216] On this basis, it matters not whether he is or was a "sinner" because, as a child of Abraham, he can enjoy a sound relationship with God.[217]

### 4.14.2 Authentic and Inauthentic Heirs to Abraham

However, according to the apocalyptic teaching of the Lukan Baptist, the conditions of the promise are changed, meaning that "mere kinship with Abraham" is no longer sufficient to gain salvation.[218] John railed against those who claimed bloodline from the patriarch but failed to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (3:8). For John, bearing fruit is a human responsibility, actualized in the Torah-based observance of ethical social behaviour, specifically involving fair dealing by the stronger parties in economic relationships (3:13–14).[219] On the basis of these practices, irrespective of whether Zacchaeus currently follows them or promises to do so in future, he qualifies, on John's re-drawing of categories, as a true child of Abraham. For the implied reader, who may still be resistant to the idea of either an honest or reformed tax collector, John reminds them how, even from the most unprepossessing material, God can "raise up children to Abraham" (3:8).

### 4.14.3 The Parabolic Abraham (16:19–31)

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where Abraham appears as a character, reinforces the connections between the practice of economic justice (which Zacchaeus claims to practice) and the attainment of a happy eternal life, which is one aspect of salvation for the implied audience. While the post-mortem Lazarus rests in the bosom of Abraham (16:22), the nameless rich man (16:22), tormented in Hades, appeals to Abraham three times as "father" (vv. 24, 27, 30). But the patriarch explains that, having neglected the needy Lazarus during their lifetimes, any appeal to Abrahamic kinship is now futile. Zacchaeus, however, unlike the parabolic rich man, appears to have heeded the lessons of Moses, the prophets (16:29, 31) and John (3:13–14)

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[216] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1226.

[217] Ibid., 1225.

[218] Hartman, "Children of Abraham," 362; Forbes, *God of Old*, 192.

[219] Nave, *Role and Function of Repentance*, 146–47.

while there was still time. Therefore, although both men are wealthy (16:19; 19:2), their fates differ, and Zacchaeus is hailed by Jesus as a "son of Abraham."

### 4.14.4 The Hospitality of Abraham

As already discussed at §4.9.1, Zacchaeus's meeting with Jesus is presented as a "hospitality encounter" strongly reminiscent of the patriarch's reception of his heavenly visitors in Gen 18:1–8.[220] In Zacchaeus's running and his joyous welcome of Jesus, he demonstrates how "Abraham's children share Abraham's character."[221] Given the fame of the patriarch's hospitality, it would be reasonable for the implied reader to assume that Zacchaeus's hospitable actions were at least partly responsible for Jesus' designation of him as a "son of Abraham."[222]

### 4.14.5 Daughter of Abraham (13:16)

Lexically, the υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ phrase evokes the woman with the bent back, a "daughter of Abraham," θυγατέρα Ἀβραὰμ, healed by Jesus in the synagogue one Sabbath day (13:16). While there are notable differences between the two episodes—she is a woman, Jesus does not know her name, he does not invite himself to her house, she does not speak to him, she is physically healed—there are many similarities to add to their Abrahamic descent. First, neither Zacchaeus nor the woman approach Jesus. Instead, it is Jesus who notices them (13:12; 19:5) and addresses them in the same manner, "Jesus … said to her, 'Woman,'" ὁ Ἰησοῦς … καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Γύναι (13:12); "Jesus said to him, 'Zacchaeus,'" Εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν, Ζακχαῖε (19:5). Second, both are victims of grumbling and complaining ("all" and the synagogue leader) to which Jesus has a ready retort. Third, from Jesus' point of view, a divine necessity is operative in both encounters. Just as it is required for Jesus to stay, δεῖ με μεῖναι, in Zacchaeus's house, so too is it essential, οὐκ ἔδει λυθῆναι, that the woman be healed (13:16). Fourth, they each have a physical condition—his smallness, her bent back—that renders them suspect in the physiognomic consciousness of their fellows.[223] With their disabilities, they are both in need

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[220] Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels,* 145.

[221] Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts*, 82.

[222] Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 145.

[223] In the physiognomic thinking of the first century, the woman's bent back, like Zacchaeus's small stature, would have been linked with her inner moral characteristics. The woman's infirmity would signify a feeble character, and very likely an evil disposition. See Parsons, *Luke*, 217. Parsons suggests that the physiognomic and misogynist characterization of the woman is furthered by Jesus' mention of the ox and donkey in the passage (13:15). Not only are Jesus' opponents more willing to aid an animal than a woman, but they are

of God's mercy, his ἔλεος, the kindness and concern that God promised his people when he swore the oath to Abraham in the days of the covenant (Luke 1:50, 54, 72–73; Gen 22:17–18; 26:3).[224]

Fifth, like the Zacchaeus pericope, Jesus makes no reference to sin, forgiveness, μετάμοια, or faith, and the woman's cure is not explicitly contingent on the presence of any of these. Nevertheless, as with Zacchaeus, salvation is present, both in the presence of Jesus and in the language of straightening and rebuilding, ἀνορθόω (13:13); healing and restoration, θεραπεύω (13:14, 14); unbinding, δέω (13:16); setting free, ἀπολύω (13:12); and unloosening λύω (13:15, 16).[225] With this dominant terminology of liberation and restoration, the reader might ask whether it is within this domain that Zacchaeus, as a "son of Abraham," principally resembles the daughter of Abraham?

### 4.15 Zacchaeus is One of the Lost (19:10)

Jesus has not yet finished his explanation for stopping with Zacchaeus "today." He concludes the encounter with another universal statement of his mission, adding to those of 4:18–19, 4:43, and 5:32.[226] Coming at a time when both Jesus and the audience know that the life of the Son of Man is drawing to a close (18:32–33), the declaration has a triple purpose. It functions as a summary of his entire ministry, serves to control retrospectively the interpretation of the Zacchaeus pericope, and bestows a new trait on the ἀρχιτελώνης: his "lostness."[227] As the final word in the pericope, carrying all the end emphasis, Zacchaeus's "lostness" is the image of him that most strikes the implied reader. Coming from Jesus, it is a characteristic that is accepted unquestioningly by the audience. Zacchaeus's "lostness" presents the reader with a critical

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also more willing to aid those animals "who symbolize negative traits such as cowardice, sluggishness, stupidity, laziness, or insolence than to help a daughter of Abraham whose status is masked, not reflected, by her physical condition." See Parsons, *Luke*, 218.

[224] "ἔλεος," kindness, compassion, concern, pity, clemency: L&N 1, §88.76; BDAG, 316.

[225] While all the other verbs are commonplace, ἀνορθόω is very rare in the New Testament, found elsewhere only in Acts 15:16 and Heb 12:12.

[226] Bovon considers that 19:10 represents "the essence of the entire Gospel." See Bovon, *Luke 2*, 600.

[227] "Lostness," in the sense of someone or something gone astray, is rare in the Gospel, found only in the Zacchaeus pericope, and in the Chapter 15 parables. Instead, the multivalent verb ἀπόλλυμι, from which comes the participle τὸ ἀπολωλός, is employed in terms of destruction (4:34; 5:37; 17:27, 29) and dying (6:9; 8:24; 9:24; 11:51; 13:3, 33; 17:33; 19:47; 20:16), sometimes with overlapping eschatological overtones (9:24, 25; 13:5; 17:33; 20:16). "ἀπόλλυμι," L&N 1, §20.31, §23.114, §57.68; BDAG, 115–16.

question: does being one of the "lost," an ἀπολωλός, equate with being a sinner, a homonymic ἁμάρτωλός, thus bracketing the mission statements of 5:32 and 19:10, or does "lostness" have a broader, deeper, more existential meaning?[228]

Had the narrative Jesus wished to be unequivocal about Zacchaeus, he might have ended his engagement with him by repeating his earlier epigram, "I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to μετάνοια" (5:32), thus putting beyond doubt the validity of the "sinner" label. While that would have resolved much of the ambiguity of Zacchaeus's characterization, it would also have closed down the narrative and left the audience with a sense of reductive finality. Such conclusiveness is not the implied author's practice. Instead, he prefers to keep his characters unfinalized and the audience actively engaged with them as they try to create meaning. The reader is therefore invited to consider the Lukan concept of "lostness" and the interpretative horizons within which it might be examined. These consist largely of the lost-seeking-finding-shepherd-sheep imagery of Ezekiel 34 and the lost-and-found parables of Chapter 15.[229]

### 4.15.1 The Lost Sheep of Ezekiel 34

Ezekiel 34 is particularly apt if the implied reader takes into account the lack of overt reference to sin or μετάνοια in the Zacchaeus pericope.[230] When Jesus identifies himself as the one who has come to seek and save the lost, ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλὸς, he alludes almost verbatim to the self-descriptions of God-as-shepherd in Ezek 34:16, "I will seek out the lost," τὸ ἀπολωλὸς ζητήσω and Ezek 34:22, and "I will save my sheep," καὶ σώσω τὰ πρόβατά μου.[231]

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[228] Tannehill suggests that 5:32 and 19:10 form an *inclusio*, and "bracket Jesus' ministry and interpret it as a whole." See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 107; Tannehill, "Zacchaeus as Rhetoric," 204–5.

[229] There are also other resonances within the Gospel. While "lostness" is rare, its corollaries of searching and finding, ζητέω and εὑρίσκω, feature prominently. Apart from their multiple appearances in Chapter 15, these verbs are also coupled in three divergent passages: when the boy Jesus goes missing in Jerusalem (2:41–50); in the parable of the fig tree (13:6–7); and in the admonition to persevere in prayer (11:9, 10).

[230] Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 119; Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1220, 1222, 1226; Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited," 161.

[231] The Septuagint-aware implied reader knows that God is widely depicted as shepherd in the LXX: Isa 40:11; Ps 23:1 (22:1 LXX); Ps 28:9 (27:9 LXX); Ps 80:1 (79:1 LXX); Jer 31:10 (38:10 LXX); Mic 7:14; and his people as the sheep of his pasture: Ps 79:13 (78:13 LXX); Ps 95:7 (94:7 LXX); Ps 100:3 (99:3 LXX); Mic 5:4; 7:14; Zech 10:3). The language is tender and caring, and the pastoral imagery of Psalm 23 (22 LXX) and Isaiah 11 is particularly sensitive. In another vein of writing, God promises to raise up David as shepherd over his people (2 Sam 5:2; Ps 78:70–71 (77:70–71 LXX) and later, in the exile, he repeats these promises (Jer 3:15; 23:4). There is no question of the sheep erring. Instead, like Ezekiel 34, Jer 50:6 (27:6 LXX) asserts that the people are lost sheep who have been led astray by false shepherds. In a third use of sheep-shepherd imagery, when people turn

The depiction of God as one who searches resounds throughout Ezekiel 34, repeated at 34:4, 6, 11, 12a, 12b, 16, while "the lost" (34:3, 16) are alternately designated as the sheep, τό προβάτον (34:3, 6b, 11, 12b, 31) or the flock, τό ποίμνιον (34:12a).

Although "the lost" of Ezekiel are in reality the exiles in Babylon, Chapter 34 figuratively defines them as the weak, the sick, the injured, the strayed (34:4, 16), the scattered (34:5, 6, 12, 21), the hungry (34:8, 29), the yoked, the enslaved, and the insulted (34:27, 29)—all categories that resonate with the saving/healing mission of the narrative Jesus to the downtrodden and unfortunate. According to Ezekiel, the "lost" are in this condition, not because of sinful choices, but because of the failures and mistreatment of their leaders.[232] Since the "lost" are blameless, there is no recrimination or call for μετάνοια issued by the prophet. Instead, God or his servant David, in their role as shepherds, promise consolation and restoration (34:12, 23, 24).[233] Because of David's prominence in Ezekiel 34, it may not be coincidental that the title "Son of David" appears twice in the immediately preceding Gospel pericope of the blind beggar (18:38, 39).[234] To the Septuagint-aware implied reader, this allusion to Jesus as Son of David links Ezekiel 34's "lost" sheep with Jesus' current ministry to the excluded.

If the Lukan Jesus is taking part of his "seeking and saving the lost" language from the sin-and-μετάνοια-free imagery of Ezekiel 34, then Zacchaeus, as an άπολωλὸς, is metaphorically a lost sheep who needs to be rescued and restored, not pardoned. Zacchaeus's symbolic scattering and straying are signified by his isolation from the community, while Jesus' figurative shepherding is expressed in his self-invitation to the unpopular Zacchaeus's home, his table-fellowship with him, and his vindication of him before the "all." In seeking hospitality with an outsider like Zacchaeus, Jesus is "fulfilling the divine will" as expressed in

away from the Lord to pursue their own path, the psalmist describes this as going astray like a lost sheep and asks the Lord to come and search for them (Ps 119:176 (118:176 LXX). The same language of straying is repeated by Isaiah, "All of us like sheep have gone astray" (Isa 53:6).

[232] Green, "Cognitive Narratorial Approach," 119.

[233] See Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 906. "As the shepherd seeks his flock … so will I seek out my sheep" (Ezek 34:12); "I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David" (Ezek 34:23).

[234] Bovon, *Luke 2*, 600; Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 907. The blind beggar is the only character to use the title "Son of David" in the narrative. However, explicit Davidic messianism featured prominently in the infancy narratives (1:27, 32, 69; 2:4, 11).

Ezekiel 34, where his openness to the tax collector makes manifest God's recovery of the lost.[235]

### 4.15.2 The Parables of Chapter 15

Shepherd and sheep discourse is not a constant feature in Luke's Gospel.[236] However, it forms the core metaphor of the Chapter 15 parables, indicating that the implied author expects the reader to be familiar with its Septuagintal associations, and will employ it as a paradigmatic referent.[237] The contexts within which the parables are narrated and the Zacchaeus pericope occurs are strikingly similar. In Chapter 15, the scribes and Pharisees grumble that Jesus welcomes tax collectors and sinners and eats with them (15:2). In a virtual mirror image, the Zacchaeus pericope presents an individual tax collector, designated a "sinner" by "all" in their complaint that Jesus dines with him. In addition to the similarity of setting, the identical language of τελώνης, ἀρχιτελώνης, ἁμαρτωλός, γογγύζω, and διαγογγύζω leads the reader to anticipate that the two passages are mutually interpretative and illuminative.

If Jesus' description of Zacchaeus as "lost" is even partially grounded in the Chapter 15 parables, a preliminary perusal might support the view that Zacchaeus is a "sinner," a lost one who is sought, found, and saved by Jesus, and experiences μετάνοια within the pericope.[238] This would undeniably be true if the sequence consisted only of the lost sheep and the lost coin parables, because the Lukan Jesus provides an explicit interpretation for both stories. Adopting the sheep and shepherd imagery of the Septuagint, he makes a symbolic identification between

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[235] Green, *Luke*, 673.

[236] Shepherds are prominent characters in the nativity narrative (2:8, 15, 18, 20). Jesus makes a reference to a slave tending sheep in the field (17:7–8). On one occasion, Jesus calls his disciples a "little flock," μικρὸν ποίμνιον (12:32). This is spoken in a context of reassurance and encouragement, the closest the narrative Jesus comes to the Septuagintal image of the shepherd caring for his sheep. Finally, in commissioning the seventy, Jesus compares them to lambs being sent out in the midst of wolves (10:3).

[237] The implied author expects the three parables of Chapter 15 to be read as one, stating, "so he told them this parable," εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην (15:3). See Stephen C. Barton, "Parables on God's Love and Forgiveness: (Luke 15:1–32)," in *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables,* ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 199–216, here 207.

[238] Hamm considers that the [Chapter 15] "associations between being lost, found, and knowing salvation, on the one hand, and the sinner repenting, on the other, surely prepare the reader to understand 19:1–10 as implying that Zacchaeus's encounter with the Lord is a matter of a sinner experiencing salvation through conversion from sinfulness." See Hamm, "Luke 19:8 Once Again," 436.

the lost sheep/lost coin and a sinner, and equates the recovery of what is lost with the μετάνοια of the sinner, whose transformation brings joy in heaven (15:7, 10).[239]

However, the third parable in the sequence, that of the lost sons, complicates this undemanding arrangement. Instead of focusing on the loss and restoration of material possessions, this "highly sophisticated" story is concerned with people, and probes existential and universal themes such as personal and family relationships, estrangement, homecoming, exclusion, self-exclusion, autonomy, rivalry, dependence, and longing, with "possessions language continuing to provide a symbolic underpinning."[240] Furthermore, in another layer of complexity, the parable of the lost sons is not one story, but a tale told in two parts. While on one level the story of the younger son can be made to broadly fit the pattern established by the sheep and the coin, the elder brother's account "transforms the overall story into something the first is not."[241] Thus, while the father (sheep owner-woman-God) character of the younger son's story interprets his son's return in lost-found-dead-alive language (15:24, 32), the substance of the elder son's section of the parable "cannot be captured in any summary statement."[242] Instead, its exploration of human "lostness" and alienation jars the audience, and its open ending generates an uneasiness that is far removed from the pastoral idyll with which the series began. This disturbing effect is enhanced because literary convention places an end stress on the third parable in the sequence, even if it concludes in anti-climax and uncertainty.

While the younger son goes astray in a "distant country" (15:13), the elder son is adrift within the very environs of home, hinting that human "lostness" is a quality that is easily overlooked because it can remain hidden within the ordinary activities of life—the elder son on the farm, Zacchaeus in his tax collecting. In their rush to celebrate and be celebrated, neither father nor younger son remember to inform the elder son who is "in the field" (15:25), and

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[239] In these parables, the joy is experienced in heaven, not by the one undergoing μετάνοια. On this analogy, Zacchaeus's joy in v. 6 cannot be equated with an experience of μετάνοια.

[240] Colin Brown, "The Parable of the Rebellious Son(s)," *SJT* 51 (1988): 391–405, here 391–92; David B. Gowler, "The Characterization of the Two Brothers in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32): Their Function and Afterlives," in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, eds. Frank Dicken and Julia Synder, *LNTS* 548 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 55–72, here 56; Johnson, *Luke*, 240; Bovon, *Luke 2,* 422; Marshal, *Luke,* 605.

[241] Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus,* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 108.

[242] Schweitzer, *Luke*, 252.

neither notice his absence from the feasting.[243] The resentful words of the elder son (15:29) reveal his distress at being unperceived by a parent who failed to miss one son out of only two—the parabolic sheep owner managed to notice one sheep missing from a hundred and the woman one coin out of ten.[244] Human beings, the parable hints, are more complicated, more problematical, and more easily overlooked and misunderstood.[245]

Within the Chapter 15 parables, therefore, Zacchaeus's "lostness" can be understood in different ways, either from the repenting "sinner" interpretations of the lost sheep, lost coin, and younger son stories or, drawing upon Ezekiel 34, from the existential dimensions of the elder son's tale, where Zacchaeus's "lostness" is a metaphor for the human condition until it is "saved" by Jesus.[246]

The passage concludes in the same way as the earlier pericopae, with a final word from Jesus, and the future of the characters left unknown and undetermined. (Will the πάντες accept Zacchaeus as part of the community, or will they leave him forever metaphorically stuck in the tree?) However, although "echo effect" is strong, it is also modified, a shift that denies the audience the simplicity of a repeating pattern.[247] Thus, while "all" face decisions about Zacchaeus and Jesus, the portrayal of the tax collector remains inscrutable. Is he an idealized figure like the anointing woman and Mary—a misunderstood man living in compliance with Torah—or a previously reprehensible individual who, on meeting Jesus, experiences a

[243] Marshall, *Luke,* 611; Levine, *Short Stories by Jesus*, 67. The reader of this dissertation will recall that, in the same way, neither Jesus nor Mary noticed Martha's absence in 10:38–42.

[244] Levine, *Short Stories by Jesus*, 49.

[245] If the implied author can portray the father/God figure in such an ambiguous manner, it should not surprise the audience that the human characters in the narrative are also complicated and contradictory, and often difficult to categorize. Harrington notes how, given his his "foolish love," the father "is the real challenge" here. See Harrington, *Reading Luke*, 129.

[246] It might be argued that existential interpretations of ancient texts involve reading modern concepts back into these documents. See Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts*, 20. Powell, however, as has already been noted, contends that the "endgame" of narrative criticism is "the engagement of texts by real readers in the real world." See Powell, "Emergence of a Prominent Reading Strategy," 19–43, here 36. In a similar way, Malbon holds that narrative criticism consistently moves "from the characters within the story world to the [real] readers or audience at its edge." See Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Characters in Mark's Story: Changing Perspectives on the Narrative Process," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, eds. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011): 45–69, here 57.

[247] The "echo-effect" is from Malbon, "Minor Characters," 75.

μετάνοια? The reader cannot be sure, and the narrative moves on without providing a resolution, leaving the audience, once again, in the "in-between."

### 4.16 Conclusion

Whether or not Zacchaeus undergoes a great conversion is unclear from the evidence of the text. It is a complex matter and not amenable to a reductive either/or conclusion. What is certain is that, according to the Lukan Jesus, Zacchaeus's defining characteristic is his "lostness," a condition in which Jesus "finds" and "saves" him in Zacchaeus's "today." It is Zacchaeus's recognition of his own "lostness" that motivates his proactive seeking (v. 3), in the real and metaphorical senses. Zacchaeus's searching is matched, and met more than half-way, by Jesus in a reciprocal and dynamic movement where the two of them are both seekers and finders.

On this symbolic level, it is themes of "lostness" and "foundness" that are being explored in the pericope. Until "found" by Jesus, Zacchaeus, a representative human being and cipher for the implied audience, was metaphorically lost, however well or badly he was living. Zacchaeus's search signifies the general human quest for purpose, meaning, belonging, and acceptance, all aspects of existence that the narrative calls "salvation." The Jesus who sees and acknowledges Zacchaeus (v. 5) is the Lord (v. 8) who embodies salvation, not in an abstract or other-worldly manner, but in a way that is actualized in the routine and mundane, especially in the interpersonal engagements of daily life. Salvation is realized in the "today" of Jesus' positive overture to Zacchaeus in its simplicity, and in the ordinariness of his self-invitation to stay in the tax-collector's house.

As a Gospel motif, "foundness" is another image that can be woven into the multivalent vocabulary of salvation, together with liberation, restoration, table-fellowship, flourishing, transformation, μετάνοια, kingdom, forgiveness, trust, love for Jesus (and, as at the crucifixion,

eternal life and "being with" Jesus).[248] These are overlapping everyday and transcendental realities that Zacchaeus, in his complex and ambivalent characterization, embodies for the implied audience as matters requiring attention and response. The "foundness" of Zacchaeus is the place where the implied author is trying to lead the readers as they too, on their quest, try to see who Jesus is (v. 3).

[248] To these might be added the homecoming of the younger son of the parable and his unqualified acceptance by his father. Instead of recrimination, there was merriment and celebration, εὐφραίνω (15:23).

# CHAPTER FIVE

# THE TWO WRONGDOERS (LUKE 23:32, 39–43)

## 5.1 Introduction

Chapter Five considers the characterization of two wrongdoers, κακοῦργοι, who are crucified with Jesus. This short, carefully constructed pericope is regarded by one commentator as the "peak of the Lucan scene of crucifixion."[1] There are four main characters in the passage: Jesus, the two wrongdoers, and the narrator. Two voices dominate, that of the narrator and the second wrongdoer. The narrator controls the first half of the pericope, while an exchange between the characters concludes it. It establishes the two κακοῦργοι as distinctive characters who are a constant presence in the final hours of Jesus' life. As such, they are given a prominence that is unique in the narrative. The three crucified men find themselves in the same existential position, poised on the boundary between life and death, with earthly dimensions of body, time, and place coming to an end. While the wrongdoers' responses to Jesus reflect some of the polarities that the implied readers have witnessed throughout the Gospel, the κακοῦργοι also manifest much of the complexity that the audience has come to expect in the implied author's characterization technique.

## 5.2 The Wrongdoers Are Introduced (23:32)

The wrongdoers are introduced by the narrator at the beginning of the pericope, characterized in "telling" or *diegetic* mode. The "telling" is spare and restrained, requiring considerable audience engagement and gap-filling. This depends on the implied reader's familiarity with the

[1] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1508; Donald Senior calls the pericope "a brilliant example of the evangelist's literary technique and theological perspective." See Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1989), 133.

dynamics of the internal narrative world and the conventions of the Judeo-Roman world beyond. The sentence that introduces the wrongdoers reads very awkwardly in Greek: Ἤγοντο δὲ καὶ ἕτεροι κακοῦργοι δύο σὺν αὐτῷ ἀναιρεθῆναι.[2] The expression ἕτεροι κακοῦργοι δύο, "two *other* wrongdoers," could give the impression that Jesus was also a wrongdoer.[3] This runs contrary to what the implied reader knows about the character and ministry of Jesus and, most recently, about his appearances before Herod and Pilate, who have each found him innocent of any charges brought (23:4, 14, 15, 22).[4] However, the turn of phrase functions to remind the implied audience that Jesus is being taken to execution *as* a wrongdoer *among* wrongdoers.[5]

### 5.2.1 Two Wrongdoers

The fact that there are "two" wrongdoers, not one or three or four, resonates with the audience. "Two" is a reminder that, throughout the narrative, the narrator has a "tendency to do things in pairs" and a propensity to present "contrasting attitudes" for the reader to consider.[6] By introducing "two" wrongdoers, an expectation is therefore created that here is another juxtaposed pair who will diverge in their response to Jesus. In addition, the term κακοῦργοι signifies to the audience that Jesus maintains to the last the "association with the lost" that has characterized his ministry.[7] Because it was precisely those whom the world discounts that the Lukan Jesus came to serve, the appearance of the wrongdoers reinforces the expectation that, even at this desolate time, his saving mission is still ongoing.[8]

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[2] Bovon, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28–24:53*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 306; Frank J. Matera, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies: Interpreting the Synoptics Through Their Passion Stories* (New York: Paulist, 1986), 183.

[3] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1499; Bock, *Luke 2*, 1867; Bovon, *Luke 3*, 306; Matera, *Passion Narratives*, 183.

[4] The Jewish leadership, supported by the crowds, brought three charges against Jesus: perverting the spiritual values of the nation (διαστρέφω) and stirring up (ἀνασείω) the people; forbidding the payment of taxes to the emperor; and calling himself Messiah, or king (23:2, 5). Pilate questioned Jesus only about the political claim to be king (23:3), while Herod's questions are not recorded.

[5] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 969; Tannehill, *Luke*, 342.

[6] Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Passion According to Luke: A Redaction Study of Luke's Soteriology* (New York: Paulist, 1985), 134. See also Michael Patella, *The Death of Jesus: The Diabolical Force and the Ministering Angel: Luke 23.44–49,* CahRB (Paris: Gabalda, 1999), 42; Wolter, *Luke II*, 528; Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1002. The audience recalls the anointing woman *and* Simon the Pharisee; Martha *and* Mary; Zacchaeus *and* the "grumblers;" the rich man *and* Lazarus; the *two* brothers in the parable of the lost sons.

[7] Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 237; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 126.

[8] Matera, *Passion Narratives*, 183; John P. Kealy, *The Gospel of Luke* (Denville, NJ: Dimension, 1979), 434. Marshall states that Jesus "is revealed as Saviour, even while dying." See Marshall, *Luke*, 871. For Carroll

Because κακοῦργος is a generic term that functions as a broad expression for any kind of law-breaker or wrongdoer, it tells the audience nothing about the nature or extent of the men's crimes.[9] There are, however, other more exact terms, already employed in the narrative, concerning rebellion (στασιαστής/στάσις), murder (φονεύς/φόνος), and banditry (λῃστής), that the implied author seems to avoid on this occasion. Thus, in the interrogation scene before Pilate, where Jesus is substituted for Barabbas, Barabbas is depicted as one imprisoned "for insurrection and murder," διὰ στάσιν καὶ φόρον (v. 25, also v. 19). Because the implied author is so specific about Barabbas's crimes, it might be inferred that it does not lie with his purposes to indicate the specific character of the wrongdoers' misdeeds.

The implied author also avoids λῃστής, a term he chose in the parable of the good Samaritan in relation to the bandits who stripped, beat, and left half dead the traveller on the road (10:30, 36).[10] Λῃστής is found in a similar sense at 19:46 on the lips of Jesus, when he drives the traders out of the temple. After loosely citing Isa 56:7, "My house shall be a house of prayer," Jesus continues in his own words, "but you have made it a cave of robbers," σπήλαιον λῃστῶν. Λῃστής is also a term rejected by Jesus in connection with himself on the occasion of his arrest at 22:52: "Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a λῃστής?" In the context of the violence and aggression of the arrest scene, it is likely that here Jesus uses λῃστής in its secondary meaning of revolutionary, insurrectionist, or guerrilla, thus proleptically disassociating himself from the crimes of Barabbas, who has not yet appeared in the narrative.

By avoiding these three terms, and instead using the generic κακοῦργοι, the implied author attempts to keep those who are crucified with Jesus free from any overtly treasonous, seditious, violent, or murderous context.[11] This has three consequences: first, it saves Jesus from guilt by association, that is, the claim cannot be made that three dangerous insurgents are

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and Green, the work of God's salvation occurs "no less at the cross than during the public ministry." See John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 72.

[9] "κακοῦργος," a criminal, evil-doer, wrongdoer, one who commits gross misdeeds and serious crimes, one who customarily engages in doing what is bad: L&N 1, §88.114; BDAG, 502.

[10] The primary meaning of λῃστής is a robber, highwayman, or bandit. Its secondary meaning is a revolutionary, insurrectionist or guerrilla. "λῃστής," L&N 1, §57.240; BDAG, 594.

[11] Johnson, *Luke*, 376.

being executed together. Second, it critiques the official justification for Jesus' execution—that he is a political and religious nonconformist who threatens the stability of Judea.[12] Third, it leaves the implied audience uncertain about how to regard the κακοῦργοι because, although the narrator establishes them as wrongdoers, he does not explain why they face execution. This is a gap that the readers must fill from their knowledge of the world behind the text. In first-century Roman Judea, capital punishment was usually reserved for individuals who threatened the Empire (under Roman legal procedures) and against dangerous and violent murderers and robbers (under both Roman and Jewish practices).[13] Depending on how much (or whether) the implied readers trust these measures, there might be an array of initial responses to the κακοῦργοι, ranging from the possibility that, like Jesus, the death sentence is undeserved, to relief that men who are dangerous to the community are rightly being executed.

### 5.2.2 To be Put to Death

Describing the κακοῦργοι as being "led away to be put to death" continues their characterization. The implied reader understands that it is only a certain kind of individual who might be crucified.[14] Since the Romans reserved crucifixion for the poorest and lowliest members of society, very often slaves, the audience may deduce that the men are peripheral individuals who are highly unlikely to be Roman citizens.[15] Although the κακοῦργοι are paired in v. 32, the narrative is not forthcoming whether the two know one another, or whether they

[12] See Joel B. Green, "The Death of Jesus and the Ways of God," *Int* 52:1 (1998): 24–37, here 27.

[13] Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 83; Mark T. Finney, *"Servile Supplicium*: Shame and the Deuteronomic Curse—Crucifixion in its Cultural Context*,"* *BTB* 43 (2013): 124–34, here 125; Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 329–31; Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus,* 169. As a conquered province, Judea was under the command of the Roman prefect based at Caesarea Maritima. Acting as the local military commander, he had "ultimate life-and-death power over everyone in the province who was not a Roman citizen. In practice, though, he let the high priest in Jerusalem, along with the priestly and lay aristocrats around him, run most aspects of internal Jewish life—provided the native aristocracy maintained good order among the Jews and saw to the collection of taxes and customs." See Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 296. Capital punishment in the Empire, in addition to crucifixion, included stoning, poison, strangulation, drowning, burning, beheading, burial while still alive, and being thrown to the beasts. Among the Jews, capital punishment could be performed by stoning, burning, beheading, or strangulation. See Sverre Bøe, *Cross-Bearing in Luke* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 52.

[14] Although the verb σταυρόω is not used until v. 33, the reader knows that the men face crucifixion: they are to die with Jesus and he is to be crucified (v. 21).

[15] Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 34, 46, 51. Because crucifixion was known as "the slaves' punishment," Romans refrained, under most circumstances, from crucifying citizens, deeming it "too shameful and ignominious a death." This restraint was not established by law, and was merely a matter of precedent. See Finney, *"Servile Supplicium*," 125–26.

are strangers who haphazardly happen to be in each another's company because this is the day on which the Romans conduct executions.

### 5.3 Is the Audience Distanced from the Wrongdoers?

At first glance, the narrator seems to present the introduction of the wrongdoers in v. 32 as summary material. That is, they and their journey to the place of execution are sparingly depicted "at a pace where the time it takes to narrate the event is significantly shorter than the elapsed time of the event itself."[16] With this type of material (the most common in biblical narratives) the narrator positions the audience such that "they whiz [sic] by the elements of the story line, able to receive only the gist of the action."[17] The brevity of the wrongdoers' introduction makes it appear as if they are merely being positioned for their central roles in vv. 39–43.[18]

However, any sense of remoteness that the audience might experience from the wrongdoers' minimal introduction is mitigated by a combination of factors. First, even in a world where "human life was cheap and violent death was common," there is an awareness that the two men are facing an imminent and horrible death, designed to cause maximum pain and humiliation to its victims, and to strike terror into the general population.[19] Second, the audience is mindful that the pair are going to die *with* Jesus, σὺν αὐτῷ (23:32), with the realization that Jesus will be in the midst of others, even in his last moments.[20] The solidarity that the wrongdoers offer Jesus, merely by their presence, contrasts with the recent bravado of

[16] Yamasaki, "Point of View," 91.

[17] Ibid., 91, 94.

[18] Green, *Luke*, 819. This contrasts with the considerable detail and slower pace with which Jesus' journey through Jerusalem is described in vv. 26–31. Here the narrator presents Jesus' journey as scene material, where everything is slowed down and the audience sees each detail as events unfold. See Yamasaki, "Point of View," 91, 94.

[19] Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 821; Bøe, *Cross-Bearing*, 61; Finney, *"Servile Supplicium*," 125. The humiliation and shame of a crucifixion death was intended to obliterate the memory of the victim and eliminate any possible following he may have gathered in life. This was an important consideration in a society where honour and shame were prized so highly, and particular emphasis was placed on an honourable death. See Michael Mullins, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary* (Dublin: Columba, 2010), 497.

[20] See Bovon, *Luke 3*, 317. Karl Barth describes how the wrongdoers go to their deaths "in solidarity and fellowship" with Jesus. See Karl Barth, "The Criminals With Him," in *Deliverance to the Captives*, trans. M. Wieser (London: Bloomsbury, 1961), 76–84, here 76. Being "with" others mattered greatly in the ancient world, where to be isolated and alone was the "worst of fates." Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 33. See also §4.7.4.

Peter who, in 22:33 declared, "Lord, I am ready to go with you, μετὰ σοῦ, to prison and to death."[21] Thus, while Peter thrice denies Jesus to escape these perils (22:54–62), it is the two wrongdoers "who had been sitting in death row" and now join Jesus in his execution.[22]

Third, because the narrator does not specify the charges against the κακοῦργοι, there may be some audience doubt whether their crimes are so momentous that they deserve death by crucifixion. Just as Jesus was the subject of a travesty of justice in Pilate's surrender to expediency, so might the wrongdoers be victims of similar dishonourable procedures (however, v. 41 will confirm that at least one of the wrongdoers considers, rather improbably, that their offences merit this death sentence).[23]

Fourth, while v. 32 is the place where the wrongdoers enter the narrative, it is not the place where they enter the story world. Verse 32 forms an *inclusio* with v. 26, although this becomes apparent to the audience only on a re-reading of the text.[24] The similarity of the language—ἀπάγω for Jesus in v. 26 and ἄγω for the wrongdoers in v. 32—suggests that the reader is to understand that Jesus and the wrongdoers underwent all or part of the journey to The Skull (v. 33) together. This narrative strategy invites the audience to consider events in the procession from the point of view of the κακοῦργοι. The wrongdoers witness everything that the narrator describes in the detailed scene material of vv. 26–31—a frail Jesus too debilitated

[21] The narrator uses σύν in relation to Jesus and the wrongdoers, and Peter uses μετά in connection with himself and Jesus. While σύν and μετά are virtual synonyms for "with," "together with," and "in company with," Smyth notes that, "when contrasted with σύν, μετά often denotes participation." See Smyth, *Greek Grammar,* §1691. This may imply how Jesus and the wrongdoers are strangers to one another while Peter, one of Jesus' inner circle, emphasizes his closeness to and familiarity with Jesus. However, contrary to this, BDAG notes that "it is hazardous to attempt to establish subtle differences is use of σύν and μετά in ref. to association, for the NT manifests a rather fluid use." See "σύν," BDAG, 961. On the other hand, BDAG also discusses how μετά can be used to denote "close association" with friends and companions, and in the sense of supportiveness, being with someone, and standing by someone. See "μετά," BDAG, 636.2α. BDF notes how μετά, meaning with, is generally interchangeable with σύν. Although μετά generally outnumbers σύν by a factor of three in New Testament and Early Christian Literature, in individual books, including Luke's Gospel and Acts, σύν is equally well represented. See "σύν," "μετά," BDF, §221, §227.

[22] Danker: *Jesus and the New Age*, 237; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 273; Barth, "The Criminals With Him," 76.

[23] From what the second wrongdoer says at v. 40, Brown posits that "Luke would like to have us think that the two wrongdoers were tried even as Jesus was, were judged … and were led off to be crucified (23:26, 32). Thus all three had the same judicial experience." See Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1004. See also Barth, "The Criminals With Him," 76.

[24] Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1138.

to carry the cross, Simon of Cyrene, the wailing women, and Jesus' words to them. Indeed, they probably witness much more than this, because they are insiders to the action, whereas the narrator is necessarily constrained and selective in the information he imparts (he cannot say everything).[25]

At this point the readers, having travelled through the Gospel with Jesus, understand far more about the current situation than do the κακοῦργοι, who have arrived late on the scene and may know nothing about Jesus (other than what they learn on this day of crucifixion).[26] Although they will soon be supreme insiders to the events of the passion, for now, from their perspective, they are merely joining up with a third man who, like them, is now cast "beyond the pale" of regular society, and is also on his way to execution.[27]

### 5.4 Through Jerusalem (19:26–31)

Unknown to the κακοῦργοι (and to everyone but the narrator and the reader), this is not a conventional crucifixion day, and all is not as might be expected. First, they witness the sight of Simon of Cyrene, a man minding his own business, encountered "walking in the opposite direction from countryside to city," being forced to carry the crossbeam, the *patibulum*, for Jesus (v. 26).[28] The audience (and the wrongdoers) must presume that Jesus is too weak or too exhausted to carry the crossbeam for himself.[29] (It was customary practice for prisoners to carry

[25] There is therefore a double audience for the action of these verses, that of the implied audience reading the narrative, and that of the wrongdoers who are participants in the story, viewing events from the inside. (On the spatial plane in these verses, the implied reader is close but, in the narrative world, the wrongdoers are even closer.)

[26] Opinions vary on whether the wrongdoers have previous knowledge about Jesus. Nolland does not attribute to them "any extensive prior knowledge" concerning him. See Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1151. Barth deems that they had "probably never heard of him before." See Barth, "The Criminals With Him," 77. Wolter considers that the second wrongdoer is aware of what has taken place in Jerusalem in vv. 2–15. See Wolter, *Luke II*, 529. Benjamin Wilson deems that the wrongdoers may have heard the repeated declarations of Jesus' innocence before the authorities. See Benjamin Wilson, "Directly Addressing 'Jesus': The Vocative Ἰησοῦ in Luke 23:42," *JBL* 136 (2017): 435–49, here 438. Green includes the second wrongdoer as one of a number of characters (the anointing woman, Zacchaeus) "who have already begun the journey of discipleship in some sense though we are never told when or how." See Green, *Luke*, 313.

[27] Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, 72.

[28] The crossbeam was typically carried to the place of execution by the condemned person himself. It was "a yoke placed across the neck, to which the outstretched arms were affixed," and on which the victim was hoisted up onto the upright stake of the cross (the *stipes*, *staticulum*). See Evans, *Luke*, 860, 861; Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 913.

[29] That Jesus was too frail to carry his cross, see Marshall, *Luke*, 863; Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1139; Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 32. Haim Cohn relates how, legally speaking, it was "flatly forbidden to ask an innocent

their own crossbeam and it can be assumed that this is what the two wrongdoers are doing.[30]) The fact that the impersonal "they" (Roman soldiers although the implied author is reluctant to clarify this fact) had to "grasp," ἐπιλαμβάνομαι, Simon indicates a degree of violence in their commandeering of him.[31]

While the audience knows that Jesus was beaten during the night by retainers of the high priest (22:63), this is not known to the κακοῦργοι, but they could presume such a chastisement from the authorities.[32] They too were almost certainly beaten by their jailers, since by Roman law flagellation usually accompanied a death sentence.[33] What the wrongdoers see and the implied audience visualize in Jesus is a physically weak man incongruously attired in the "elegant robe," περιβαλὼν ἐσθῆτα λαμπρὰν, in which Herod's soldiers mockingly garbed him during the night (23:11).[34] A detail unrecorded by the narrator (but maybe known to the implied audience) is that each condemned man, or someone in front of him, would likely have been carrying a plaque or tablet, a *titulus* or ἐπιγραφή, possibly around his neck, bearing his name and the charge against him, later to be fixed over his cross.[35] As an exercise in popular

passer-by to bear a convict's cross for him: that meant transferring part of the sentence to be served by the convict to a wholly blameless outsider." However, in practice, much was left to the discretion of the soldiers leading the prisoner. In the case of a convict unable to carry his own cross, practical measures were taken and, "to the Roman soldiers it would barely matter which Jew bore the cross, so long as they had not to do it themselves." See Haim Cohn, *The Trial and Death of Jesus* (New York: Ktav, 1977), 205–6.

[30] Bøe, *Cross-Bearing in Luke*, 63–74.

[31] "ἐπιλαμβάνομαι," to make a motion of grasping or taking hold of something; to take hold of, to grasp, to catch, to pounce on something, sometimes with violence: L&N 1, §18.2; BDAG, 374. In vv. 25 and 26 the narrative gives the impression that Pilate hands over Jesus to those who had demanded the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus—the chief priests, the leaders, and the crowds (vv. 13, 18, 23, 25) and that these are the people who lead him away, crucify him, and gamble for his clothes (vv. 26, 33, 34). It is only in v. 36 that it becomes clear that it is the Roman soldiers, οἱ στρατιῶται, who have carried out these deeds. See Johnson, *Luke,* 372; Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1505.

[32] Although Pilate promised such a chastisement (a discipline), παιδεύω, when he proposed to free Jesus (23:22), the narrative does not record whether Jesus was whipped by the Romans after he was substituted for Barabbas. See Evans, *Luke*, 860; Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1139.

[33] Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 29; Evans, *Luke*, 860; Cohn, *Trial and Death*, 191; Bøe, *Cross-Bearing in Luke*, 60; Paul W. Walaskay, "The Trial and Death of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke," *JBL 94* (1975): 81–93, here 90–91.

[34] "λαμπρός," pertaining to white garments, bright and shining, having a glistening quality, sparkling, glamorous: L&N 1, §14.50, §79.20, §79.25; BDAG, 585. Zerwick and Grosvenor describe Jesus' robe as splendid or gorgeous. See Zerwick and Grosvenor, *Grammatical Analysis*, 276.

[35] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1505; Evans, *Luke,* 871; Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 963.

communication, it was one way of publicizing the cause of execution for the purpose of deterrence.[36]

Now, winding their way out of Jerusalem, the wrongdoers get caught up with a great number of people, πολὺ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ (23:27), following the execution party. Because crucifixion could serve as a "popular entertainment," such crowds would not be unexpected.[37] Some are undoubtedly curious and maybe filled with "vulgar delight" at the gruesome spectacle, ἡ θεωρία (v. 48), to come.[38] Others, however, may already be experiencing reservations about their part in the process that sends Jesus to his death. The narrator hints at this by stating that the crowd "was following" Jesus, ἠκολούθει (v. 27), the language of gospel discipleship, just as he depicts Simon of Cyrene coming behind him, ὄπισθεν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (v. 26).[39] In addition, the narrator associates the crowd with the wailing and lamenting women, already grieving for Jesus and playing the part of mourners ahead of time.[40]

### 5.5 The Crucifixion (23:33)

Like the previous verse, v. 33 consists entirely of direct description by the narrator. The adverbial phrase "when they came to the place," καὶ ὅτε ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον, confirms the impression that the three men have walked some distance, not only spatially but also temporally, in one another's company. The narrator presents the actual crucifixion as summary

[36] Green, *Luke*, 821; Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 963.

[37] Hengel, *Crucifixion,* 35; Marshall, *Luke*, 863.

[38] Evans, *Luke*, 869; Tannehill, *Luke,* 342; Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 989. As occasions of public entertainment, K. M. Coleman notes that, because crucifixion involved a lingering death that often lasted for days, it did not have the same "spectacular appeal" of burning or being thrown to the beasts. However, the actual moment of death may have been "relatively insignificant in relation to the satisfaction spectators derived from witnessing preliminaries that culminated in the hoisting of the body unto the cross." See K. M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments," *JRS* 80 (1990): 44–73, here 56.

[39] Johnson, *Luke*, 374.

[40] Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1139; Green, *Luke*, 815. These are women who regularly turned out to witness executions, whose wailing was commonplace, and whose action was one of religious merit. See Marshall, *Luke*, 863–64. The women's lamentation takes the form of beating their beasts, κόπτω, a form of mourning that the crowd will mirror when they execution is over and they leave the scene (v. 48). Oliver Treanor suggests that the mourning scene has "all the hallmarks of epic-heroic poetry," and that the women lament Jesus as a "classic noble hero, victorious even when vanquished, idealized by the wailing chorus of ancient Greek tragedy." See Oliver Treanor, *This is My Beloved Son: Aspects of the Passion* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1997), 112. Green sees an allusion to the mourning women of Zech 12:10–14. See Green, *Luke*, 815.

material in a "restrained, matter-of-fact" manner.[41] In an example of "dramatic minimalism," shorn of detail, he tersely records that "they crucified him and the wrongdoers."[42] Unlike the following verses, which feature a "protracted description" of actions and reactions, no details of the executions are given.[43] The implied audience would have needed little elaboration, as crucifixion was a notorious and feared form of capital punishment in the ancient world.[44] Carried out at the aptly-named τό Κρανίον, The Skull, the site of execution would have been one of maximum exposure, situated outside Jerusalem's walls, possibly on high ground, and near one of the main thoroughfares into the city.[45]

The narrative continues the solidarity of Jesus and the κακοῦργοι, even if the Greek reads that they crucified Jesus *and*, καὶ, the wrongdoers, not Jesus *with* the wrongdoers, which seems to establish some distance between them.[46] This is significant in that the narrator uses σὺν in the previous verse when introducing them. Nevertheless, the narrator is clear that, having arrived together, the three are now crucified together, with Jesus in the middle. Jesus' centre position thus fulfils the words he spoke about himself at the Last Supper (22:37), citing Isaiah 53:12, "and he was counted among the lawless," καὶ μετὰ ἀνόμων ἐλογλίσθη.[47] The emphasis on the centrality of Jesus is "architectronic," creating a spatial symmetry that allows readers to

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[41] Carroll, *Luke,* 463.

[42] "Dramatic minimalism" is from Chelsea N. Revell and Steven A. Hunt, "The Co-Crucified Men: Shadows by his Cross," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John*, eds. Steven A. Hunt, D. F. Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 607–17, here 609.

[43] Evans, *Luke*, 865; Mullins, *Luke*, 497.

[44] Ancient sources contain very few details of the actual procedure of crucifixion. It was "so offensive" that writers of the "cultured literary world did not want to have anything to do with it," instead preferring euphemisms. See Bøe, *Cross-Bearing*, 62.

[45] Green, *Luke*, 819; Mullins, *Luke*, 498; Evans, *Luke*, 865. One detail that is omitted (although hinted at in v. 34b) is that all three men were stripped naked or semi-naked as a final humiliation. See Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, 169–70; Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 129. Stripping convicts was a last insulting gesture to signify their nothingness and their powerlessness, even as they still lived. While public nakedness was designed to humiliate all execution victims, it was particularly shameful for Jews, for whom modesty was connected with holiness, and nakedness considered "an offence to the sacred." See Michael L. Satlow, "Jewish Constructions of Nakedness in Late Antiquity," *JBL* 116/3 (1997): 429–54, here 433, 453. In addition, as understood by the implied audience, an act of forced public stripping signified the removal of honour, and the loss of personal identity and status. See François Bovon, *Studies in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 84.

[46] The NRSV translates this too loosely, "they crucified Jesus there with the criminals."

[47] Bovon, *Luke 3*, 306; Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 127; Evans, *Luke*, 865; Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1496. Isa 53:12 reads, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη.

visualize the scene and to focus on Jesus, the one in the prominent middle position.[48] The description enables the audience to see what anyone at τό Κρανίον would have seen, whether the crowds, the soldiers, the leaders, the execution squad, the acquaintances of Jesus, his women followers, casual passers-by on the highway, and any friends or family who may have accompanied the wrongdoers.[49]

### 5.6 "Father, Forgive them" (v. 34a)

The first to respond to Jesus' crucifixion is Jesus himself.[50] In this textually unstable part of the narrative, Jesus reveals that his dreadful situation does not jeopardize his relationship with God, whom he continues to address as "Father," Πάτερ, as he did previously at 10:21, 11:2, and 22:42.[51] By depicting Jesus as seeking forgiveness for his opponents, ἄφες αὐτοῖς (v. 34a), because they are acting out of ignorance, the "moral tone" of his response is set very high.[52] He embodies "the very standard he sets for his disciples in the Sermon on the Plain" when he advocates, "pray for those who abuse you" (6:28).[53] From the wrongdoers' point of view, suffering the same ordeal as Jesus, his concern for his (and their) executioners must seem remarkable if not inexplicable.[54] Jesus is being characterized for them (and the

[48] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 971; Revell and Hunt, "The Co-Crucified Men," 612.

[49] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1503.

[50] Green, *Luke*, 819.

[51] Ibid. The textual status of v. 34a is very uncertain, as it is omitted from many of the oldest manuscripts. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 154. Scholars engage in a "rigorous debate" on the verse's status, with "proponents of the shorter reading tending to emphasize external evidence, and defenders of the longer reading focusing on intrinsic probability." See Nathan Eubank, "A Disconcerting Prayer: On the Originality of Luke 23:34a," *JBL* 129/3 (2010): 521–36, here 521. Thus, some critics note how it seems to interrupt the flow of the story. See Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1053; Johnson, *Luke*, 376. However, many hold that it accords closely with Lukan interests. Senior summarizes the position, "It fits Luke's characteristic language and theology. The emphasis on forgiveness is typical of this Gospel, especially from a Jesus who teaches his disciples to love their enemies. And the attributing of his enemies' actions to 'ignorance' echoes similar texts in Acts (see, for example, 3:17; 13:27; 17:30). Casting it in the form of a prayer to his Father also fits Luke's manner of presentation, complementing Jesus' prayer on the Mount of Olives (22:42) and at the moment of death (23:46). A strong parallel to Jesus' prayer for forgiveness are Stephen's words directed to the Risen Christ as he is about to die: 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them (Acts 7:60).'" See Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 128–29. In a similar vein, see Marshall, *Luke*, 867–68; Johnson, *Luke*, 376; Parsons, *Luke*, 337; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 272.

[52] Bock, *Luke 2*, 1850.

[53] Ibid. Szkredka regards the phrase, "Father, forgive them," as "theologically ambiguous" and summarizes three possible interpretations from various exegetes. It can be construed as an "embodiment of love of enemy," a "device for assigning blame," or "an assertion of Jesus's moral superiority devoid of any interest in actual reconciliation." See Szkredka, "Father, Forgive Them," 80–81.

[54] See Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1144.

audience) as one who, by his non-retaliatory, uncomplaining, and composed manner is facing death in the noble and praiseworthy way so admired by ancient societies.[55]

### 5.7 Jesus is Taunted (23:34–38)

The wrongdoers are not mentioned again until v. 39, leaving Jesus at the centre of audience attention. However, in a narrative technique similar to vv. 26–31, the reader understands that the κακοῦργοι are present throughout the intervening verses as observers and interpreters of events. In these verses, through the actions and reactions of various characters, they will learn much about Jesus, adding to what they may already have gathered about him on the journey through Jerusalem. Constrained by their positions on the crosses, the crucified men can only look outward at the various groups gathered before them. These are divided by the narrator into two kinds of people, those who observe silently, and those who mock. Those who stand watching are the people, ὁ λαὸς (v. 35), presumably some of those who recently followed Jesus to the execution site (v. 27), had earlier gathered before Pilate with the chief priests and leaders (v. 13), who had insisted on the release of Barabbas (v. 18), and demanded the crucifixion of Jesus (vv. 21, 23). Neither supportive nor negative, they are reported to take no part in the mockery and derision.[56]

Those who taunt Jesus are presented in descending order of Judean social status: first the religious leaders (the chief priests and scribes), οἱ ἄρχοντες, next the soldiers, οἱ στρατιῶται, and then, as Parsons describes it, "humiliation reaches its nadir" when one of the

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[55] See Peter J. Scaer, *The Lukan Passion and the Praiseworthy Death* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005), 90; Michael Pope, "Emotions, Pre-emotions, and Jesus' Comportment in Luke 22:39–42," *NovT* 62/1 (2020): 25–43, here 36; Carroll, *Luke*, 464, 466; Johnson, *Luke*, 381; Neyrey*, Passion According to Luke*, 67. Wilson disputes that the implied author portrays a self-controlled Jesus who overcomes his passions, contending that Jesus is cast with neither "the absent passions of a Stoic nor the cheerful calm of a Socrates." Instead, she deems that the Lukan Jesus is characterized more as a "lamenting, [Isaianic] Suffering Servant" who takes on his suffering out of obedience to God. She bases much of this view on the "blood, sweat, and tears" of Jesus on the Mount of Olives. See Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 227, 219. The wrongdoers, of course, have not witnessed the emotional Jesus pray that the cup of suffering might pass him by (22:42).

[56] Bock, *Luke 2*, 1851; Lieu, *Luke*, 195. The attitude of the crowd is difficult to determine. Nolland considers them to be sympathetic. See Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1145. Bock believes they are curious. See Bock, *Luke 2*, 1851. Lieu regards them as passive. See Lieu, *Luke*, 195. Brown describes them as non-committal. See Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 919. Fitzmyer deems that their attitude is merely to be contrasted with that of the leaders. See Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1504. Heather M. Gorman discerns a "gradual transformation" in the people: from demanding Jesus' death (vv. 21, 23), to passive observers (v. 35), to mourners (v. 48). See Heather M. Gorman, "Interweaving Innocence: A Rhetorical Analysis of Luke's Passion Narrative" (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2013), 163–64.

wrongdoers also derides him.[57] The narrator has heretofore presented the leaders and the people as united in their determination to have Jesus killed (v. 13 is specific about this and, in vv. 18, 21, 23, "they"—priests, people, and leaders—demand his death).[58] Now the narrator separates them and it is the leaders and the soldiers who find common ground.[59] Using terminology and concepts appropriate to their different cultural and religious backgrounds, each group in turn challenges the identity of Jesus and demands that he prove his messiahship and kingship by physically saving himself from the cross.

### 5.7.1 The Leaders (23:35b)

The jeering of the leaders is expressed in the verb ἐκμυκτηρίζω, meaning to make fun of or to sneer, used in the imperfect tense to mark the beginning of the mockery.[60] In a strict twofold repetition, this "marvelously [sic] expressive" verb is used only once elsewhere in the New Testament, at Luke 16:14, where the Pharisees ridicule Jesus for his teaching on the impossibility of serving both God and money.[61] The leaders ironically deride Jesus' claim to be the royal Messiah, God's chosen one, who was supposed to bring salvation (1:69; 2:11, 30), and now cannot save himself (see 4:23).[62] Within their cultural horizons, the leaders understand "saving" in the sense of physical deliverance or rescue, whether from danger, illness, or death.[63] Their jeer implies that they expect a veritable Messiah to be able to save himself or deliver

[57] Parsons, *Luke*, 337. V. 36 is the first time that the audience learns that there were Roman soldiers (or Roman and other mercenaries in Pilate's service) present at the crucifixion of Jesus. The implied author has sought to play down their presence and involvement up to this. See Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1505; Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2,* 997; Lieu, *Luke*, 192.

[58] Lieu, *Luke*, 193.

[59] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1500; Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1148; Carroll, *Luke*, 467; Johnson, *Luke*, 377; Wolter, *Luke II*, 526.

[60] "ἐκμυκτηρίζω," to ridicule in a sneering and contemptuous way, to look down one's nose at someone or something: L&N 1*,* §33.409; BDAG*,* 307.

[61] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 991. The verb is also very rare in the Septuagint, found only at Ps 2:4; Ps 22:7; Ps 35:16, and 1 Esd 1:49. In a strict twofold repetition, there is ordinarily a coherence between usages, where one instance illuminates the other. In this case, the retrospective linking of the Pharisees with the sneering of the leaders is decidedly to their disadvantage.

[62] Because the readers know that Jesus is Messiah since the angel revealed it at 2:11, they understand that the leaders' taunts, intended to make fun of Jesus, actually "testify to his true identity." See Gorman, "Interweaving Innocence," 162.

[63] On salvation, see §2.12.1 and §4.13.2.

others from harm.[64] From this perspective, they assume that "a saviour on a cross is ridiculous."[65] However, their statement, "he saved others," (v 35), ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, appears to be categorical, denoting that, irrespective of their sarcasm, the leaders accept Jesus' reputation as one who has delivered others through his healings and exorcisms.[66]

The original real readers (and therefore the implied readers), two generations removed from the events at The Skull and with the advantage of post-resurrection perspective and interpretation, understand that Jesus cannot save himself by escaping death—he has predicted his fate four times (9:22, 44; 18:32–33; 22:22)—and after the resurrection will confirm to the disciples that everything, including this death, had been foretold in Scripture (24:44–46).

### 5.7.2 The Soldiers (23:36)

The soldiers disparage Jesus in various ways. First, their stripping of him and casting dice for his clothes (the elegant robe) is part of the customary "status degradation ritual" of a crucifixion.[67] Next, they verbally taunt Jesus, ἐμπαίζω (v. 36), another verb that conveys jeering and ridicule.[68] However, unlike the leaders who spoke about Jesus in the third person,

[64] Evans, *Luke*, 869. After centuries of invasion and oppression, a Jewish apocalyptic eschatological movement was widespread from the first century BCE to the second century CE. Expectation centred on a charismatic figure, a Messiah or "anointed one," who offered hope for an ideal future in which the power of the God of Israel would be dramatically manifested and universally recognized. Although "Messiah" was open to many interpretations, an ideal Davidic king was one of the most prominent types of such a figure (others included a priest or a prophet). The Davidic Messiah was invested with the characteristics of a military and political leader and was associated with triumph, not the defeat and death of Isaiah's Suffering Servant (Isa 50:6; 52:14; 53:8–9). See David B. Levenson, "Messianic Movements," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version*, eds. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 2017), 622–28, here 622–23; Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 1104–7; Meier, *The Roots of the Problem*, 218–19.

[65] David L. Balch, "Luke," in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, eds. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1104–60, here 1156; Greg Sterling, "Mors Philosophi: The Death of Jesus in Luke," *HRT* 94/4 (2001): 383–402, here 383. As Gorman puts it, for the leaders, "Jesus' actions are not consistent with his titles." See Gorman, "Interweaving Innocence," 159.

[66] Evans, *Luke*, 869.

[67] Tannehill, *Luke*, 340. The stripping and division of clothing recalls Ps 22:18, "they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots," a psalm that "expresses the anguished prayer of the just Israelite who, even as suffering and death seem about to overwhelm him, puts complete confidence in God." See Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 129–30.

[68] "ἐμπαίζω," to mock, to ridicule, to subject to derision, to make fun of someone by pretending that he is not what he says he is, or by imitating him in a distorted manner: L&N 1, §33.406; BDAG, 323. The verb appears five times in the Gospel. On the first occasion, Jesus speaks about the man who fails to budget properly for the building of a tower and must endure the consequent ridicule of his fellows (14:29). It next appears in Jesus'

as if he were not there, referring pejoratively to him as οὗτος (v. 35)—"this fellow," "this one"—the soldiers address Jesus directly, εἰ σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων (v. 37), at least acknowledging his presence, if only to mock him to his face.[69] With a different religious and cultural perspective, their derision is grounded, not in any messianic claims, but in the terminology of the political charge against Jesus.[70] Their language is identical to Pilate's query, Σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; (23:3), and the audience will soon learn that it is also the indictment recorded on the inscription over the cross (23:38). While this part of the soldiers' jibe is political, they also echo the "saving" language of the leaders, urging this "laughable candidate for royalty" to save himself.[71] As "king of the Jews," the narrator casts their offer of sour wine, not as a gesture aimed at alleviating Jesus' suffering, as sometimes happened at an execution, but as a "burlesque gift," a joke on their part, intended to depict them approaching Jesus as though serving him choice wine at a royal banquet.[72]

There are other links between the mockery of the soldiers and that of the leaders. The irony of both is expressed in the conditional conjunction εἰ, "if," (εἰ οὗτός ἐστιν, "if this one is" … εἰ σὺ εἶ, "if you are").[73] These "if" clauses imitate the language of the hostile Sanhedrin's question, εἰ σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός, εἰπὸν ἡμῖν, "If you are the Messiah, tell us (22:67).[74] More ominously, they recall the devil's testing of Jesus in the wilderness: εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, "if you are [the] Son of God …" (4:3, 9).[75] The leaders and soldiers are therefore characterized as being

prediction of his own coming mockery (18:32); then in the prophesy's fulfilment, when Jesus is jeered by retainers in the high priest's house (22:63); by Herod and his soldiers (23:11); and by the soldiers at The Skull (23:36).

[69] The demonstrative pronoun οὗτός can have unfavourable connotations, with undertones of contempt. See "οὗτος, αὕτη, τοῦτο," L&N 1, §92.29; BDAG, 740.1α. It is used in this pejorative manner in the Lukan passion account, at 23:18, 35, 38. Earlier in the narrative, the scribes and Pharisees use it to deride Jesus (5:21), as does Simon the Pharisee (7:39) and his guests (7:49). The elder son in the parable of the two lost sons employs it to disparage his younger brother (15:30), as does Peter's accuser in the high priest's house (22:59).

[70] Wolter, *Luke II*, 527; Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 997.

[71] Roy W. Hoover, "Selected Special Lucan Material in the Passion Narrative: Luke 23:33–43, 47b–49," FF 1.1 (1998): 119–27, here 121.

[72] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 997; Lieu, *Luke*, 195; Bock, *Luke 2*, 1848, 1852; Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1149; Johnson, *Luke*, 377.

[73] The implied author appreciates the ambiguities and possibilities of the εἰ. See §2.5.2 and §4.12.2.6.

[74] Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 132.

[75] Ibid. Wolter, *Luke II*, 526. The εἰ in these four statements (4:3, 9; 23:35, 37) introduces a first-class condition, in which the protasis (the 'if' clause) is assumed to be true for the sake of the argument. See Culy, Parsons, and Stigall, *Handbook,* 124, 127, 722, 723. BDF notes that "Ei with the indicative of all tenses denotes

in the same position as the devil, as they tempt a physically weakened Jesus to "perform a miracle for his own benefit."[76] This is appropriate because, in the apocalyptic thought world of the implied author and implied reader, the crucifixion is *the* critical instance in the cosmic conflict between God and Satan, where the values and way of life embodied in Jesus are lethally opposed by the representatives of the devil, here the leaders and soldiers.[77]

### 5.8 The Focus Shifts

On the spatial plane, the implied audience has, up to this point in the pericope, received a wide-angle view of the crucifixion scene. Now the focus narrows, the pace slows, and the reader views the drama from a different perspective.[78] The hitherto silent wrongdoers find their voices. Previously treated as one, they are now differentiated and individualized.[79] Having "accompanied Jesus on the way to the cross," they part company in their responses to him.[80] Although the coming face-to-face scene "humanizes the drama," the wrongdoers remain nameless, distinguished by the narrator as "one," εἷς, and "the other," ἕτερος, for our purposes "the first" and "the second."[81] In the exchange that ensues, the narrator follows the ancient literary convention that avoids dialogue between more than two characters at a time.[82] Thus, rather than engaging in a general conversation, the first wrongdoer addresses Jesus, and the second κακοῦργος responds to him; next, the second wrongdoer speaks to Jesus, and Jesus replies.

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a simple conditional assumption with emphasis on the reality of the assumption (not of what is being assumed): the condition is considered 'a real case.'" See "εἰ," BDF, §371.

[76] Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 633.

[77] Apocalyptic eschatology pervaded much of the thinking of late Second Temple Judaism. Centuries of invasion and subjugation presented serious theological problems for the concept of God's sovereignty and rule. Although ultimately hopeful that God would set all things to rights, something had to account for the terrors of the present time. The existence of another realm, a demonic world ruled by Satan, was posited as one solution. For the implied reader, the outcome of the conflict between God and Satan was never in doubt, because it was already decided in the life and death of Jesus. See Boring, *New Testament*, 104–9.

[78] Green, *Luke*, 819.

[79] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1508.

[80] Senior, *Passion of Jesus,* 134; Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1152.

[81] See Bovon, *Studies in Early Christianity*, 82.

[82] Ibid., 81.

### 5.9 The First Wrongdoer Speaks (23:39)

Before the first κακοῦργος speaks, the narrator guides audience reaction by describing him as continually "blaspheming," βλασφημέω, or reviling, slandering, and defaming.[83] This verb has recently been on the lips of the narrator (in its participle form) at 22:65, to describe how the high priest's retainers, after ridiculing, beating, and blindfolding Jesus, "kept heaping many other insults on him," καὶ ἕτερα πολλὰ βλασφημοῦντες ἔλεγον εἰς αὐτόν. It therefore aligns the attitude of the first wrongdoer with the violent and belittling behaviour of Jesus' earlier tormentors, and casts him in a negative light.[84]

When he speaks, the κακοῦργος petitions, almost demands, rescue from his terrible death. (In the call for Jesus to save himself, the wrongdoer echoes the taunts of the leaders and the soldiers. However, in the plea for his own life, he resembles Jesus who, at 22:41–42 on the Mount of Olives, also sought deliverance from his coming ordeal. The narrator, however, describes Jesus' appeal in terms of praying, προσεύχομαι, not demanding, and portrays Jesus as willing to submit to his Father's will.) The use of the imperfect βλασφημέω denotes the ongoing nature of the man's entreaty, its insistence, and its persistence. Seeing Jesus, the pretended Messiah, "reduced to the same impotence as himself," he mirrors what he has heard from the other negative figures, forming the same connection between Jesus' supposed identity and the exhortation to save himself: "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" οὐχὶ σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός; σῶσον σεαυτὸν καὶ ἡμᾶς.[85] In this third challenge to Jesus, the first wrongdoer follows the σῴζω imperative of both the leaders and the soldiers, but it is the religious "Messiah" title of the authorities that he echoes. This hints that he may be a Jew, or know something about Judaism.

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[83] "Βλασφημέω," in relation to humans: to slander, revile, or defame—all sensitive matters in an honour-shame oriented society; employed against transcendent or associated deities: to speak irreverently, disrespectfully, or impiously of or about them: L&N 1, §33.400; BDAG, 178.

[84] Earlier in the Gospel, at 12:10, using βλασφημέω in a different sense, Jesus drew a sharp distinction between those speaking against himself as Son of Man and blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. The charge of uttering blasphemy, βλασφημία, was laid *against* Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees in 5:21 over his claim to have authority to forgive sins.

[85] Byrne, *Hospitality*, 181; Bock, *Luke 2*, 1854; Wolter, *Luke II*, 528.

### 5.9.1 Is the First Wrongdoer Associated with the Devil?

The lexical alignment between the first wrongdoer and Jesus' opponents establishes a possible connection between him and the devil, ὁ διάβολος. This is for three reasons. First, the three tauntings of Jesus at The Skull match *numerically* the devil's three temptations in the desert.[86] Second, the *content* of the three crucifixion jibes follows the script of the devil's final temptation in 4:9–12, where he challenges Jesus to save himself from death. Third, at the passion, the audience understands that the devil's "opportune time," ἄχρι καιροῦ (4:13), has arrived, and that his "malevolent figure" lurks behind all the actions of Jesus' opponents.[87] The narrator is explicit about this when he informs the reader that Satan, ὁ Σατανᾶς, entered into Judas Iscariot (22:3), thus setting his betrayal of Jesus in motion. That Jesus understands that "satanic machinations" are afoot is clear when he warns Simon Peter at the Last Supper that Satan demands to sift the apostles like wheat (22:31), and goes on to warn Peter that he will deny him *three* times—another triad—as indeed Peter does (22:57, 58, 60).[88] At his arrest, Jesus declares that the "power of darkness," ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ σκότους (22:53), is now in control, a point underscored by the narrator when he describes the cosmic gloom that prevails, καὶ σκότος ἐγένετο (23:44), in the *three* hours while Jesus dies.[89]

However, the linguistic connection between Satan and the wrongdoer is more nuanced than the one between Satan and the rulers and soldiers. Although the wrongdoer echoes their challenge to Jesus' identity and power, he does not do so in an identical manner. Instead of repeating their "if," εἰ, statements (4:3, 9; 23:35, 37), the first wrongdoer poses a negative question in the οὐχί form: οὐχὶ σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός; The interrogative adverb οὐχί usually expects the answer "Yes."[90] ("Surely you are the Messiah, are you not?" "Yes I am.") But this

[86] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 984.

[87] Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, 66.

[88] The expression "Satanic machinations" is from Green. See Green, *Luke*, 778.

[89] The implied reader recognizes deep irony here: that Satan and all those involved in the death of Jesus are actually enabling him to fulfil his messianic destiny.

[90] "οὐχί," an interrogative word in questions that expect an affirmative answer, a marker of an affirmative response: L&N 1, §69.12; BDAG, 742.3; BDF, §427; Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §2651; Culy, Parsons, and Stigall, *Handbook*, 207. As an interrogative adverb expecting the answer "Yes," οὐχί is used on ten other occasions in the Gospel: Is this not Joseph's son? (4:22); Will they both not fall into a pit? (6:39); Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? (12:6); Will (the king) not sit down first? (14:31); Will (the woman) not light a lamp? (15:8); Will (the master) not say to him? (17:8); Were not ten (men with leprosy) made clean? (17:17); Is it not the one reclining at table? (22:27); Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things? (24:26); Were not our hearts burning within us? (24:32).

potentially positive reading is qualified because the text gives several indications how the implied audience is to regard the first wrongdoer's attitude. First, before he speaks, the narrator describes the first wrongdoer's speech as "blaspheming." This adds a tone to his words that is missing if the words are presented without the description (this is similar to the narrator pronouncing Martha as "distracted" before she speaks in 10:40). Next, because the audience is witnessing another Lukan "dramatic triangle" comprised of Jesus and a "pair of narrative twins," it is primed to anticipate that one character will respond positively, and the other not.[91] The narrator's use of "blaspheming" strongly suggests that the first wrongdoer is the one to react negatively. Finally, the wrongdoer's rider to his οὐχί question, to "save yourself and us," appears equivalent to a negative condition: "If you do not save yourself and us, then you are not the Messiah."[92]

For the implied audience, the context suggests that the wrongdoer does not seriously consider that Jesus is the Messiah or, if he does, that he has an inadequate idea of the Χριστός, where saving himself means coming down from the cross and escaping death.[93] Nevertheless, because the first wrongdoer does not replicate the "if" declarations, it may indicate that the implied author, to a degree, distances him from the malice of Satan and the others.[94] This shading of the first wrongdoer's characterization is furthered because he differs from the leaders (his fellow Jews) by speaking directly *to* Jesus, whereas they addressed their remarks *about* him to one another, derisively referring to Jesus as οὗτος, "this one."

### 5.9.2 Jesus Does Not Respond to the First Wrongdoer

Jesus makes no reply to the first wrongdoer. This might surprise the implied reader who knows that, during his ministry, Jesus often responded to similarly hopeless, seemingly irredeemable situations. The audience recalls how, on request, Jesus restored an individual man with leprosy

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[91] Wolter, *Luke II*, 528.

[92] Marshall, *Luke,* 871.

[93] Wolter, *Luke II*, 528; Johnson, *Luke*, 380.

[94] Evans, however, deems that the wrongdoer's "impious utterance" is similar to that of the rulers: "It starts from the supposed messiahship of Jesus, which is now put in the rough and ready, and more insulting, form of a question," introduced by "Are you not?" οὐχί; See Evans, *Luke*, 872. Bock is in agreement. He considers that the taunt is expressed "as total sarcasm, using the more bitter form of first class condition," and that, although the premise is presented as true, it is not what the speaker really believes. See Bock, *Luke 2*, 1854.

(5:12–14); cured the centurion's servant (7:1–10); calmed the storm (8:22–25); heard the silent petition of the woman with the flow of blood (8:43–48); raised Jairus' daughter (8:40–42, 49–56); exorcized a child's unclean spirit (9:38–42); cured the ten men with leprosy (17:11–19); and restored sight to the blind man of Jericho (18:35–43). The first wrongdoer's desperate plea for deliverance follows the pattern of these distressed petitioners.[95]

In considering Jesus' lack of response, the audience cannot conclude that it is because the κακοῦργος, as a wrongdoer, is unworthy of a reply. The reader knows that previous cures and exorcisms were not necessarily linked to the dispositions of their beneficiaries.[96] Instead, the reader is to understand that today the wrongdoer's σῴζω plea, although plausible and compelling, is pointless: Jesus is unable either to come down from the cross himself (he is fulfilling his Father's will) or bring the wrongdoer with him. Although the polyvalent verb σῴζω has featured throughout the Gospel (employed by Jesus ten times out of sixteen, the last occasion with Zacchaeus), its recent use by the leaders and the soldiers has emptied it of meaning.[97] Just as Jesus did not reply to their σῴζω taunts, neither does he respond to the κακοῦργος.

Describing the σῴζω appeal as "blaspheming" stands in sharp contrast to how earlier (successful) petitioners' requests were presented: the first man with leprosy pleaded, δέομαι (5:12); the centurion's friends and Jairus implored, παρακαλέω (7:4; 8:41); the apostles spoke, λέγω (8:24); the father of the boy with the demon cried out, βοάω, and begged, δέομαι (9:38); the ten men with leprosy raised their voices, αἴρω (17:13); and the blind beggar of Jericho called out, βόαω, and shrieked, κράζω (18:38, 39). None of these verbs carry the pejorative overtones of βλασφημέω."[98] Therefore, while "blaspheming" depicts the wrongdoer's request as mistaken in itself, it also functions to distance the audience from him.

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[95] Jesus sometimes got involved when there was no request for intervention—the widow's son (7:11–15); the woman with the bent back (13:10–13); the man with dropsy (14:1–4); the high priest's slave (22:50–51).

[96] For example, before he raised Jairus' daughter, Jesus was subjected to mockery and ridicule, καταγελάω (8:53), from the entourage at the dead girl's home, yet it did not prevent him raising the child.

[97] Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 182.

[98] "δέομαι," to plead, to request, to ask for something pleadingly: L&N 1, §33.170; BDAG, 218. "παρακαλέω," to ask for earnestly, to implore, to entreat: L&N 1, §33.168; BDAG, 764–65. "βοάω," to shout, to call, to cry out: L&N §33.81; BDAG, 180. "κράζω," to shout, to cry out, to scream, to shriek: L&N 1, §33.83; BDAG, 563–64.

Identification with the κακοῦργος is further reduced because, in his failure to grasp the reality of his predicament, he presents a contrast to Jesus, whom the Gospel has portrayed as possessing a "proper discernment of the times."[99] In Jesus' own words, he knows what happens when the wood is dry (23:31). Thus, at τό Κρανίον, while the first wrongdoer seeks an escape, Jesus accepts his fate, accepting that the cup will not be taken away from him (22:42).

Although he does not grasp the inexorable nature of his situation, the wrongdoer, by addressing Jesus, almost seems to expect an engagement with him.[100] This is, after all, a one-on-one dialogue, unlike the barrage of abuse from the leaders and soldiers. But the implied reader never knows if Jesus intends a reply, because the first κακοῦργος is interrupted by the second. Normally, Jesus is depicted as responding to challenges (5:22, 31; 6:3, 8, 9; 7:40; 11:39; 13:15; 16:15), but now he allows the second wrongdoer to speak, thus giving him "unusual prominence" and affirmation.[101] Jesus' reticence does not altogether surprise the implied audience because, despite provocation, he has been largely silent up to this point in the crucifixion narrative, apparently content to let events take their course.[102]

### 5.10 The Second Wrongdoer Responds to the First (23:40–41)

Before he speaks, the implied author prepares the audience response by informing them that the second wrongdoer "rebuked" the first, ἐπιτιμάω.[103] The implied reader is familiar with this verb because it has it has already featured several times in the narrative. Significantly, Jesus is reported to rebuke diabolic entities like illnesses (4:39), storms (8:24), and evil spirits (4:35, 41; 9:42), thus implying a connection between the first wrongdoer and these cosmic bodies.[104]

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[99] Green, *Luke*, 741. For example, in the parable of the fig tree (21:29–30), or in his interpretation of weather signs (12:54–55), Jesus suggests that people need to learn lessons from the world of experience and common sense.

[100] In this, he is similar to Martha, who expects Jesus to intervene in her grievance with Mary.

[101] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 126.

[102] However, Jesus is no "passive pawn in the grip of larger forces" … nor is he "overtaken by a fate for which he is ill-prepared: in full obedience to his Father he goes to his appointed destiny, through death and to glory." See Nolland, *Luke18:35–24:53*, 1139.

[103] "ἐπιτιμάω," to express strong disapproval of someone, to rebuke, reprove, censure, denounce, also to speak seriously or to warn in order to prevent an action or bring one to an end: L&N 1, §33.419; BDAG, 384.

[104] On three occasions, it is not Jesus who rebukes. The disciples reprove the people who bring the children to him (18:15); the crowds reproach the blind beggar of Jericho, trying to quieten him (18:39); and some Pharisees censure Jesus to silence the disciples who greet him on the Mount of Olives (19:39).

The verb also appears on the lips of Jesus when he directs, "If your brother sins, you must rebuke the offender," ἐὰν ἁμάρτῃ ὁ ἀδελφός σου ἐπιτίμησον αὐτῷ (17:3). The implication of this is that Jesus supports the second wrongdoer in his reproach of the first.[105] By "rebuking" his fellow, the second wrongdoer is doing what Jesus says he must do, and what Jesus himself does. Thus, their points of view are aligned. As Jesus is the most privileged point-of-view character in the Gospel, and the second κακοῦργος is now harmonized with him, it follows that the second wrongdoer's perspective is valid and is one that the implied reader is expected to embrace.[106]

The second wrongdoer's rebuke of the first may be assessed on various levels. First, unlike the first wrongdoer, he makes no plea for his life, recognizing that there is no hope now of being saved from death. This realism mirrors Jesus' acceptance of his own coming death, a fate that he never tries to evade as he winds his way towards Jerusalem (9:51, 53; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28). It is also similar to the pragmatic "coming to himself," εἰς ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἐλθὼν (15:17) of the parabolic younger son when he assesses his desperate situation and decides what action to take for survival. Second, because the three men are being crucified together, the κακοῦργος cannot understand how one sharing the same punishment as Jesus can join in the taunting and mockery.[107]

Third, while the second κακοῦργος takes responsibility for his crimes, conceding that he is guilty of the charge for which he is being executed, he is not explicit about sorrow or μετάνοια.[108] However, this may be implicit in his reference to the fear of God.[109] Fourth, in

[105] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 126.

[106] See Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 17.

[107] Lieu, *Luke*, 195; Nolland, *Luke*, 1152–53.

[108] Lieu, *Luke*, 195; Wolter, *Luke II*, 529; Evans, *Luke*, 872.

[109] Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 634. Tannehill considers that taking responsibility for his deeds is an "aspect of repentance." See Tannehill, *Luke*, 343. Marshall also believes that "to accept one's punishment as justified is an expression of penitence." See Marshall, *Luke*, 872. Fitzmyer similarly concludes that the wrongdoer's recognition of his guilt "implicitly expresses his *metanoia* before God." See Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1509. Bock also considers the wrongdoer's confession of guilt is one of "recognition and repentance." See Bock *Luke 2*, 1856. Bovon states that, "to acknowledge one's guilt and to fear God are, in the eyes of the writer of this episode, an act of repentance and the beginning of conversion." See Bovon, *Luke 3*, 310. On the other hand, Brown questions whether the recognition of his own guilt and of Jesus' innocence are equivalent to repentance (*metanoia*) on the part of the wrongdoer. He cites how the Lukan Jesus healed the ear of the high priest's servant (22:51), how his very presence healed the enmity that had existed between Herod and Pilate (23:12), and how he prays for forgiveness for those who are crucifying him (23:34). Brown concludes, "Obviously, then, interpreters cannot

accepting his guilt, he admits that their shared crimes merit this form of execution.[110] While such a concession might be part of his pragmatic attitude to life (and death), it also appears somewhat improbable, given the "obscenely painful and ugly death of crucifixion."[111] However, it serves as a foil for the next point made by the wrongdoer: that, unlike them, Jesus *is* an innocent man who has done nothing wrong, literally "out of place," ἄτοπος.[112] This is the fifth statement of Jesus' innocence, a "street-level" recognition to parallel the high-level affirmations of Pilate and Herod (23:4, 14, 15, 22).[113]

Fifth, while the text gives no direct indication whether the κακοῦργοι are Jews or gentiles, believers or unbelievers, the second wrongdoer is characterized as one who fears God, and who accepts that all are under God's judgment as they face death.[114] The "fear of God" motif is familiar to the implied audience from both the Septuagint and the Gospel, inviting the reader to interpret its current usage through their lenses.

### 5.10.1 The fear of God

The "fear of God" is an underlying Septuagintal and wisdom theme, where it signifies "religious devotion in the richest sense of the phrase … that which every human being owes the Creator."[115] Thus the LXX closely links the fear of God with serving him, loving him, and obeying his law (Deut 6:13; 10:12–13; 1 Sam 12:14; Sir 23:27).[116] God, as creator, is

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demand that *metanoia* must have existed in the heart of this crucified wrongdoer who recognized that Jesus had not done anything disorderly, deserving condemnation." See Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1004–5. In a similar vein, Evans considers that "it is not the moral attitudes of penitence and forgiveness that are prominent, but the religious attitudes of piety and faith." See Evans, *Luke*, 872.

[110] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1004; Bovon, *Luke 3*, 310. Bovon considers that the second wrongdoer's use of δικαίως, "rightly," and ἄξιος, "worthy," confirms his belief that the punishment corresponds to what he and his fellow wrongdoer have done. See Bovon, *Luke 3*, 310.

[111] Gerald O'Collins, *The Calvary Christ* (SCM: London, 1977), 52.

[112] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1508; Marshall, *Luke*, 872.

[113] Nolland, Luke *18:35–24:53*, 1153. Fitzmyer describes this declaration of innocence as coming from "one of the dregs of humanity." See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Luke the Theologian: Aspects of His Teaching* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1989), 207.

[114] Johnson, *Luke,* 378.

[115] Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 85. "φόβος," "φοβέω," "φοβέομαι," respect, awe, and reverence before God; fear, terror, intimidation, apprehension, or amazement for someone or something: L&N 1, §25.251, §25.254, §53.58, §53.59, §87.14; BDAG, 1060–62.

[116] C. Stephen Evans, "Accountability and the Fear of the Lord," *SCE* 34.3 (2021): 316–23, here 317.

acknowledged as having authority over humans, with the right to command them, and to expect obedience and accountability. The biblical writers see this accountability as a positive virtue, and the stipulations of Torah as "a gracious expression of his love."[117]

But in a relationship where there are laws and accountability, there is always the possibility of judgment. When someone is described as "not fearing God," as the second wrongdoer pronounces the first, that person is deemed to indulge in evil deeds (Ps 36:1; Eccl 8:12–13).[118] Such people are not expecting God's judgment, but judgment always comes (Ps 36:6, 12; Prov 1:26–29). On the other hand, the one who fears God and hates evil (Prov 8:13), as the second wrongdoer seems to do, is deemed blessed (Ps 112:1; 128:1), has learned wisdom and discipline (Prov 15:33; 1:7), and is on the way that leads to life (Prov 10:27) and security (Prov 19:23).

In the Gospel, the lexemes φόβος, φοβέω/φοβέομαι occur extensively (seven and twenty-three times respectively) across a range of meanings.[119] However, the "fear of God" image features just twice. In Mary's Song of Praise, she extols how "God my saviour" (1:47) has mercy "for those who fear him from generation to generation" (1:50), an attitude that reflects the LXX attitude of confidence in the goodness, mercy, and trustworthiness of God.[120] The "fear of God" features in a different context in the parable of the widow and the unjust judge. First, the narrator characterizes the judge as one "who neither feared God, τὸν θεὸν μὴ φοβούμενος, nor had respect for people" (18:2), and then the judge defines himself in similar terms, "I have no fear of God, καὶ τὸν θεὸν οὐ φοβοῦμαι, and no respect for anyone" (18:4). Yet, however arrogant, unscrupulous, and overconfident is the judge, and however little he may confess to fearing God, he is forced to come to terms with the stubborn widow who refuses to give up her petition.

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[117] Ibid., 318.

[118] Neyrey, *Passion According to Luke*, 134–35.

[119] Furthermore, the multivalent quality of "fear" features in many synonyms. Θαυμάζω is the most common of these, figuring thirteen times, while others include θαύβος, ἐξίστημι, ἔκστασις, πτοέω/πτοέομαι, τρέμω, and ἐκπλήσσω/ἐκπλήσσκμαι. See Aída Besançon Spencer, "'Fear' as a Witness to Jesus in Luke's Gospel," *BBR* 2 (1992): 59–73, here 72–73.

[120] Lk 1:50 cites Ps 103:17 (102:17 LXX) almost verbatim, "But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him," τὸ δὲ ἔλεος τοῦ κυρίου ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐπὶ τοὺς φοβουμένους αὐτόν.

The implied audience recognizes that the first wrongdoer, like the judge, is facing a reality from which there is no escape. And when they hear the "fear of God" phrase on the lips of the second wrongdoer they appreciate that, like Mary, he is articulating a laudable Septuagintal attitude towards God, one that promises mercy and blessings. They await the unfolding of the pericope to discover if this assurance will come to pass.

### 5:11 "Jesus" (23:42)

The second κακοῦργος now turns from the first wrongdoer to Jesus, addressing him intimately and directly with the personal name "Jesus," Ἰησοῦ.[121] This is the only time in the Gospel that the name, in direct address, is not accompanied by some other designation or reverential title (Jesus of Nazareth; Jesus, Son of the Most High; Jesus, master; Jesus, Son of David).[122] Not even his mother called the twelve-year-old boy "Jesus" when she found him in Jerusalem, instead addressing him as "child," τέκνον (2:48); nor did any of his apostles do so, his inner circle and closest companions.[123]

The surprising use of the vocative by the second wrongdoer represents a deliberate choice by the narrator, who could have chosen otherwise.[124] Thus, he might have had the wrongdoer address Jesus as κύριε, "lord" (Peter at 5:8; 12:41; 22:33), ἐπιστάτα, "master" (Peter at 5:5; 8:45; 9:33), or διδάσκαλε, "teacher" (Simon the Pharisee at 7:40; the lawyer at 11:45; the Sadducee at 20:28); or he might have eliminated the vocative case entirely by means of the dative, καὶ ἔλεγεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ, or with a prepositional phrase, καὶ ἔλεγεν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν.[125] The narrator's choice of the familiar Ἰησοῦ therefore functions to characterize the second

[121] Brown calls this address "stunning in its intimacy." See Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1005.

[122] Ibid., 1005; Evans, *Luke*, 873. There are four instances of "Jesus" being addressed with a designation attached: 4:34 and 8:28 by demons; 17:13 by the ten men with leprosy; 18:38 by the blind beggar of Jericho. Wilson sees a connection between the second wrongdoer, the men with leprosy, and the blind beggar as the only non-demoniac characters to address Jesus in this manner. All have a need, they turn to Jesus in hope, and he responds positively to them. See Wilson, "Directly Addressing 'Jesus,'" 440.

[123] Brown appreciates the irony that the first person with the confidence to be so familiar with Jesus is a convicted wrongdoer. See Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1005.

[124] Wilson, "Directly Addressing 'Jesus,'" 437.

[125] Ibid., 436–37. Neither of these expressions is found in the Gospel. Instead, the name is eliminated and a pronoun is substituted in such phrases as εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ διάβολος (4:3), and οἱ δὲ εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτόν (5:33), or a title replaces the name "Jesus," Ζακχαῖος εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν κύριον (19:8).

wrongdoer. By granting him its unparalleled use, the implied author again endorses the κακοῦργος as a point-of-view character and marks the material that follows as of special note.

With the designation "Jesus," it is the personal nature of the encounter that first strikes the audience. On this level, the second wrongdoer might be addressing "Jesus" out of compassion for one seemingly dying without friend or family support (Jesus' friends or acquaintances, οἱ γνωστοὶ, are not mentioned until v. 49), and derided by all, including the first κακοῦργος who shares his fate and might be expected to know better. Whether the second wrongdoer believed that "Jesus" was the Messiah, or God's chosen one, or king of the Jews, or had a kingdom, or could save anybody, or was merely delusional, his familiar use of the name is a means of combatting his universal rejection.[126] On another level, whether known or unknown to the wrongdoer, the name Ἰησους—first introduced at the Annunciation (1:31) at Jesus' conception and now appearing at his death—means "the Lord saves," or "God is salvation."[127] The name is thus "a play on the terminology of salvation" that has dominated the passion scene, and where the verb σῴζω appears four times (vv. 35 twice, 37, 39).[128]

### 5.11.1 "Remember me" (23:40)

The second wrongdoer, however, does not ask to be saved; he asks instead to be remembered.[129] In the Greco-Roman world, to be remembered was an important aspiration, since remembrance was a form of presence, a survival in the memory of another.[130] The

[126] See Peter Steinfels, "Note from the Good Thief," *Commonweal*, 135.6 (2008): 30, here 30.

[127] Johnson, *Luke*, 378; O'Collins, "Salvation," 910. See §4.13.1 for discussion on the name Ἰησους.

[128] Wilson, "Directly Addressing 'Jesus,'" 446.

[129] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1508. Both Brown and J. Duncan M. Derrett see a resonance between this incident and Genesis 40, the story of the chief baker and chief butler (cupbearer) to Pharaoh who were imprisoned with Joseph in Egypt. The butler eventually was reinstated to Pharaoh's court, while the baker was hanged on a tree. Joseph had interpreted both men's dreams while in prison. Foreseeing the positive future awaiting the butler, Joseph asked, "Remember me, μνήσθητί μου, when it is well with you; please do me the kindness to make mention of me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this place" (Gen 40:14). Although he first forgets about Joseph (Gen 40:23), the butler eventually remembers (Gen 41:9) and takes him to a prestigious place at court (Gen 41:40) just as, in the Lukan story, Jesus takes the wrongdoer with him to paradise. See Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1002–3; J. Duncan M. Derrett, "The Two Malefactors (Lk. xxiii 33, 39–43)," in J. Duncan M. Derrett, *Studies in the New Testament: Vol. 3: Midrash, Haggadah, and the Character of the Community* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 200–214, here 201–10; Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1002–3.

[130] Johnson, *Luke*, 338; Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 228.

wrongdoer's request is therefore particularly poignant, as the dishonourable death of crucifixion was intended to obliterate the memory of its victims.[131]

Like the "fear of God" motif, "remembering" is another image that resonates in the Septuagint and the Gospel.[132] In the Septuagint, "remembering," μιμνῄσκομαι, is manifested in various ways. First, the people are urged to remember God and all that he has done for them (Deut 8:18; 1 Chr 16:12; Jer 51:50; Jonah 2:7; Ps 103:17–18). Second, God is described as remembering his covenant (Gen 9:15; Exod 2:24; Ps 111:5). Third, God is portrayed as one who remembers his people: Noah (Gen 8:1), Abraham (Gen 19:29), Rachel (Gen 30:22), Hannah (1 Sam 1:19), and Ephraim (Jer 31:20). Fourth, like the second κακοῦργος, various characters in the Septuagint petition God to remember them: thus Hannah (1 Sam 1:11), Nehemiah (Neh 5:19), Job (Job 14:13), and Jeremiah (Jer 15:15) all cry out, "Remember me." In the psalms, the plea to God to "remember," as with the wrongdoer, is often a cry for help and deliverance (Ps 25:7; Ps 74:2, 18, 22; Ps 106:4).[133]

The verb μιμνῄσκομαι features six times in the Gospel. It is found directly on the lips of Mary (1:54), Zechariah (1:72), the parabolic Abraham (16:25), the second wrongdoer (23:42), and the "men in dazzling clothes" at the empty tomb (24:6). In addition, the women at the tomb are reported as "remembering" Jesus' words concerning his death and resurrection (24:8). In all these contexts of Gospel "remembering," as with the dying wrongdoer, there are eschatological and liminal overtones, of characters on a boundary between one state of existence and another.[134] Furthermore, the wrongdoer's "remembering" places him within the

[131] Mullins, *Luke*, 497. The fear of being forgotten was made worse because the crucified person was often denied burial, with the corpse left on the tree to rot, or as food for scavenging birds. See Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, 169–70. Thus, for execution victims, there were rarely any of the usual Greco-Roman or Jewish funerary customs and mourning rituals, nor was there a grave marker, on which was often inscribed the request for remembrance. See Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 228–32; James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 44–46; Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1005.

[132] The primary meaning of μιμνῄσκομαι is to recall information from memory, to remember, recollect, remind oneself. Its secondary meaning is to think of and call attention to something or someone, to make mention of someone, and its tertiary meaning is to give careful consideration to something, to remember, think of, care for, be concerned about, keep in mind (probably the meaning intended by the wrongdoer). "μιμνῄσκομαι," L&N 1, §29.7, §29.16; BDAG, 652.

[133] Lieu, *Luke*, 195.

[134] With a different, but similar verb, ὑπομιμνῇσκω, Peter is also reported as "remembering." This happens in the high priest's courtyard, when Jesus turns to look at him and Peter remembers (22:61) how Jesus predicted his betrayal (22:34). The remembering triggers the tears that, in a way that is unrecorded in the narrative,

small group of exalted characters—Mary, Zechariah, and the heavenly messengers—who prophetically interpret the course and significance of Jesus' life. Being included in this select company confirms the second κακοῦργος as one with true discernment concerning the events at τό Κρανίον.

The second wrongdoer's μνήσθητί μου triggers the audience's recall of another instance of recent Gospel "remembering." The wrongdoer's request evokes Jesus' own words at the Last Supper, when he urged the apostles to remember him in the ritual act of the breaking of bread (22:19).[135] However, instead of the familiar μιμνῄσκομαι, a noun is employed, ἀνάμνησις, its only appearance in any of the gospels.[136] By changing the vocabulary in this manner, it is as if the implied author is playing in the semantic field of remembering, teasing the audience with an echo, not a repetition, of what it has encountered elsewhere. This encourages a re-reading or re-hearing of the Last Supper passage to secure the reference. On doing so, in addition to its eucharistic emphasis, the readers also understand how Jesus' request for remembrance, like the wrongdoer's, highlights his own humanity and vulnerability as he faces imminent death.[137]

Although no vocabulary of "remembering" is found in the parable of the two lost sons (15:11–32), a connection is nonetheless established with the passion scene. The implied audience recalls the father who remembers his two errant sons, waiting on the younger to come home, and going out to the field to draw the elder back in. For their part, each son wants to be remembered (or at least not forgotten), the younger adrift in a foreign land, but prepared to admit his error, and the elder astray on his own doorstep. The second κακοῦργος resembles the younger son, pragmatic, clearsighted, and trying to make things right, while the first wrongdoer is like the elder brother, driven to frustration, unwilling to recognize or accept his situation, while the solution to his predicament all the time lies within his grasp, if he can only realize it.

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begin Peter's restoration to the company of the apostles and to the witness of the empty tomb (24:12). "ὑπομιμνῇσκω," L&N 1, §29.10; BDAG, 1039.

[135] In the world behind the text, Luke's audience are second or third-generation Eucharistic Christians, meeting to break bread and to remember the words of Jesus.

[136] "ἀνάμνησις," a derivative of ἀνάμιμνῄσκω, meaning to cause to recall and to think about again: L&N 1, §29.11; BDAG, 68.

[137] Williams notes how Jesus, in taking on an "earthly, temporary identity," makes himself "vulnerable to loss and suffering." See Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 11.

### 5.11.2 "When You Come into Your Kingdom"

At first reading, the second wrongdoer's mention of kingdom seems to mirror the royal and administrative βασιλεία language (however ironical its thrust) of Pilate, the soldiers, and the inscription on the cross.[138] However, since the κακοῦργος does not ask to be rescued in a physical way, as though Jesus could call upon an earthly force, the audience understands that he does not employ "kingdom" in the context of a worldly realm, but in its Gospel and Septuagintal sense.

"Kingdom" first recalls the Annunciation scene where "royal" language of θρόνος, βασιλεύω, and βασιλεία featured prominently in the angel's predictions to Mary (1:32–33). By way of fulfilment, the "kingdom of God" metaphor, ἡ βασιλέια τοῦ θεοῦ, becomes a central component in the teaching of the Lukan Jesus.[139] It is an image drawn from the Septuagint where it suggests, not a space or place, but the "dynamic notion of God powerfully ruling over his creation, over his people, and over the history of both."[140] The implied author re-interprets and reshapes the Septuagintal image of "kingdom" in terms of its relationship to the coming of Jesus.[141] The narrative proposes that the kingdom has arrived, in some way or to some degree, "however partially or symbolically," in his person and ministry.[142] Jesus' words, deeds, and re-

[138] "βασιλεία," kingship and royal power; or God's rule, and the royal reign of God: L&N 1, §37.64; BDAG, 168–69.

[139] John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Volume Two: Mentor, Message, and Miracles,* ABRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 239. The "kingdom of God" appears across a wide variety of the Lukan Jesus' teaching—parables (13:18, 20); prayer (11:2); beatitudes (6:20); eschatological prophesies (21:31); cures and miracles (10:9); and instruction stating the requirements for entrance into the kingdom (18:22–25, 29–30). Ibid., 238.

[140] Ibid., 240. The Septuagint does not present the "kingdom" or "reign" or "rule" of God systematically or didactically, but as a narrative, recounting the story of God's dealings with humanity in general, and with Israel in particular. Because no one part of the LXX spells out the entire story in detail, the symbol of God's kingship is multivalent and tensive, with many facets and dimensions—present, future, and eternal. Ibid., 252. The future aspect of God's kingdom grew in significance in Late Second Temple and intertestamental Judaism when an apocalyptic outlook generated hopes for a better future. This might take the form of a "restoration-but-vast-improvement of David's original kingdom, or a return to paradise on earth, or a heavenly kingdom beyond this world of time and space." Ibid., 241. It also included, in some circles, an anticipation of a messianic figure, who would usher in the age of renewal in the present time and place. See §5.7.1, footnote #64. It is within this broad horizon of understanding and expectation that the implied writer introduces "kingdom" into the narrative and the implied reader receives it.

[141] Green, *Luke*, 629.

[142] Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 398, 450.

ordering of human relationships are indicators of the kingdom's existence here-and-now, realized in the present moment.[143]

But the narrative also presents the kingdom as a future-yet-imminent phenomenon, attested in the prayer and instruction of Jesus: "Let your kingdom come" (11:2); "for I tell you that from now on I may not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God may come" (22:18). Above all, in the image of the eschatological banquet, familiar from Isa 25:6, Jesus promises a reversal that is coming to life's unfortunates: the poor, the hungry, those who weep (6:20–21), the physically disabled, and the blind (14:13), all of whom will enjoy the metaphorical feast, ἡ δοχή (14:13).[144] (The κακοῦργοι might be added to such a list of those who have fallen by the wayside.) In contrast, the evildoers, ἐργάται ἀδικίας, literally the "workers of unrighteousness" (13:27), will be excluded from the table. They will have no place in the kingdom, instead weeping and gnashing their teeth (13:28) when realization dawns, too late (like the rich man in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus [16:19–31]), of what is lost.

At το Κρανίον, the wrongdoers encounter Jesus in a liminal place where the present-and-realized kingdom actualized in his person is melding into his future-yet-imminent kingdom as death approaches. While all three crucified men are in an identical situation, with time running out, no place to go, and their earthly existence about to be annihilated, the audience recognizes that the wrongdoer, in accepting that Jesus will not physically save himself or the two κακοῦργοι from the cross, envisages "kingdom" in the eschatological sense of a domain beyond death where Jesus will reign. This is the kingdom prophesied by the angel at 1:31–33, and endorsed by Jesus at 22:29, "my Father has conferred on me a kingdom," διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ μου βασιλείαν. The wrongdoer's entreaty at 23:42 thus echoes both the angel's promise and Jesus' confirmation, and makes his request a valid and well-founded one. It aligns him with the angel's prophesy and with the perspective and self-understanding of the Lukan Jesus.

[143] The narrative Jesus confirms the kingdom's manifestation both in his person, "For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you" (17:21), and in his deeds, "But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come among you" (11:20).

[144] In the apocalyptic tradition, the theme of the messianic or eschatological banquet was a widespread symbol used to refer to the joys of the new age. The idea "appears to derive from the OT traditions that take up the theme of the joyous feast before Yahweh and apply it to the joys of the future." See Smith, "Table Fellowship," 626.

The wrongdoer's request to be remembered in the kingdom infers a recognition, however instinctive or intuitive, that all those sneering have missed, "that the one who is being mocked as Messiah and king, who is dying as a condemned wrongdoer, really is the royal Messiah, and that his shameful death does not end his claim to royal power but is the means by which he will achieve it."[145] In circumstances where Jesus is being scorned and condemned as a convict, such recognition is striking.[146] For the implied reader to wonder how the wrongdoer perceives all this about Jesus is probably "to miss the point of the story."[147] In terms of the narrative and hence of the implied author, it matters not how the wrongdoer comes to such an awareness, but how the implied audience understands and receives it. Thus, the reader accepts that, like other worldly-unimportant characters throughout the narrative, the κακοῦργος exercises an "astounding insight" into the identity and status of Jesus.[148] His discernment stands in stark contrast to the obtuseness of the disciples, whom Jesus tried to inform about his death and resurrection, but who could not understand (9:44–45; 18:31–34; 20:13-17).[149] A Messiah who was rejected and killed in such a shameful way fitted neither their presumptions nor those of the scorners at the crucifixion.[150] The wrongdoer, on the other hand, seems to have no difficulty in differentiating between the appearance (the man dying on the cross) and the reality of messiahship and kingdom in all their density and mystery.[151]

### 5.11.3 The Second Wrongdoer's Persistence

The ongoing nature of the wrongdoer's plea, ἔλεγεν, characterizes him as asking continuously to be remembered. It denotes the duration, repetition, determination, and perhaps the audacity

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[145] Tannehill, *Luke*, 343; Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 135.

[146] The second wrongdoer is similar to Simeon who, in equally unlikely circumstances, when the infant Jesus was presented to him by two poor parents, recognized him as "God's salvation" (2:30). See Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 840.

[147] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1508. Green considers that the second wrongdoer may have had a prior encounter with Jesus. See Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 112.

[148] Green, *Luke,* 822.

[149] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 127.

[150] Tannehill, *Luke*, 343. O'Collins comments how the evangelists also had to "try to cope with the shame and horror of it all." See O'Collins, *Calvary Christ*, 52. Harrington notes how they had to "come to terms with the inexplicable fact of the death of Jesus." See Harrington, *Reading Luke*, 27

[151] See Gorman, "Interweaving Innocence," 170.

of the man's request.[152] The wrongdoer's tenacity reminds the reader of other resolute petitioners: the man demanding bread from his sleeping neighbour (11:5–8); the parabolic tenacious widow (18:3–5); and the blind beggar of Jericho (18:35–43). In each of these cases, the doggedness (ἡ ἀναίδεια, 11:8) of the petitioner paid off, sometimes despite the reluctance of the grantor. It also recalls the tenacity of the first wrongdoer who is as determined in his plea for rescue as is the second wrongdoer in his request for remembrance. The first wrongdoer, however, according to the narrative, is asking the wrong question at the wrong time, with the wrong view of salvation, with the wrong demeanour, for all of which "blaspheming" the second wrongdoer "rebukes" him.

In one respect, however, the request of the second wrongdoer, whom the audience is being guided to accept as a point-of-view character, raises an unexpectedly unfavourable comparison with the first κακοῦργος. While the first wrongdoer includes his companion in his plea, "save yourself and us," σῶσον σεαυτὸν καὶ ἡμᾶς (v. 39), the second κακοῦργος merely requests remembrance for himself, "remember me," μνήσθητί μου (v. 42). In thus excluding his associate, the second wrongdoer replicates the lack of solidarity for which he berated his companion in his taunting Jesus. This is another instance of the nuanced characterization that the implied author favours throughout the narrative. The effect is that the second wrongdoer's focus on his own need functions, however marginally, to soften the description of the first wrongdoer's plea as "blaspheming," and prevents the implied reader from approaching the first κακοῦργος in an overwhelmingly one-dimensional manner.

### 5.12 Jesus Makes a Promise (23:43)

Having endured in silence the σῴζω demands of the leaders, the soldiers, and the first κακοῦργος, Jesus now accepts their challenge to save—not himself, but the second wrongdoer.[153] In a direct and personal response, Jesus answers with greater generosity than the wrongdoer could possibly expect.[154] His final words to another human being before his death,

[152] Bovon describes the wrongdoer as "not lacking in impudence." See Bovon, *Luke 3*, 311.

[153] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1030.

[154] Raymond E. Brown, *A Crucified Christ in Holy Week* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1986), 54; Marshall, *Luke*, 870; Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1508; Bock, *Luke 2*, 1857; Parsons, *Luke*, 339. Evans describes this as an "immense reward promised for so small an act of repentance." See Evans, *Luke*, 872. Brown states how "these last words of Jesus exhibit divine graciousness beyond any anticipation, including that of the crucified wrongdoer who petitioned Jesus. In Luke 11:9, Jesus promised 'Ask and it will be given you'; here it is given more abundantly." See Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1009.

directed to the last person to appeal to him, are filled with hope and assurance. Whether the second κακοῦργος made his request wistfully or seriously, out of sympathy, discernment, or both, Jesus solemnly promises that he will not simply remember the wrongdoer after entering into his kingdom, the man will be with him in paradise this very day, the great Lukan "today," σήμερον.[155] Thus, unlike the vagueness of the wrongdoer's request, "*when* you come …," Jesus does not speak of an unspecified future, but of the immediate present, employing an imminence that the implied author has favoured throughout the Gospel (for example, 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 13:32–33; 22:34, 61).[156]

Virtually every word of Jesus to the wrongdoer is laden with significance. The "Truly I tell you," Ἀμήν σοι λέγω, is a turn of phrase already familiar to the audience because Jesus has used it, in the plural, Ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν, on five previous occasions (4:24; 12:37; 18:17, 29; 21:32), making this the only time that he addresses these solemn words to an individual.[157] While ἀμήν was known from the Septuagint as a "confirmation, endorsement, or expression of hope" coming at the end of a blessing, prayer, curse, or oath, the Lukan Jesus employs it differently.[158] In a manner reminiscent of the "Thus says the Lord," τάδε λεγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς, assertions of the ancient prophets, Jesus uses ἀμήν to validate his own speech beforehand, in a sign of what Johnson calls his "prophetic self-consciousness."[159] From the point of view of the implied audience, ἀμήν adds "rhetorical strengthening" to what follows and marks what is said as reliable and trustworthy.[160] And when ἀμήν is combined with the σοι λέγω "metacomment,"

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[155] Morna D. Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel: New Testament Interpretation of the Death of Christ*, BNTC (Carlyle: Paternoster, 1994), 88; Brown, *Crucified Christ*, 54; Marshall, *Luke*, 870; Bock, *Luke 2*, 1857. For more on σήμερον, see §4.8.3 and §4.13.1.

[156] Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1510; Bock, *Luke 2*, 1857.

[157] "ἀμήν," a strong affirmation of what is stated, truly, indeed, it is true that; a solemn declaration used only by Jesus, I assure you that, I solemnly tell you: L&N 1, §72.6; BDAG, 53–54. Runge calls "amen" an "attention-getter." See Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 114.

[158] See Hanoch Avenary, "Amen," *EncJud* 2:38, here 38. Examples include 1 Chr 16:36; 1 Esd 9:47; Neh 5:13; 3 Macc 7:23.

[159] Johnson, *Luke*, 80; Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: Part One: The Proclamation of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1971), 36. The "Thus says the Lord" formula features throughout the Septuagint, for example, Exod 4:22; 5:1; Josh 7:13; Judg 6:8; 2 Sam 7:8; Isa 22:15.

[160] The expression "rhetorical strengthening" is from Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 305.

and the words are addressed to just one individual, even more weight and significance are added.[161]

The μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ, "with me," is also noteworthy. First, as has already been seen, "being with" others mattered greatly in the ancient world, where to be isolated and alone was "the worst of fates."[162] At the Last Supper, Jesus uses this phrase when speaking to the apostles: "You are those who have remained with me, μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ, (NRSV: stood by me) in my trials" (22:28) and who, as a reward, will eat and drink at his table in the kingdom (22:30). On this analogy, Jesus affirms the wrongdoer and indicates what it might mean to be with him and be remembered by him: he promises the second wrongdoer paradise.[163]

### 5.12.1 Paradise

"Paradise," παράδεισος, is an extremely rare word in the New Testament, featuring elsewhere only at 2 Cor 12:3 and Rev 2:7.[164] Nevertheless, it is part of the "presupposition pool" shared by the implied author and implied reader because it is familiar from its Septuagintal and intertestamental appearances.[165] "Paradise" results from the use in Greek of a Persian loan word, *pairi-daēza*, meaning an enclosure, garden, or park.[166] The expression was used widely in the Septuagint to describe the garden of Eden, an agreeable and peaceful place of fruit trees and flowing water, where God and humans are close (for example, Gen 2:8, 9, 15, 16; 13:10; Ezek 31:8).[167] In Isaiah, the symbolic language of παράδεισος expresses the condition of the

[161] See §2.9, footnote #163 for the σοι λέγω "metacomment."

[162] Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 33. See also §4.7.4 and §5.3, footnote #20.

[163] See Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1009.

[164] "παράδεισος," dwelling place of the righteous dead, heaven, the garden of Eden, a transcendent place of blessedness: L&N 1, §1.14; BDAG, 761.

[165] "Presupposition pool" is from Green. See Green, *Luke*, 13.

[166] James H. Charlesworth, "Paradise," *ABD* 5, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 154–55, here 154.

[167] Mention of "paradise" reminds the audience of Adam, the archetypal (and flawed) human for whom God prepared the original garden (Gen 2:8). Jesus' connection to Adam is significant for the implied author because he gives Adam the penultimate place in the fictive ancestry of Jesus (fictive because it is based on Jesus' connection to Joseph, whom the genealogy concedes at 3:23 is not the father of Jesus). The genealogy is carefully framed, with references to Jesus as "son of God" in 3:22, 38 and "son of Adam" in 3:38, thus highlighting both his divine status and his solidarity with all humanity. See Green, *Luke*, 189. At the same time, Jesus and Adam are connected fraternally, each characterized as sons of God, Jesus by God himself (3:22) and Adam by the implied author (3:38). While this brotherhood once again highlights the humanity of Jesus, it also underlines the divine

redeemed Jerusalem on earth (Isa 51:3), where God's people will be as a watered garden (Isa 58:11). The apocalyptical writings of Late Second Temple Judaism expanded the natural or worldly construal of παράδεισος to signify an intermediate resting place for the souls of the righteous dead who await the final resurrection (for example, 2 Esdr 8:52; Pss Sol 14:2, 3, 10; 2 En 8-9).[168] By the turn of the millennium, many Jews envisaged the survival of the soul after death as an opportunity to reward the righteous in a paradise-like place (and, conversely, punish the wicked in an opposite realm).[169] For the implied reader, "paradise" therefore generates a multifaceted image, at once tangible and transcendent, of a verdant garden where God is close, and the souls of the worthy dead receive their just reward.

It is striking that, although the wrongdoer requests the kingdom, he is instead promised paradise. From the point of view of the Lukan Jesus, and the implied author, it might be supposed that, with "paradise," a different word is being used to convey the complex symbol of the kingdom, this one with tangible garden imagery.[170] On the level of the interacting characters, Jesus and the wrongdoers alike, the pastoral idyll of flowing water and blossoming trees, of fertility and abundance, evokes an image of peace and repose as different from the execution ground of το Κρανίον as can be imagined.

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origins of the human race and recalls Gen 1:26, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness." See Parsons, *Luke*, 70. By extending the genealogy of Jesus all the way back to Adam, the implied author highlights the significance of Jesus, not just for "Abraham and his descendants" (Luke 1:55) but for all the descendants of Adam, that, is, all the peoples of the earth. Thus, at Jesus' death, there is sounded the same note of universality as in John's prophesy at 3:6, "all flesh shall see the salvation of God," καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. See Johnson, *Luke*, 72.

[168] Charlesworth, "Paradise," 154. The possibility of a pleasant after-life marked a profound change from earlier Jewish cosmologies where, at best, the dead might expect to descend to Sheol, a cheerless underworld where, as in the Greco-Roman Hades, faceless souls wandered drearily. See J. Edward Wright, "Heaven," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, eds. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 711–13, here 712; Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 251. For the psalmist, Sheol was a place where "the dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any that go down into silence (Ps 115:17–18 [113: 25 LXX]).

[169] Martha Himmelfarb, "Afterlife and Resurrection," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version*, eds. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 2017), 691–95, here 692–94.

[170] See §4.13.2 where other lexemes are interwoven with kingdom: faith, salvation, love for Jesus, forgiveness of sins, conversion, eternal life, being saved.

There might be some audience surprise that Jesus has made it all so unconditional and uncomplicated for the wrongdoer.[171] The reader recalls Jesus' difficult conversation with the rich ruler regarding the challenges of entering eternal life (18:18) and the kingdom (18:24). Their exchange culminated in the question, "Then who can be saved?" (18:26), and the answer, "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God" (18:27). At the crucifixion, this reply is reformulated and reconfigured in Jesus' solemn promise to the κακοῦργος. All the wrongdoer had to do was to ask.[172]

### 5.12.2 Salvation

Guided by their reading of the crucifixion pericope, the audience understands that, through the terminology of "today," "with me," and "Paradise," (and "remember," "kingdom," and σῴζω) the second wrongdoer is being promised salvation.[173] At the crucifixion, the implied author presents salvation as a transcendent, eschatological reality that awaits the human after death, when individuals will stand before God and be rewarded or punished according to their earthly deeds (something that the second wrongdoer seems to anticipate in v. 40).[174] This aspect of salvation is expressed variously in the Gospel— the "bosom of Abraham," ὁ κόλπος Ἀβραάμ (16:22–23); "in the eternal homes (tents)," εἰς τὰς αἰωνίους σκηνάς (16:9); and the "kingdom of God," ἡ βασιλέια τοῦ θεοῦ, the complex and metaphorical abode for the righteous belonging both to the present time and to the eschatological future (6:20; 9:27; 13:28–29; 14:15; 18:17, 24–25; 22:29–30).[175]

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[171] Szkredka interprets the first wrongdoer's request to be remembered as an act of repentance from a "self-confessed sinner," and Jesus' promise of paradise as "the equivalent of the declaration of forgiveness." See Szkredka, "Father, Forgive Them," 93.

[172] This directness reminds the reader of one of the first cures of Jesus. At 5:12–13, a man with leprosy implored, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean, to which Jesus succinctly replied, "I do choose. Be made clean."

[173] Fitzmyer describes Jesus' promise, "Today you shall be with me in paradise" as "the word of salvation itself." See Fitzmyer, *Luke the Theologian*, 213. The complex nature of salvation, in its material and existential dimensions and its multivalent terminology, has already been discussed at the §2.12.1 and §4.13.2.

[174] The parables of the rich fool and the rich man and Lazarus both indicate a certain post-mortem judgment, while the latter (focused as much on proper use of wealth and possessions in this life as on a picture of the afterlife) depicts the separation and differentiation expected by some in the hereafter. See Forbes, *God of Old*, 180, 191. Levine and Witherington consider that the details contained in the second parable "fit contemporary Jewish eschatological descriptions." See Levine and Witherington, *Luke*, 452.

[175] Alexey Somov, *Representations of the Afterlife in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 556 (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 94–97.

The inverse of paradise, or the abode of the wicked, is variously named in the Gospel as "Hades," ᾅδης, where the parabolic rich man is sent (16:23), and where the unrepentant city of Capernaum will find itself (10:15); the "abyss," ἄβυσσος, the dwelling place of the demons who torment the Gerasene demoniac (8:31); and "Gehenna," γέεννα, the place into which God has the authority to cast a person after death (12:5).[176] To the implied reader, Jesus' promise of "paradise" to the second wrongdoer has a double-edged meaning because, for the juxtaposed κακοῦργοι, "paradise" for one might imply "Hades," the "abyss," or "Gehenna" for the other.[177]

### 5.12.3 The Wrongdoers' Views of Salvation

The first wrongdoer comprehends salvation in its material and imminent aspect. He employs the verb "to save" as he has heard it from the leaders and soldiers (people who personify how many historical first-century people in the world behind the text would have primarily understood it). Like them, he assumes a connection between Jesus as Messiah and his ability to save himself (and the two wrongdoers) by coming down from the cross. He (and they) can comprehend no salvation except that involving "the perpetuation of human existence."[178] But the second wrongdoer grasps that rescue from their present plight is not the path that salvation is taking today, either for Jesus or for himself. On the very edge of life, with everything taken away, he grasps that there is no time or space for illusion. Because σῴζω has been "debased" in the threefold mockery that has just preceded, the wrongdoer employs a different vocabulary—that of remembrance—to indicate that he seeks another kind of deliverance.[179] His petition may be a forlorn plea against personal annihilation, if only to survive in the

[176] In the Septuagint, Sheol, ᾅδης (the equivalent of the Greek Hades), is presented in various contexts. It can be a way to talk about death itself (1 Sam 2:6; Ps 6:4–5; Tob 13:1–2), or can describe a post-mortem abode, where both the righteous and the unrighteous go (Gen 37:35; Tob 13:1–2). See "ᾅδης," L&N, §1.21; BDAG, 19. Gehenna, γέεννα, was a site outside Jerusalem in the valley of Hinnom where child-sacrifice took place to the gods Moloch and Baal, a practice widely condemned in Scripture (2 Kgs 23:10; 2 Chr 28:3, 33:6; Jer 7:31; 19:2–6; 32:35). It was believed that God's final judgment would take place here. See "γέεννα," L&N, §1.21; BDAG, 190–91. The abyss, ἄβυσσος, representing primordial ideas of chaos, first appears in the opening verses of Genesis, prior to God putting order on the formless void (Gen 1:2). It comes to represent a pit so deep that it seems bottomless and immeasurable, a transcendent place associated with the unrighteous dead who are condemned by God, a domain of abandonment and desolation (Ezek 26:20–21). See "ἄβυσσος," L&N, §1.20; BDAG, 2.

[177] For a discussion on Lukan usages of these terms, see Somov, *Representations of the Afterlife*, 85–88; Outi Lehtipuu, *The Afterlife Imagery in Luke's Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 265–75.

[178] Johnson, *Luke*, 380.

[179] Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 182.

memory of Jesus, whom he intuits will have a different future to his own, or it may reflect a hope for some kind of existence for himself after death.

### 5.12.4 The "Today" and "Withness" of Salvation

Jesus' "today" answers the "when" of the wrongdoer's petition, and it incorporates a spectrum of meanings.[180] On the one hand, and especially on this crucifixion day, a day when "events in historic time astonishingly fuse with events beyond time," it has an eschatological tone, referring to the dimension of salvation inaugurated at the death of Jesus (and at every death).[181] On the other hand, "today" also has the literal meaning of "this very day," not some indefinite future in God's plan.[182] The narrator signals this immediacy by the inclusion of precise time references: "noon" and "three in the afternoon" (v. 44) mark the hours of the actual "today" that is drawing to a close.[183] Throughout the Gospel, and especially at 2:11, 4:21, and 19:9, the implied author also gave "today" the dual meaning of a "chronological day that is also an eschatological moment of salvation."[184] That is because, where Jesus physically is, the work of salvation is also present. At the crucifixion, with his earthly "today" coming to an end, Jesus defines salvation as a kind of "withness," μετ᾽ἐμοῦ, a solidarity with him.[185] With the terminology of "today," "with me," and "in paradise," Jesus promises the wrongdoer a "share in his own destiny," which he describes to the disciples at Emmaus as entering "into his glory," καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ (24:26).[186]

## 5.13 It Was Now About Noon … (23:44)

After the solemn assurance to the second κακοῦργος, the narrative focus returns to Jesus. It is noon, and Jesus dies at three (23:44-46). He dies unusually quickly for a crucifixion death—it

[180] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1009.

[181] MacCulloch, *History of Christianity*, 77; Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1009.

[182] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1009; Fitzmyer, *Luke the Theologian*, 208.

[183] Brown, *Death of the Messiah 2*, 1009.

[184] Ibid. See §4.8.3, footnote #93.

[185] Parsons, *Luke*, 339. Bovon considers that "being with" is a "constant of biblical fidelity, whether it is God's presence with his own or the people in company with their Lord." See Bovon, *Luke 3*, 312. Fitzmyer discusses how the expression "to be with me" is a formula similar to that found elsewhere in the New Testament for the destiny of Christians (1 Thess 4:17; Phil 1:22–23). See Fitzmyer, *Luke the Theologian*, 208.

[186] See Fitzmyer, *Luke the Theologian*, 213.

often took days—so the implied audience may presume that the two κακοῦργοι expire more slowly. Their story is not yet over. For the third time in the pericope, the wrongdoers and Luke's implied readers are present as silent witnesses to events. They observe, together with the wrongdoers, Jesus' death (v. 46), the cosmic signs that precede it (v. 45), the reactions that follow it (vv. 47–48), and the removal of his body from the cross (v. 53). The narrative does not record details of the wrongdoers' deaths or the post-mortem disposal (if any) of their bodies. Such information would close down their story and allow the audience to move on with the narrative. Instead, the open ending creates a hermeneutical space that invites readers to ponder the wrongdoers' differing responses to Jesus in this defining experience of their lives.

The second wrongdoer is an idealized character who behaves graciously and perceptively in an extreme situation. His attitude garners much idealistic empathy from the readers who recognize that he is negotiating death well. His fellow, the first wrongdoer, is a more complex character about whom no simple conclusions can be reached. The implied audience is unsure whether his outburst results from an evil intent that associates him with the leaders and Satan, or whether, driven to distraction by the stress of crucifixion, he is a simple-minded man who imitates what he hears from the barrage of abuse around him. And is he to be commended because, unlike the second wrongdoer, he includes his associate in his misguided, if understandable, plea for deliverance? This uncertainty results in considerable audience interest in him and attention to his fate, which may be less certain than the polarities of the pericope might suggest. Despite provocation, the Lukan Jesus neither chides the first wrongdoer, nor condemns him, nor corrects him. Instead, he does two things. First, he allows the second wrongdoer to respond, to put a perspective on the situation, and then he permits the first wrongdoer to hear the exchange between himself and the second κακοῦργος.

While he awaited death, the first wrongdoer had time to consider the strange events in which he found himself a first-hand participant, culminating in his companion's reprimand, the dialogue between Jesus and the second wrongdoer, and the promise to him of paradise.[187] Because his story is unfinished, the reader might consider that the first κακοῦργος resembles Simon, Martha, the πάντες in the Zacchaeus pericope, and the older son of the parable of the lost sons. They are all portrayed as negative but ultimately open characters who are left on a

[187] Barth describes this promise as "given so clearly, so urgently to both of them, indeed without distinction." See Barth, "The Criminals With Him," 81.

"threshold of decision" and potential change, where the implied audience never knows the outcome. However, the stakes are infinitely higher for the first wrongdoer because, while one can decide on a change of heart or μετάνοια until "the last hour of one's life," for him the final hour has arrived and the time for decision has come.[188] And it may be that the first wrongdoer more closely resembles the rich man in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19–31), for whom parabolically it *is* too late, and for whom no bosom of Abraham awaits.[189] This lack of closure and the uncertainty of destiny once again engages the audience. The possibility that the first wrongdoer's situation cannot and will not change works rhetorically to galvanize the readers (implied and real) to decision-making vis-à-vis Jesus in the "today" that is still theirs.

## 5.14 Conclusion

The pericope depicts human relationships (and therefore the anthropology) as involved and contingent. The outburst of the first wrongdoer is what allows the second man to speak. Hearing the first man's desperation brings the second κακοῦργος clarity and recognition (or μετάνοια, conversion, transformation) and gains him the promise of paradise. For his part, the second wrongdoer's rebuke represents for the first man "a call to an authentic acceptance of his own own destiny and need for decision."[190] It thus provides him with an opportunity that he may never have recognized, and that he may or may not take. It is on this note of existential uncertainty that the implied reader leaves the first wrongdoer, a complex combination of unease and possibility that is symbolic of the human condition.

[188] Bovon *Luke 3*, 310. Carroll and Green describe how the second wrongdoer's "penitent faith is apparently born only in the desperate final hours of his life." See Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus,* 72. Bock similarly states that the second wrongdoer's response is "what he has learned while facing death." See Bock, *Luke 2*, 1856.

[189] This is how Szkredka envisages the "tragic fate" of this wrongdoer, the parabolic older brother, the parabolic rich man, and the grumbling crowd. See Sławomir Szkredka, "Postmortem Punishment in the Parable of Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31): Between Coherence and Indeterminacy in Luke's Eschatology," *Verbum Vitae* 36 (2019): 1–12, here 4.

[190] Johnson, *Luke*, 378.

# CHAPTER SIX

# CONCLUSIONS

## 6.1 Introduction

This dissertation set out to explore aspects of the anthropology of Luke's Gospel, asking the question, What is Luke's view of the person and how does he narrate it? The very many lines of inquiry, and the constraints of being able only to follow some, exclude any claim to a comprehensive or global treatment of this important Lukan optic. That said, such a study is both important and feasible because of the implied author's clear interest in the human being. This can be seen in his choosing to write a narrative, an imaginative, rhetorical, and expansive genre, and filling it with memorable characters who encounter Jesus (and one another) in the course of his ministry. The study adopted a narrative-critical approach, undertaking a close reading of four pericopae—the Anointing Woman and Simon the Pharisee (7:36–50), Martha and Mary (10:38–42), Zacchaeus and the "Grumblers" (19:1–19), and the Two Wrongdoers (23:32, 39–43)—each chosen as characteristic of Jesus' interaction with "Luke's people."[1] While respecting the "otherness," temporal distance, and multivalency of the Gospel, the dissertation aimed at an interpretation that was based on the evidence of the text, and on the perspective of the implied author which emerges from it.

While characterization was the main investigative tool of the study, the characters, in themselves, are not what is at stake. They are ciphers for the reality that the implied author seeks to project. On one level, it is a simple reality: Jesus has come to proclaim the inbreaking of the reign of God into human experience, an event that would be expected to make a difference in people's lives. On another level, the reality is highly complex, because the

[1] The expression is borrowed from the title of Thomas J. F. Stanford, *Luke's People: The Men and Woman Who Met Jesus and the Apostles* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

response to Jesus is not predictable. It exists along a continuum that ranges through acceptance (5:28), uncertainty (7:49), indifference (7:32), and rejection (19:47b). It is this diversity that makes an exploration of the anthropology possible: if all characters responded in the same way, there would be no surprise, nothing to consider, and nothing over which to muse. In short, there would be no story to tell. Three of the pericopae follow the same pattern. Alongside an idealized character—the anointing woman, Mary, and the second wrongdoer—they each feature a more realistic counterpart who, while ostensibly negative, is left open-ended, and whose ultimate response to Jesus remains unresolved. The fourth pericope, Zacchaeus and the "Grumblers," is different because, while the "grumblers" repeat the negative-if-open model, Zacchaeus's nuanced portrayal makes it difficult to categorize him. In this, he emerges as the most inscrutable character of the present study, whose "lostness" represents the paradigmatic human condition until "found" by Jesus. In this, Zacchaeus becomes the very epitome of what it means to be human in the light of Christ.

The main findings of the dissertation may be summarized as follows, (i) human beings are decision-makers and, as such, possess a certain freedom and responsibility; (ii) they are complex and enigmatic; (iii) they live in existential uncertainty and insecurity; (iv) their "today" is the primary locus where salvation—or life as God intends it—occurs; (v) "lostness" defines the human condition until "found" or saved by Jesus; (vi) being "found" implies an openness or willingness to be found. All of these findings are expanded upon below.

### 6.2 Human Beings are Decision-Makers

The Gospel of Luke depicts the human being as a decision-maker who must come to an imminent resolution of who Jesus is.[2] While the Gospel's idealized characters embody the desired response that the implied author wishes to present to the implied audience, their counterparts' stories are left unfinished. Simon the Pharisee, the "all" of the Zacchaeus story, and the first wrongdoer, having encountered Jesus in their "today," face various choices on how to proceed. They can ignore the experience and continue unchanged; undergo a reorientation, a μετάνοια; or actively decide against Jesus. Martha is slightly different in that

[2] Oscar Cullmann discusses the "decision of faith intended in the New Testament." See Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, trans. Sidney G. Sowers (London: SCM, 1965), 234. Tannehill describes the "time of your visitation" (19:44) as one of "special opportunity but also of fateful decision." See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity 1*, 68.

her choice is between the two Gospel qualities of "doing" and "hearing," but she still must choose. The implied author, in leaving these characters to their decisions, shows that he values human responsibility, as well as the embrace of freedom, and the human capacity for choice. By composing a rhetorical narrative, he envisages readers (implied and real) who are open to persuasion and therefore capable of decision-making and transformation in their own lives.[3] In doing so, he reflects the Septuagintal-wisdom and Hellenistic view of the human as a free being endowed with agency, however circumscribed it may be.[4]

### 6.3 Human Beings are Complex and Enigmatic

The implied author presents characters as complex, enigmatic, and often surprising. He does this in various ways. First, individual characters can be particularly well drawn. Zacchaeus, for example, is so nuanced that he remains opaque, no matter how closely he is read. Is he undergoing a spectacular μετάνοια during his encounter with Jesus, or is he a misunderstood, honest tax collector living in accordance with Torah?[5] The characterization of the anointing woman is similarly layered, much of it achieved by means of the ambiguous ὅτι. Its unexpected and disruptive appearance permits a non-reductive exploration of the complex themes of love and forgiveness, and the "mutuality and simultaneity" that exists between them.[6] These and other examples illustrate that the implied author's portrayal of the human is frequently so shaded that it cannot be confined to a "either/or" interpretation, and is often better construed through a "both/and" prism of understanding. This approach is possible in a narrative because, as Marguerat avers, tensions, ruptures, and shifts are inherent to narrativity [and to the human being whom it depicts] in a way that is impossible in a systematized argumentative discourse.[7]

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[3] Tannehill notes that this "rhetorically crafted" narrative leaves a "large area of freedom and responsibility for its audience." The [first real] audience "had to decide what was prescriptive for themselves and what was simply descriptive of the past or applicable for others … the story offered the audience multiple opportunities for change, but it could not, and it did not, take away the audience's responsibility to decide which of these calls for change was right for them." See Tannehill, *Luke*, 31.

[4] Alter describes the human in the Hebrew Bible as "abandoned to his or her unfathomable freedom." See Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 157, 144. For Epictetus, "you are … what you choose." See Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.1.40.

[5] This question is discussed throughout section §4.12.

[6] The expression "mutuality and simultaneity" is from Bertschmann, "Hosting Jesus," 47. The interpretation and import of the very complicated ὅτι is explored at §2.9.1.

[7] Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, 46.

Second, the negative-if-realistic characters are left unfinalized, with their eventual decisions concerning Jesus unnarrated. They are thus endowed with an inscrutability that the implied author chooses not to resolve.[8] To be truly human, he thereby implies, is to be unfinished and evolving, capable of surprise and transformation, and of integrating new possibilities into one's life. Not being naïve, the implied readers understand that the stories of the "negative" characters, in their freedom, are as likely to end in indifference or rejection of Jesus and the life that he advocates as they are in acceptance of him. They also appreciate that the positive-if-idealized characters have been captured at a particularly "good" moment in their narrative lives. As Malbon puts is, "many [characters] could probably be considered exemplary if only one well-chosen story were recounted."[9]

Third, nothing in Luke's text explains why various characters respond to Jesus as they do. While it is virtually a "given" that the non-elite and the poor react more positively than those of ambient honour and status, this is an ideological standpoint that tells the reader little about individuals. The enigma of personal choice is highlighted but not explained in the pericope of Martha and Mary. Given their identical backgrounds and matching circumstances, where both appear already to know Jesus, it might be expected that the two sisters would react similarly to him. That they do not, reflects a Lukan view of humans as idiosyncratic and distinctive, with unaccountably different perspectives on the world.[10]

While it is possible, perhaps even likely, that characters like the anointing woman, Zacchaeus, and the second wrongdoer have had a prior encounter with Jesus or with God's good news, the implied author never clarifies this fact.[11] Instead, he leaves it to the readers to weigh the possibilities as they strive to create meaning. If these characters are encountering

[8] This reflects the inscrutability of people in real life. Chatman notes now "some people in the real world stay mysteries no matter how well we know them." See Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 118. Williams discusses "the pervasive, mysterious, nagging sense that there's always something about the other person that's to do with what I can't see, and that can't be mastered." See Rowan Williams, *Being Human: Bodies, Minds, Persons* (London: SPCK, 2018), 71.

[9] Malbon, "Minor Characters," 82–83. Comparing the single appearance of model-character Levi with the mixed characterization of Peter in Mark's Gospel, she notes, "We know more about Peter, and maybe too much about Peter, for Peter's sake." Ibid. The same comment holds for the Peter of Luke's Gospel.

[10] The same might be said of the response of the ten men with leprosy to their cure, where just one returned to give thanks (17:19). See §6.6 below for more on why characters respond as they do.

[11] Green considers that the three have already "aligned themselves with God's kingdom, but whose conversion Luke never recounts." See Green, "Cognitive Narratological Approach," 112.

Jesus for a second time, it not only makes their responses more comprehensible, but it provides hope for the negative characters who, given time to consider, may eventually respond as fulsomely.

Third, the implied author presents characters who continuously surprise the reader and do not behave according to type. Thus, some behave "better" or differently than might be expected: one centurion builds a synagogue (7:5); another recognizes Jesus' innocence (23:47); the parabolic Samaritan is the good neighbour (10:30–37); the "sinful" woman becomes Simon's teacher (7:44–47); and the first wrongdoer "remembers" his associate (23:39). On the other hand, the implied author's characterization technique is so refined that even idealized characters can irritate, frustrate, and disappoint. Thus, some of the role models whose response to Jesus the implied reader is encouraged to emulate are not unequivocally admirable: Mary is patently unfair to her sister, and the second wrongdoer displays no solidarity with the first. Even Jesus, *the* point-of-view character, in his dismissal of Martha's plight, is characterized as unfeeling, unappreciative, and self-contradictory. That the implied author can depict Jesus in this "lifelike" manner—as awkward and contrary as any other person when suddenly forced on the defensive—demonstrates his appreciation of just how complex the human being can be. It is worth remarking that the same might be said of the parabolic father of the two lost sons, feasting with one but temporarily forgetting the other. If the father/God figure is portrayed so equivocally, it cannot surprise the reader that human characters in the narrative are similarly tensive.

### 6.4 Humans Live in Existential Uncertainty

The Lukan author leaves the "negative" characters on a boundary, where their response to Jesus is unfinalized and indeterminable. Thus, while the anointing woman goes in peace, Mary listens, Zacchaeus is found, and the second wrongdoer is with Jesus in paradise, the stories of the "other" characters are forever unfinished; they exist in a liminal space of unknowability-yet-possibility. This leaves the audience with an uncertainty that reflects the contingency of human existence and human experience. Through the prism of these characters' incomplete stories, readers—both implied and real—are challenged to negotiate the unknowns, insecurities, and surprises of life. The reality is that other people are enigmatic, little is constant, the unexpected happens, life is simultaneously fragile and promising, and death is the only certainty. In one of his shorter parables, that of the fig tree (13:6–9), Jesus captures this

existential dilemma, leaving it forever unresolved whether or not the tree is cut down. Like the unfinished stories of the non-idealized characters, the parable can only be completed by the reader, if at all.[12] This lack of ready-made answers is part of the rhetoric of the narrative where the implied author and implied audience interact. The openness invites the audience (implied and real) into a hermeneutical space where real understanding and insight may be achieved.

### 6.5 The Reality of "Today"

The implied author is focused on the human being's existence in the here-and-now, what he calls "today," σήμερον.[13] Contrary to a first-century perspective that increasingly looked to an after-world to compensate for the troubles of this one, Lukan anthropology is radically this-world oriented, and characters are called to "inhabit the moment and the place."[14] The salvation that Jesus brings, in the sense of life in all its fullness, properly belongs in the ordinariness and routine of the "now."[15] Thus, Jesus, by attending to the immediate needs of people—the blind, the sick, the lame, the hungry—places a value on their lives "today" as the pivotal, tangible reality where life is lived. By thus re-calibrating and re-valuing the present, the implied author tries to shift the point of view of his implied audience from the after-life to this life. "Today" people are called to live together as active, responsible, accountable agents whose lives have purpose and meaning, where there exists the possibility of a different way of living, and of a better future for themselves and others in light of the inbreaking kingdom of God.[16]

However, σήμερον is also a reminder that human beings live in time, and time is radically relativized due to the inexorability of death. Because of this, the narrative acknowledges that this life alone cannot define the person and that there is another,

[12] Mark S. Burrows styles human life as "an unfinished and unfinishable work." See Mark S. Burrows, "'To Taste with the Heart': Allegory, Poetics, and the Deep Reading of Scripture," *Int* 56 (2002): 168–80, here 175.

[13] Troftgruben describes this as Luke's "infatuation" with "today." See Troftgruben, "Salvation 'Today,'" 6.

[14] Rowan Williams, "Foreword," in Fiona Gardner, *The Only Mind Worth Having: Thomas Merton and the Child Mind* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015), ix–x, here ix.

[15] The implied author uses "daily," καθ' ἡμερον, language to emphasize the pressures and needs of the moment (9:23; 11:3), where the primary sphere of discipleship lies. See Troftgruben, "Salvation 'Today," 6.

[16] This is adapted from Thiselton, "Theoretical Hermeneutics," 105. Thiselton is discussing Ricoeur's view of the human condition.

transcendent dimension to reality. The implied author therefore confirms the significance of eternal life (10:25; 18:18), and affirms the legitimacy of his audience's eschatological expectations (16:22; 18:30; 23:43).[17] And the narrative Jesus, while continually emphasizing God's reign in the here-and-now, fully understands the limits of the earthly life, and four times predicts his own death (9:22, 44; 18:32–33; 22:22). However, the after-world is not presented as a place of escape from the efforts and challenges of "today," thus avoiding the trap of fostering a hollow engagement with this life; it is rather a horizon of hope for a possible future.

### 6.6 "Lostness" and "Foundness"

One of the more significant outcomes of this investigation is the anthropological significance of the very Lukan Zacchaeus. In his "lostness," Zacchaeus becomes a metaphor for the general human condition until "found" or transformed by Jesus.[18] The purpose, meaning, and belonging for which Zacchaeus searches are all aspects of existence that the Gospel calls "salvation." Salvation or "foundness" is a multi-dimensional, existential reality actualized in various encounters throughout the narrative and expressed in many interwoven ways: liberation, healing, homecoming, acceptance, table-fellowship, friendship, transformation, renewal, μετάνοια, restoration, forgiveness, eternal life, the kingdom, trust, love for Jesus, being "with" Jesus.[19] Zacchaeus's quest symbolizes his dissatisfaction with all that "lostness"—the opposite of "salvation"—entails. In acknowledging (and addressing) his need, this paradigmatic human is not passive, as his "lostness" might imply. Instead, he makes a decision and takes action: he goes in search of Jesus, to see who he is, somehow intuiting that Jesus will make a difference.

If Zacchaeus had a prior experience of Jesus or an encounter with God's good news, as συκοφαντέω (3:14; 19:8) seems to signify, then the sophistication and complexity of the pericope deepens. It means that, for the implied audience, Zacchaeus is less a model or cipher

[17] Powell, "Salvation in Luke-Acts," 6.

[18] The same existential "lostness" is mirrored in the pain of elder son in (as he considers) his abandonment by his father, and the desperation of the first wrongdoer trapped in his terrible death. Indeed, all the characters in the narrative (and the implied audience) are "lost" and are wrongdoers. Jesus makes this clear in a hyperbolic way at 11:13 when, speaking to the disciples, he says, "if you then, who are evil …" ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὑπάρχοντες; and to the crowds at 11:29, "this generation is an evil generation," Ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη γενεὰ πονερά ἐστιν.

[19] These nuanced and interwoven dimensions of salvation are discussed at §2.12, §2.12.1, §4.13.1, §4.13.2, §5.12.2, §5.12.3, §5.12.4.

for an *initial* encounter with Jesus, but embodies the way to salvation for those who have encountered Jesus or have heard the good news but are still "lost."

### 6.7 The "Found" Human

The "found," saved, or transformed human evinces a receptivity or willingness to being found, and so enter into the fullness of life that salvation brings. This is what separates the anointing woman, Mary, Zacchaeus, and the second wrongdoer from their more timid narrative counterparts. These idealized characters are risk-takers.[20] In their different ways, they all resemble Levi who, in the most dramatic and condensed μετάνοια of the narrative, "got up, left everything, and followed him" (5:28).[21] The positive characters display an openness, a boldness, a readiness (a decision) to take Jesus on trust, πίστις, a characteristic that he extols throughout the Gospel (5:20; 7:9, 50; 8:25; 8:48, 50; 17:19; 18:42). Once they metaphorically go searching, their quest is matched, and met more than half-way by Jesus, God's Son and agent, who assures them that the one who seeks, finds, ὁ ζητῶν εὑρίσκει (11:9–10), a present-tense construction imbued with certainty. With their openness, they join the cycle of God's unending outreach to his creation, his ceaseless gifting or gracing (7:42), so that the searching and finding, and the going out and meeting, are not separate actions, but a simultaneous and reciprocal exchange.[22]

The "other" characters are less spontaneous, less trusting, and more measured. Any response they make lies beyond the perimeters of the narrative. These guarded characters evoke a complex response in the implied readers who, understanding some of the challenges of πίστις, simultaneously critique them for their hesitancy and identify with them as possible versions of

[20] For example, in coming to Simon's house to meet Jesus, the anointing woman defies the cultural codes of the time; Mary, by sitting and listening to Jesus, challenges the expectations of hospitality—and those of Martha; Zacchaeus, in his own defence, challenges the "all" in their opinion of him; and the second wrongdoer, on the brink of death, steps into the unknown to be "with" Jesus.

[21] The Gospel is replete with resourceful and determined characters who do "something extravagant" in the presence of Jesus. See Ellis, *Luke*, 220; Byrne, *Hospitality of God*, 72. Some of these are mentioned at §4.7.2.

[22] C. S. Lewis describes this mutual search as the person discovering "God himself, alive pulling at the other end of the cord." See C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 124–25. Pope Francis refers to God as "a God who searches … who does not like to lose what is his, and in order not to lose it, he goes out from himself, and seeks out" the lost. See Pope Francis, "God Does Not Like to Lose," morning meditation, 7 November 2013, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20131107_lost-sheep.html.

themselves. In their undecidedness, the "borderline" characters serve an important function in the narrative because their equivocation provides audiences (real and implied) with important opportunities for self-judgment.[23] They spur the readers into taking a position vis-à-vis Jesus and committing metaphorically to being "found" or transformed by him. While their decision might come quickly or more slowly, ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ (Acts 26:29), the clarion call of the text is to embrace the new way of life that Jesus both advocates and embodies.

### 6.8 The Narrated Anthropology of the Gospel

From the pericopae examined, the core characteristic of the human being is that she or he is a person who makes decisions (specifically, a decision about how to respond to Jesus and, therefore, to God and the neighbour [10:27–28]). This is revealed, not in an abstract or propositional way, but through the narrative, and the interactions of a diverse cast of characters in their encounters with Jesus. A close reading reveals that none of the characters (including Jesus) are simple or uncomplicated, but instead reflect the colour and complexity of life itself. Because the characters are credible, they engage and persuade the (real) readers in the world before the text where appropriation takes place, inviting them to ask questions of the text, What is it about? What are its truth claims? What difference does it make? What do I do as a consequence? As a decision-maker, the human in Luke's Gospel is full of possibility and potential, with the capacity to choose one course or another. As such, the Lukan implied author displays a realism about the human being that is neither optimistic nor pessimistic, but is best described as pragmatic.

[23] See Malbon, "Minor Characters," 63.

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