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The Death of a Righteous Man: Redactional Elements in Luke's Passion Narrative (23:44-56)

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Luke's account of Christ's death and burial (23:44-56) provides a succinct but penetrating synopsis of the third Gospel's theology of redemption. As the inaugurator of the time of salvation, Jesus represents the fulfillment of God's promises to the people of Israel. The opposition that Jesus encounters in implementing this saving mission culminates at the cross. In the process, Jesus emerges as the Righteous Sufferer who freely submits Himself to the Father's will for the sake of sinful humanity. But Luke's presentation of this message is closely interwoven with his work as redactor. Accordingly, this paper explores Luke's Passion Narrative as a referent for analyzing the scope and extent of his reliance upon (and modification of) his Markan source for his own theological purposes.

Luke's account of Jesus' death and burial (23:44-56) provides a succinct but penetrating synopsis of the third Gospel's theology of redemption. As the inaugurator of the time of salvation, Jesus represents the fulfilment of God's promises to the people of Israel. But an essential element of Luke's presentation of this story is the opposition that Jesus encounters in implementing His saving mission. This opposition culminates at the cross. In the process, Jesus emerges as the Righteous Sufferer who freely submits Himself to the Father's will for the sake of sinful humanity. After His crucifixion and death, His proper burial depends upon those who are, in turn, numbered among the righteous ones of Israel. These friends of God point the way to the triumph of the Resurrection and the ultimate proclamation of the Gospel to the world.

But Luke's presentation of this message is closely interwoven with his work as redactor. This passage, in fact, provides extremely fertile ground for analyzing the scope and extent of Luke's reliance upon (and modification of) his Markan source for his own theological purposes. As Matera observes, Luke's presentation of Jesus' death "provides an excellent test case, because Luke differs

so dramatically from his Markan counterpart at this point."[1] But such differences are equally (if not more so) apparent in Luke's account of Jesus' burial. The discussion which follows provides an exegesis of Lk. 23:44-56, with a special focus upon the parameters of Luke's redactory efforts. At the outset, let us consider the broad and immediate contexts of the pericope under scrutiny.

Context

Lk. 23:44-56 falls within the final part of a Gospel which is divisible into seven major parts.[2] The opposition which Jesus encounters throughout His public life reaches its climax in Jerusalem, where He enters into direct conflict with the religious leadership of Israel.[3] In this connection, the immediate context of Lk. 23:44-56 is provided by the series of events encompassing Jesus' arrest and crucifixion.[4] The pericope which immediately

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[1] Frank J. Matera, "The Death of Jesus According to Luke: A Question of Sources," *CBQ* 47 (1985) 470.

[2] I rely upon the interpretation of the arrangement of Luke's Gospel provided by Alan Culpeper, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIB 9 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995) 10.

1. The Prologue (1:1-14)
2. The Infancy Narrative (1:5-2:52)
3. Preparation for Jesus' Ministry (3:1-4:13)
4. The Galilean Ministry (4:14-9:50)
5. The Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27)
6. The Ministry in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38)
7. The Passion/Resurrection Narratives (22:1-24:53).

[3] Such conflicts emerge in the following passages: Lk. 4:16-30; 5:21, 30; 6:2,7,11; 7:36-50; 9:53; 11:15; 37-52; 53-54; 13:14,7; 14:2; 15:2; 16:14; 19:39.

[4] The portions of Luke's Passion Narrative preceding 23:44-56 can be divided into the following sections:

1. The Last Supper (22:14-20);
2. Jesus' Farewell Discourse (22:21-38);
3. Jesus' Agony in the Garden (22:39-46);
4. Jesus' Arrest (22:47-53);
5. Peter Denies Jesus (22:54-62);
6. Jesus is Ridiculed (22:63-65);
7. Jesus Before the Sanhedrin (22:67-71);
8. Jesus' Trial Before Pilate, including
9. Jesus Before Herod (23:1-25);
10. The Way of the Cross (23:26-32);
11. Jesus' Crucifixion (23:33-43).

precedes (23:33-43) effectively sets the stage for what we now encounter: Jesus is crucified between two criminals and harangued by hostile witnesses (including the criminal at His side). In effect, their ironical taunts (which correctly identify Christ as *Messiah of God* and *King of the Jews*) anticipate the centurion's confession of Jesus as *a righteous man* (ὁ ἄνθρωπος δίκαιος) at 23:47. In contrast to those condemned justly (δίκαιως), Jesus is recognized as a man who committed no wrong (23:41).

But what transpires on the cross is the necessary (and seemingly inevitable) outcome of Jesus' struggle against all the forces (both human and cosmic) which would frustrate His saving work. As the model of righteousness, Jesus is the very embodiment of God's plan for the salvation of humanity. From this standpoint, Lk. 23:44-56 serves as a touchstone for such key Lukan themes as the universality of redemption and the call to discipleship. These themes find fuller expression in the resurrection narrative which immediately follows (as well as the second part of Luke's Gospel that comprises the *Acts of the Apostles*).

Outline

Lk. 23:44-46 amounts to an introductory statement specifying the time of day and three developments that immediately precede Jesus' death on the cross: darkness permeates the earth; the curtain of the sanctuary is torn *down the middle;* Jesus utters His cry to the Father and dies. On the basis of this information, the remainder of the passage unfolds in three sections: (1) *vv.* 47-49, depicting the different reactions of the witnesses (i.e., the centurion, the crowds, and Jesus' acquaintances and the Galilean women); (2) *vv.* 50-53, depicting the role of Joseph of Arimathea in Jesus' burial, concluding with a reference to the day of Preparation and the approach of the Sabbath (*v.* 54); (3) *vv.* 55-56, depicting the

visitation of the women to the tomb, and their return to prepare the materials for the anointing of Jesus' body.[5]

Markan Comparison

Luke exhibits clear affinities with Mark's passion narrative. As Johnson observes (406b), Luke uses Mark "with reasonable fidelity." Lk. 23:44-56, in fact, is part of a larger section of the Gospel [i.e., 22:1-24:12] representing one of five blocks of Markan material which Luke incorporates and/or alters.[6] But by the same

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[5] For purposes of analysis, the foregoing overview can be reduced to the following outline:

The Death of Jesus (44-46)

1. The time of day is specified (44a)
2. Two great eschatological signs (44b-45)
3. Jesus' cry to the Father (46a)
4. Jesus' death (46b)

The Witnesses' Reactions (47-49)

1. The centurion sees what had taken place and glorifies God (47a)
2. The crowds see what had taken place (48) and return beating their breasts (48b)
3. Jesus' acquaintances and the Galilean women see what happened (49)

Joseph of Arimathea/Jesus' Burial (50-53)

1. Joseph described (50-51)
2. Joseph requests Jesus' body from Pilate (52)
3. Joseph takes Jesus' body from the cross, prepares it for burial, and places it in the tomb (53)
4. Transitional reference to the day of Preparation and approach of the Sabbath (54)

The Role of the Women (55-56)

1. The women examine the tomb (55)
2. The women return home to prepare spices and ointment for Jesus' anointing (56a)
3. The women rest on the Sabbath according to the commandment (56b)

[6] The following are the pertinent Lukan passages and their Markan counterparts:

(a) Lk. 3:1-4:15	=	Mk. 1:1-15
(b) Lk. 4:31-6:19	=	Mk. 1:21-3:19
(c) Lk. 4:1-9:40	=	Mk. 8:4-9:50
(d) Lk. 18;15-21:33	=	Mk. 10:13-13:32
(e) Lk. 22:1-2:12	=	Mk. 14:1-16:8

token, the third Gospel also exhibits some significant alterations of its Markan source. Such changes can be examined in terms of the following sequence of verses (and their Markan counterparts): (a) Lk. 23:44-46/Mk. 15:33-37; Lk. 23:47-49/Mk. 15:38-41; (c) Lk. 23:50-56/Mk. 15:42-47.[7] Overall, this paper considers Luke's parallels with Mark in three different contexts: *first,* a purely expository one (in the present section); *secondly,* an exegetical one; and *third,* a more explicit hermeneutical one, in assessing Luke's redaction.

1. Lk. 23:44-46/Mk. 15:33-37

In contrast to Mark's emphatic temporal specification *When it was the sixth hour* (15:33), Luke (23: 44) provides the more tentative it was *already about the sixth hour* (ἤδη ὡσεὶ ὥρα ἕκτη). Mark refers to the tearing of the Temple curtain in two (εἰς δύο), with the added *from top to bottom* (ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω), only after Jesus expires

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Luke also makes two omissions from Mark's Gospel: (a) the Big Omission from Mk. 6:45-8:26 (at Lk. 9:17); and (b) the Little Omission from Mk. 9:41-10:12 (at Lk. 9:50).

[7] For comparative purposes, a parallel outline of **Mk. 15:33-47** follows:

Introduction
1. The time of day is specified (33a)
2. The coming of darkness and its duration (33b)

A. Jesus' Death
1. Jesus' cry to God (34)
2. The bystander's response (35)
3. Jesus is offered sour wine and taunted (36)
4. Jesus gives a loud cry
5. The Temple curtain is torn in two (38)

B. Witnesses' Reactions
1. The centurion's proclamation (39)
2. The women who followed Jesus (40-41)

C. Joseph of Arimathea
1. Day of Preparation (42)
2. Joseph described (43)
3. Pilate's response (43-45)
4. Joseph buries Jesus (46a)
5. Joseph rolls a stone against the tomb's entry (46b)

D. Women Visit the Tomb
1. The Galilean women examine the tomb (47)

(15:37). Luke, however, describes this occurrence at the outset and replaces Mark's reference to the curtain's rending εἰς δύο with the more stylized *down the middle* (μέσον). This coincides with the coming of darkness *over the whole earth* and its attribution to the failing of the sun's light, or more precisely, to a solar eclipse (23:45). Luke eliminates Jesus' cry of dereliction in Aramaic (and its translation) found in *Mark* (15:34), as well as Mark's recounting of the bystanders' references to Elijah, their mocking offer of sour wine to Jesus, and their taunts regarding the prospect of Elijah's assistance (Mk. 15:35-36). Luke (23:46) supplements Mark's reference to Jesus' final cry (15:37) with a prayer to the Father.

2. Lk. 23:47-49/Mk. 15:38-41

Like Mark, Luke presents three categories of witnesses favourable to Jesus. Luke, however, provides the following innovations. In contrast to Mark's claim (15:39) that the centurion stood before Jesus and saw that He expired (repeating the verb ἐξέπνευσεν found at 15:37), Luke (23:47) simply points out that the centurion saw τὸ γενόμενον, and then, praised God with the proclamation ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος ἦν (as opposed to Mark's profound christological claim ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν). Luke (23:48) also adds the general category of the *crowd* (ὄχλοι). Finally, Luke condenses Mark's extended reference to the female witnesses to one verse. In contrast to Mark's naming of the women who followed Jesus from Galilee and reference to those *who came up with Him to Jerusalem* (15:40-41), Luke (23:49) only specifies *all His acquaintances and the women who had followed Him from Galilee.*

Luke likewise postpones Mark's temporal references (15:42) to the day of Preparation and the beginning of the Sabbath until after Jesus' internment. The positioning of this reference at that point in the narrative underscores the fact that the customary anointing of Jesus' body had to be delayed for religious reasons. Luke thereby opens the way for the women's preparation of spices and ointments for a subsequent anointing after the Sabbath (23:55-56). Finally, the grief displayed by the gathered crowds (Lk. 23:48) stands in sharp contrast to the belligerent nature of the bystanders at the cross at Mk. 15:35-36.

3. Lk. 23:50-56/Mk. 15:42-47

Luke (23:50-51) embellishes Mark's description of Joseph of Arimathea (15:43) in several ways: *first,* he characterizes Joseph as *a good and righteous man; secondly,* he specifies that Arimathea was a *city of the Jews; third,* he contrasts the fact that Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin with his refusal to support the plan and course of action adopted by that council (thereby accentuating his goodness and righteousness). While Luke retains Mark's reference to Joseph's request for Jesus' body from Pilate (23:52), he deletes Mark's description of Pilate's doubt regarding Jesus' death, and Pilate's accompanying inquiry of the centurion in confirming this fact (15:44-45). He also avoids Mark's repetitive references (15:46) to the linen cloth in which Joseph wraps Jesus' body, and merely informs us that he took the body down and *wrapped it in a linen cloth* (23:53). Luke, however, expands upon the reference to the rock-hewn tomb by specifying that no one had ever been interred there (while eliminating the Markan detail that Joseph *rolled a stone against the door of the tomb*). In recounting the visit to Jesus' tomb by the women, Mark (15:47) explicitly names them (as he did at 15:40), while Luke (23:55) continues to maintain their anonymity. In keeping with his earlier reference to the approach of the Sabbath, Luke (23:56) stresses that they rested (in accordance with the Law) after preparing spices and ointments for Jesus' delayed anointing (a feature absent in Mark's account).

Exegesis of Lk. 23:44-56

Luke closely adheres to Mark's timeline for the crucifixion. While Luke does not specify when Jesus was initially placed on the cross, we can assume (since He follows Mark's general chronology) that this occurred at the third hour or approximately at nine in the morning (cf., Mk. 15:25). As Marshall (874) points out, ἤδη designates the present (in the sense of "now"), but it also suggests a passage of time in relation to a prior event (i.e., the beginning of Jesus' crucifixion, some three hours earlier). Accordingly, Luke's assertion that *it was already about the sixth hour* underscores the fact that Jesus has been on the cross for a good while. At this point, the reader is informed that *darkness came over the whole earth* for a three hour period (that is, until ὥρας ἐνάτης or three in the

afternoon). While this claim is found in all three Synoptic accounts, it assumes a special import in the Lukan version.

In light of Jesus' earlier identification as *Son of God* (1:35), it is fitting that His crucifixion should be accompanied by an unusual occurrence. Moreover, Jesus' own words at the moment of His arrest (22:53) provide a preview of what is to come: *this is your hour, the time for the power of darkness.* Accordingly, darkness dominates the scene in which the *Son of the Most High* is firmly in the grip of the forces of evil. Here, Luke may have also incorporated Old Testament imagery which linked the darkening of the sun with Divine judgment, specifically in connection with the coming of the "day of the Lord."[8] In the context of Luke's passion narrative, the object of such judgment could easily be construed as the leadership of Israel.

Unlike Mark, Luke (23:46) offers a naturalistic explanation for this phenomenon. But there is some dispute regarding the phrase τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος and its translation. On the one hand, manuscripts provide two different readings: in contrast to τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος, some read ἐσκοτίσθε ὁ ἥλιος[9] On the other hand, the phrase τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος allows for two viable translations: *the sun being eclipsed,* or alternatively, *the sun having failed.*[10] Some commentators favour the latter over the former on purely scientific grounds: Luke could not have meant a solar eclipse (or if he did, he

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[8] See Isa. 13:9-10; Amos 5:18, 20; Joel 2:1-2, 31; 3:4; Zeph. 1:14-16. Of special interest here is Amos 8:9, which exhibits a striking parallel to the language of Lk. 23:44:

> *On that day, says the Lord God, I will make the sun set at midday and cover the earth with darkness in broad daylight*

[9] Brown (1039) specifies the manuscript testimony for these alternate readings: for τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος--P75, Codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Ephraem rescriptus, and Sahidic witnesses; for ἐσκοτίσθε ὁ ἥλιος--Codices Alexandrinus, Bezae, Koridethi; Marcion, Latin/Syriac witnesses; Koine traditions.

[10] According to Brown (1039), however, "the first Greek reading has more impressive textual support and should be given preference under the rule of choosing as original the more difficult reading."

was mistaken), since such a phenomenon was impossible during the full moon of Passover.[11]

But such reasoning overlooks the literary context in which Luke uses the phrase τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος. Whether a solar eclipse actually occurred at Jesus' crucifixion is a moot point. What is relevant is the evangelist's desire to stress the cataclysmic character of this event and its impact upon the created order as a whole. If Jesus' crucifixion could be accompanied by an all pervasive darkness at midday (due to a *failing of the sun*), it could also precipitate an untimely solar eclipse. By the same token, Luke might have been drawing upon his audience's memory of an eclipse as a means of showing that Jesus' crucifixion signals the beginning of a critical time when the whole world will be turned upside down.[12] Such events are anticipated in Simeon's earlier prophecy

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[11] An example of the drawbacks which proceed from a failure to appreciate the theological and literary purposes at work in this verse is provided by G.R. Driver ("Two Problems in the New Testament," *JTS* 16 (2, '65) 327- 337), who goes to great lengths to argue (on scientific grounds) that ἡλίου ἐκλιπτόντος could not have meant the sun being eclipsed. In a particularly telling passage, Driver (333) states: "A solar eclipse at the full moon (14/15 Nisan) is an astronomical impossibility; that the darkening of the sky at the Crucifixion is said to have lasted for some three hours whereas the utmost duration of a total solar eclipse is 7 minutes 40 seconds, only increases the difficulty of postulating an eclipse as thus described; and no inconceivable eclipse can have torn a curtain or anything else into two pieces!"

[12] Brown (1041-43) provides a detailed overview of the scholarly debate surrounding this issue and offers a persuasive explanation that takes into account Luke's redaction of Mark. Brown (1041) argues that Luke's insertion of a census that occurred well after Jesus' actual birth into the infancy narrative (2:2) for his own literary and/or theological purposes sets a precedent for what we encounter in the Passion Narrative: "In light of these procedures in the infancy narrative, it is not implausible that having read about darkness at noon in Mark, Luke associated it with a well-known eclipse of the general period in which Jesus died and made the latter the cause of the former." In this connection, John F.A. Sawyer ("Why is a Solar Eclipse Mentioned in the Passion Narrative (Luke xxiii.44-5)?," *JTS* 23 (1972): 125) offers the following observation regarding Luke's use of this image: "The darkening of the sun, like the earthquake and the resurrection of the saints...was part of the literary tradition employed by writers in the first centuries of the Christian era to communicate their belief that God was in Christ." Sawyer cites the eclipse of November 24, A.D. 29 as a possible inspiration for Luke's reference (since it was the only total eclipse of the sun observable in that region during the first century).

(2:34) that *this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel.*

In keeping with this eschatological motif, Luke also inserts the tearing of the curtain of the sanctuary (καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ) at this point in the narrative, rather than after Jesus' death (as at Mark 15:38). The phrase καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναου designates the inner curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (cf, Ex. 26:33).[13] In Luke, the only other appearance of ναός is found in the infancy narrative (1:9, 21, 22), in designating the inner sanctuary of the Temple where Zechariah receives his vision announcing John the Baptist's birth. (Luke uses the more common ἱερόν when referring to the Temple and its precincts in general terms.)[14] Accordingly, the tearing of the curtain in Luke's more stylized *down the middle* (μέσον) suggests that Jesus' crucifixion has sundered Israel at the very heart of its religious and national life.[15]

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[13] This issue, in fact, has been a matter of some debate among commentators. According to Plummer (537), a curtain called τὸ Δεύτερον καταπέτασμα was between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (cf., Ex. 26:31; Lev. 21:23; 24:3), in order to distinguish it from τὸ Κάλυμμα, the curtain separating the outer court from the Holy Place (cf., Ex. 27:16; Num. 3:25).

[14] Also see Lk. 2:27, 37, 46; 4:9; 18:10; 19:45, 47; 20:1; 21:5, 37-38; 22:52-53; 24:53.

[15] There are four dominant interpretations regarding the significance of the tearing of the curtain (as enumerated by Bock, 1860-61): (a) a picturing of a time of judgment (in conjunction with other signs); (b) a suggestion that judgment is coming on the Temple; (c) the suggestion that Jesus opens the doors to paradise; (d) an announcement that God cannot be contained within His Temple any longer, since He is now reaching out to all through Jesus' death. I favour a variation of the second interpretation, with the qualification that the tearing of the curtain points to the passing of the Temple as the locus of Divine activity (rather than to its physical destruction). As Green (826) states, "what is signified is God's turning away from the temple in order to accomplish his purposes by other means. Luke portrays the rending of the temple veil as a symbol of the destruction of the symbolic world surrounding and emanating from the temple..." Elsewhere, Green observes ("The Demise of the Temple as 'Culture Center' in Luke- Acts: An Exploration of the Rending of the Temple Veil (Luke 23.44-49)," *RevBib* 101 (4, '94): 515: "Even if the temple remains as a place for prayer and teaching, it no longer occupies the position of the cultural center, the sacred orientation point for life; its zones of

Such a portentous happening effectively sets the stage for what next transpires. In a very real sense, the character of Jesus' death depicted in *v.* 46 illuminates Luke's somewhat cryptic repositioning of the tearing of the Temple curtain one verse earlier. Luke's placement of this occurrence before Jesus dies brings home the message that only Jesus' sacrifice can open the way to the Father blocked by sin.[16] In the process, we witness a complete superseding of the Temple cult and its outmoded obligations.[17] But the tearing of the curtain just prior to Jesus' death also provides a striking means of illustrating the intimacy between Christ and the Father, as Jesus's salvific mission reaches its climax. By virtue of the tearing, there is a direct opening to the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary of the Divine presence. In a manner consistent with the symbolism operative in this incident, Jesus can now speak directly to the Father.

Luke eliminates Jesus' cry of dereliction in Aramaic found in Mark (15:34). Jesus' cry *in a loud voice* (φωνήσας φωνῇ) at Lk. 23:46, then, parallels Jesus' second cry at Mk. 15:37. In Mark, Jesus dies immediately after this *loud cry.* In the absence of any "last words" on Christ's part in Mark, Luke finds an opportunity to express the depth of Jesus' devotion to the Father. In the wake of the first cry in the other Synoptic versions (*My God, my God, why have you*

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holiness no longer prejudge people according to relative purity."

[16] This theme finds clearer expression elsewhere in the New Testament. Eph. 2:14-15 affirms that Christ *broke down the dividing wall of enmity through His flesh, abolishing the law.* Similarly, Heb. 10:20 depicts the curtain or veil as Christ's own flesh, and its tearing as the rending of His flesh as the conduit to reconciliation with God: *through the blood of Jesus we have confidence of entrance into the sanctuary by the new and loving way He opened for us through the veil, that is, His flesh.*

[17] Luke's image of the curtain tearing down the middle suggests that the opening provided an aperture through which Jesus passed. Cf., Heb. 6:19, which depicts Jesus' entrance *into the interior behind the veil...on our behalf as forerunner.* Brown's thought-provoking question (1105) has a direct bearing upon the question of Luke's redaction: if Luke changed Jesus' last words from a cry of abandonment to an affirmation of trust, "why could he not have changed the Marcan rent veil from a negative sign of destruction of the sanctuary to a positive sign of access to God?"

forsaken me?), the second cry reflects a sense of abandonment at the very point of death. But for Luke, Jesus' cry *in a loud voice* assumes the form of a prayer that expresses the complete trust of a loving son: *Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit* (πάτερ, εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου). The prayer, in effect, provides a striking restatement of the words of Ps. 31:6.[18] Luke, however, makes two notable changes to the Psalm text. First, the future tense of the verb (παραθήσομαι) is changed to the present tense (παρατίθεμαι). Luke thereby lends a greater sense of immediacy to Jesus' prayer. Secondly, Luke has Jesus address God as πάτερ. Christ's appeal to God in this personal manner is consistent with other expressions of a filial relationship found throughout the third Gospel.[19]

While the verb παρατίθημι can be translated as "I commit" or "I commend," it also suggests an act of entrusting, whereby one places what is properly one's own at the disposal of another. In this case, Jesus is placing His innermost being (i.e., His πνεῦμα) into the Father's *hands.* But in keeping with the biblical connotations surrounding the term χείρ, such an act is tantamount to a complete submission to God's saving power.[20] Earlier, Luke emphasized that the Son of Man is about to be betrayed *into the hands of men* (9:44). Likewise, Zechariah's Canticle proclaims the prospect of salvation *from the hand of all who hate us* (1:71) and rescue *from the hand of enemies* (1:74). Now, Jesus finds a means of deliverance from the grip of the enemy only by placing Himself in the hands of the Father. In broader Lukan terms, Jesus' submission becomes a model of Christian discipleship. Thus, Stephen's death cry at Acts 7:59

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[18] Ps. 31:6 (LXX): *Into your hands I will commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth* (εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου, ἐλυτρώσω με κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀληθείας)

[19] Also see Lk. 10:21-22; 11:2, 13; 12:30, 32; 22:42; 23:34.

[20] In the Old Testament, God is depicted as laying His hand (yad) on people, stretching it out, and using it to create and redeem; the New Testament follows Old Testament usage (Kittel, 1310-11). Cf., I Kings 18:46; Jer. 15:17; Ezek. 1:3; Rom. 10:21; Acts 7:50;13:11; Heb. 10:31.

(*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*) echoes Jesus' final words at Lk. 23:46. This prayerful offering is followed immediately by an *expiration.* In contrast to the harsh quality of Jesus' final words in Mark, the verb ἐξέπνευσεν expresses a peaceful surrender.[21]

In *vv.* 47-49, Luke presents the reactions of the centurion, the crowds, and Jesus' acquaintances and the Galilean women, respectively. These witnesses display three different reactions to what they observe: the centurion gives glory to God and proclaims Jesus' righteousness; the crowds express their grief by a symbolic gesture; the acquaintances and Galilean women watch in silence. While the centurion and a group of women are found in the Markan version of Jesus' death, the inclusion of the ὄχλοι bears a distinctive Lukan stamp. Luke's reference to the centurion's reaction suggests a dependence on Mark: both Lk. 23:47 and Mk. 15:39 begin with ἰδὼν δὲ, and the confession of the centurion in both accounts assumes the same general form. But that is the extent of the similarities. In Luke, the centurion's confession has a different content, and Jesus undergoes a completely different manner of death. (Likewise, Mark refers to the centurion by means of the Latin loan word ὁ κεντυρίον, while Luke uses the original Greek term ἑκατοντάρχης, designating a commander of a hundred [ἑκατόν] troops.)

But what does the centurion see? This question provides a means of distinguishing what we find in the Markan and Lukan accounts. For Mark, the specific object of the centurion's gaze was *how Jesus expired* (οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν). Luke, however, speaks in more general terms of *what had taken place* (τὸ γενόμενον). We might assume (although this is not clear from the text) that this phrase not only encompasses the manner of Jesus' death, but the darkening of the sun at midday as well.

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[21] Literally, the term means "to breathe out," "to blow out," or "to expire" (Kittel, 894). The only New Testament appearances of this form of the verb ἐκπνέω are found at Lk. 23:46 and Mk. 15:37, 3.

Whatever the centurion observes prompts him to glorify God.[22] In contrast to the Markan centurion's statement *truly this man was the Son of God* (ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν), the Lukan centurion makes the simpler assertion that Jesus is an *innocent* or *righteous* (δίκαιος) *man*. Here, Luke effectively plays upon the duality of meaning inherent in δίκαιος. In one sense, the term stands in continuity with the statements of Pilate and the good thief absolving Jesus' of any guilt.[23] But the term is also rich in theological import. In the Old Testament, the Messiah is characterized as δίκαιος, by virtue of his conformity to God's will.[24] This meaning is implicit in Jer. 23:5 (where the "righteous shoot" is one who does what is just and right), in Zech. 9:9 (where the king is depicted as *a just savior, meek and riding on a colt*), and in Isa. 53:11 (where the Suffering Servant of the Lord makes many righteous). Against this Old Testament background, the centurion's confession attests to Jesus' intimate relationship to the Father (as indicated by His dying prayer), and conversely, Jesus' role as the one who suffers and dies on behalf of humanity.[25] This theme is carried over into Acts (3:14; 7:52; 22:14) where the term is again

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[22] For other instances in the Gospel in which people render glory to God in response to some wondrous work or miraculous healing, see Lk. 2:20; 4:15; 5:26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; Acts 13:48. For endorsements of a traditional interpretation that this response prefigured the conversion of the Gentiles, see Ellis, 270; Fitzmeyer, 1515; Green, 827; Karris, 719. "Longinus" ("soldier with a spear") is the name attributed to the centurion in the *Acta Pilati* B.11.2. Cf., John 19:34.

[23] See Lk. 23:4; 23:14-15; 23:22; 23:41.

[24] Kittel, 170. For additional Old Testament references to δίκαιος, see Matera, "The Death of Jesus According to Luke: A Question of Sources," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 482. P. Doble ("Luke 23.47--The Problem of *dikaios*," *Bib Trans* 44 [3, '93]: 329) perceives a direct link between the scriptural background of the word and a redaction that provides a means of "systematically telling...the story of Jesus' death in terms which would have been intelligible to hearers who were learning to grasp the whole event as fulfilment of scripture..."

[25] For a thorough treatment of the debate regarding the connotation of δίκαιος at 23:47, see Brown, 1163-64.

applied to Jesus, as the Righteous One that was betrayed and murdered.

In *v.* 48, the focal point becomes *the crowds* (ὄχλοι), an anonymous group of individuals that comes to the fore at various junctures in Jesus' ministry and crucifixion. In this connection, Luke seems to use ὄχλοι somewhat interchangeably with the *people* (ὁ λαός). In the Lukan passion narrative, this collective noun represents those who support Jesus, or those who assume the role of neutral observers of His final hours. In Lk. 23:35, the *people* who watch the crucified Christ provide a striking contrast to the jeering rulers at the foot of the cross. While it is not initially apparent whether the ὄχλοι depicted at 23:48 are sympathetic to Jesus, they might well be linked with those who mourned and lamented His plight on the way of the cross (23:27).[26] Still, the fact that they are depicted as mourning and lamenting by no means confirms their belief in Jesus' innocence. Such expressions of grief may well have been part of a standard mourning ritual.

Like the centurion in *v.* 47, the ὄχλοι of *v.* 48 also see *what had taken place.* But it is interesting to observe Luke's use of the plural (ἃ γενόμενα) in *v.* 48 (as opposed to the singular τὸ γενόμενον in *v.* 47). While the evangelist might have used the plural form merely in order to complement ὄχλοι, he also might have wished to underscore the fact that the centurion's gaze was confined exclusively to Jesus' death (i.e, τὸ γενόμενον). Thus, the crowds' observation of *things that had taken place* not only encompassed Jesus's death (and the darkening of the sun), but the reaction of the centurion. Indeed, the very sight of a Roman officer giving glory to the God of an alien people (and calling the man he just executed δίκαιος) was sufficient enough to arouse their curiosity. But the centurion is an ancillary character in the spectacle (θεωρια) that finds its verbal counterpart in θεωρήσαντες Jesus clearly occupies center stage. Here, θεωρία (a New Testament *hapax legomenon*) assumes the character of a unique, privileged sight that rivets the

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[26] Lk. 22:47, however, the *crowd* is explicitly identified with that group that comes with Judas to arrest Jesus.

attention of everyone present. Accordingly, they *returned* (υπεστρεφον), *beating their breasts* (τύπτοντες τὰ Στήφα) in a remorseful, and even penitential manner.[27]

Luke's focus on the third category of witnesses at *v.* 49 begins with the generic *all his acquaintances,* or more precisely, *all those known to Him.* Here, the somewhat hyperbolic πάντες οἱ γνωστοὶ finds a parallel in the πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι of the preceding verse. In these γνωστοὶ, we find an implicit reference to Jesus' disciples. In contrast to Mark's depiction of the disciples' abandonment of Jesus at the time of His arrest (14:50), Luke refrains from any further mention of their whereabouts (with the exception of Peter's denial of Christ at 23:54-62). As Brown (1171) observes, however, the fact that the generic οἱ γνωστοὶ is in the masculine provides a means of differentiating this group from the Galilean women.[28] Such a distinction not only lends credence to the assumption that these acquaintances are men, but likewise, the supposition that they are Jesus' followers.

But the real focal point of *v.* 49 is the group of women. Unlike Mark (who explicitly names the women witnesses at 15:40), Luke merely identifies them as *the women from Galilee following along with Him* (γυναῖκες αἱ συνακολουθοῦσαι αὐτῷ ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας). By virtue of this Galilean link, we have some justification for associating this group with the women identified as Jesus' followers

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[27] Cf., Lk. 18:13, where the humble tax-collector beats his breast and prays. The theme of "returning" (ὑπέστρεφειν) after witnessing some marvellous deed is found at Lk. 2:20 (where the shepherds return, glorifying and praising God after what they had heard and seen), and Lk. 8:39 (where Jesus commands the healed Gerasene demoniac to return home and recount what had been done for him).

[28] Brown (1172-73) also entertains other possibilities regarding the γνωστοὶ some theorize that the term points to the male and female relatives of Jesus (cf., 2:43-44), while others suggest Jesus' disciples and/or circle of friends extending beyond the Twelve. It is interesting to observe that Luke also refers to larger groups of followers in both the Gospel (10:1,17--which specifies the "seventy-two" others appointed by Jesus) and in Acts (1:13-15--which specifies an assembly of *about one hundred and twenty persons,* in addition to the explicit naming of male and female disciples, as well as Mary and Jesus' "brothers").

at 8:3 (i.e., Mary Magdalene; Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza; Susanna; and *many others who provided for them*). Or, as Marshall (877) conjectures, Luke might have simply omitted their names here because they had already been named. Like Jesus' acquaintances, these women are described as standing at a distance (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν). The phrase (which appears at Mk. 15:40) has a curious ambiguity: while it obviously carries a spatial connotation, it also suggests a certain reluctance to approach the cross. Peter, we recall, followed the progress of Jesus' arrest μακρόθεν (Lk. 22:54).[29] While these witnesses are not to be placed on the same level as one about to deny Christ, their standing *at a distance* still removes them from the women and the beloved disciple at the very foot of the cross at Jn. 19:25-27. By the same token, such a stance might suggest an attitude of piety or reverence that distances them from those mocking Christ as well. In this connection, the act of standing ἀπὸ μακρόθεν at *v.* 49 also evokes the image of the humble tax collector (18:13), who stood μακρόθεν, *beating his breast.*

This interpretation finds further support in the fact that the women are described as *following along with Him.* In this context, the present participle συνακολουθοῦσαι expresses the notion of an ongoing activity that began in the course of Jesus' ministry (cf., 8:13).[30] In effect, they have embarked on a journey which has led them to the culmination of Jesus' redemptive activity. Unlike the spectators described at *v.* 48, the acquaintances and women are not said to *return home.* Here, the distinction between those who do return (ὑπέστρεφον) and those who remain on the scene points to the theme of discipleship that permeates Luke/Acts.[31] In this respect,

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[29] See Ps. 38:11 (LXX), a verse which conveys the idea of the separation of the righteous sufferer from those closest to him (οἱ ἐγγιστά μου ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔστησαν).

[30] Fitzmeyer (1520) notes that some manuscripts (A, D, R, W, Y, C, 0177, and the Koine-text tradition) use the aorist participle συνακολουθέσασαι *(those who had followed Him).*

[31] In this connection, Plummer (540) sees Luke's initial use of δέ as establishing a contrast between the faithful group at *v.* 49 and the crowds at *v.* 48.

ὑπέστρεφον is a variant of ἐπιτρεψόν, the verb used in connection with the would-be disciple's request to go home in order to bury his father (9:59). Clearly, the γνωστοὶ and γυναῖκες of 23:49 are not among those *gazing at what lies behind* (9:62). While they are now confined to *seeing these things* (ὁρῶσαι ταῦτα), their continued presence also indicates a desire to look at what lies beyond Jesus' death.[32] In terms of the pericope as a whole, however, Luke has also set the stage for the reappearance of these women at Jesus' tomb, some six verses later.

At *vv.* 50-51, we encounter a marked transition in the story, as reflected in the opening phrase Καὶ ἰδοὺ. The account moves from the scenes surrounding Jesus' crucifixion and death to the preparations for His burial. We are also introduced to a character who assumes a pivotal role at this stage of the passion narrative. By rendering Jesus a place of interment, Joseph provides the physical setting for His eventual resurrection. Joseph, in fact, is associated with Jesus' burial in each Gospel (cf., Mk. 15:43; Mt. 27:57; Jn. 19:38). While Luke's recounting of Joseph's role in the story closely follows what we find at Mk. 15:42-47, it also reveals some distinctive features of its own. Let us consider the similarities and differences between these versions in turn.

Luke repeats three biographical items found in Mark. First, we are informed that Joseph is a "council" member. (Most commentators agree that βουλευτὴς, which is only found here and at Mk.15:43,

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[32] Luke's choice of verbs expressing the witnesses' act of observing Jesus' crucifixion and death at *vv.* 47-49 is illuminating: he moves from ἰδὼν at *v.* 47, to θεωρήσαντες at *v.* 48, to ὁρῶσαι at *v.* 49. It is not entirely clear whether these verb changes are motivated by stylistic considerations, or whether they reveal a theological motive. I would suggest the following hypothesis. At *v.* 48, Luke uses a verb (θεωρήσαντες) which complements the unique term referring to the object of the crowds' attention (θεωρίαν). But such an act of detached observation is different from the act of seeing that is expressed in *vv.* 47 and 49, respectively: in *v.* 47, the centurion's act of seeing the crucified Christ results in his recognition of Christ's righteousness; in *v.* 49, the act of seeing on the part of Jesus' followers is motivated by faith. Luke's use of different verbs in these three verses, then, might serve as a means of conveying different attitudes toward Christ on the part of the three levels of witnesses.

refers to the Sanhedrin mentioned at Lk. 22:66). Secondly, Luke and Mark specify that Joseph came from Arimathea. Third, Luke and Mark describe Joseph as one anticipating *the Kingdom of God.* Luke, however, refines or expands upon each of these items. But the force of his changes is only evident when we consider his initial characterization of Joseph as *a good and righteous man* (ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος). This characterization significantly shapes the Lukan portrayal of Joseph in the entire verse. We are immediately struck by Luke's attribution to Joseph of the same term (δίκαιος) the centurion attributed to Jesus at *v.* 47. At the outset of *v.* 50, then, we know that this individual is someone special. A clear indication of his privileged status lies in his depiction as one who awaited the Kingdom of God. Like Mark, Luke underscores this fact by means of the verb προσεδέχετο, and its connotation of an eager anticipation or longing.

But the Lukan version also conveys a strong sense of paradox that is absent in Mark. For, this *good and righteous man* also happens to belong to the Sanhedrin. On the basis of Luke's account, we know that this council was instrumental in securing Jesus' condemnation. Luke, however, distances Joseph from this group in a significant way: despite his association, Joseph did not concur in its decision (τῇ βουλῇ) and action (τῇ πράξει) in respect to the plot to betray Jesus (22:4) and hand Him over to Pilate (23:1). Once again, Luke exploits the ambiguity of meaning inherent in δίκαιος to great effect. On the one hand, Joseph is *innocent* of any collusion with the Sanhedrin in securing Jesus' condemnation. By virtue of this refusal, however, Joseph has also placed himself in the company of those Jews numbered among God's chosen ones. In this way, he can be linked with the righteous people mentioned in the infancy narrative (1:6,17; 2:25) and elsewhere in Luke's Gospel (5:32).

Luke further specifies that Joseph came from *Arimathea, the city of the Jews* (πόλεως τῶν Ἰουδαίων). This information not only provides a geographical indicator (as Marshall [880] suggests), but serves to highlight the fact that Joseph himself is a Jew. As such, he is a recipient of the messianic promise.[33] There is a difference,

[33] In Luke, the term Ἰουδαῖος only appears in three contexts: (a) in the present

however, between those Jews who are open to Jesus' status as Messiah and those not so disposed. In Luke, the Jewish leaders (i.e., the scribes and Pharisees) exemplify this latter group, and by implication, the spirit of hostility to Jesus' redemptive mission. In contrast to Mark's assertion that Joseph went to Pilate *boldly* (τολμήσας), Luke simply informs us that Joseph *requested the body of Jesus after approaching Pilate.* Clearly, Joseph enjoyed a position prestigious enough to acquire an audience with the Roman procurator. This position also afforded him the credibility to ask for the body of a condemned man. In this request, commentators perceive an indication of the evangelist's desire to confirm Roman culpability for Jesus' death (or at least, for His actual execution).[34]

Luke completely eliminates Mark's scene regarding Pilate's initial doubt about Jesus' death and its verification by the centurion. Instead, he tacitly affirms that Joseph's request was granted on the basis of what transpires in *v.* 53. But such permission entailed more than an act of courtesy extended to a high-ranking Jew. Bock (1874-75) suggests that Joseph's standing in the community gave Pilate a sense of assurance that the release of Jesus' body would not precipitate the violent reaction that usually accompanied the execution of political leaders. The implication is that Pilate could trust a member of the same group that handed Jesus over to crucifixion in the first place. Like Mark, Luke (*v.* 53) has Joseph assume personal responsibility for removing the body from the cross.

In keeping with the requirements of Jewish custom and law, Joseph now fulfills the obligation of burying Jesus' body. This action

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passage; (b) in a reference to the elders at 7:3; and (c) in the references to Jesus as *King of the Jews* at 23:3,37-38. According to Culpeper (464a), this verse provides an example of Luke's use of balanced pairs (i.e., a man from the city of the Jews and women from Galilee; Zechariah and Elizabeth; Joseph and Mary; Simeon and Anna; the centurion and widow; Simon the Pharisee and the woman of the city; the men with dropsy and the bent woman). Whether Joseph himself recognized Jesus as the Messiah is a matter of debate (cf., Plummer, 541). Bock (1874) provides a survey of arguments for and against Joseph's possible status as a disciple.

[34] See Culpeper, 465a and Brown, 1229.

conforms to the belief that the lack of a proper burial incurred a divine curse.[35] The manner of burial further reveals Joseph's desire to impart honor to the deceased. We are told that he *wrapped* the body in a fine piece of linen (an apparent symbol of immortality).[36] But Luke also stresses that the rock-hewn tomb has never been used (or more precisely, that Joseph placed the body in a tomb οὗ οὐκ ἦν οὐδεὶς οὔπω κείμενος.)[37] Ironically, then, the man crucified under the derisive title *King of the Jews* is given a burial appropriate to a royal personage by one who opposed Jesus' condemnation at the hands of His own people. The temporal reference of *v.* 54 provides the transition to the reappearance of the Galilean women at *v.* 55. But in actuality, *vv.* 54 and 56b form an *inclusio* which serves the dual purpose of (a) demonstrating that the Law was observed throughout Jesus' burial; and (b) providing an incentive for the women's eventual return to the tomb after the Sabbath.[38]

Luke's assertion (54a) that ἡμέρα ἦν παρασκευῆς has prompted some debate. Generally, παρασκευή refers to the day of the Jewish

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[35] According to Deut. 21:22, someone that was executed for committing a capital offence must be buried the same day, *since God's curse rests on him who hangs on a tree.* For other Old Testament references demonstrating the importance attributed to proper burial, see Tob. 1:17; 4:3; 6:15; 14:13; Jer. 8:2; 16:4; Ezek. 29:5.

[36] According to Karris (720a), linen symbolized immortality because it was made from flax, which in turn came from the life-giving earth. In this connection, he also finds a Christian symbol for resurrection in the linen. To some extent, this verse provides but another example of the links between themes and motifs in Luke's Infancy Narrative and the Passion Narrative (e.g., the role of righteous individuals in Jesus' life; the consistency of Jesus' life and ministry with the Law). In this connection, Jacques Winandy ("Le signe de la mangeoire et des langes," NTStud 43 (1, ['97]: 146) perceives a relation between the reference to the manger and swaddling clothes at Lk. 2:12 and the references to the tomb and linen cloth of Lk. 23:53: "On voit des lors le parallélisme que Luc a pu établir entre la mangeoire et la couche funèbre, l'une étant le signe prémonitoire de l'autre. Secondairement, les langes ont joué le même rôle à l'égard du drap utilisé en guise de linceul de cette σινδώνdont parle Luc. en 23:53, comme le font d'ailleurs les autres synoptiques."

[37] Cf., Jn. 19:41. Mark gives Joseph the role of rolling the stone in place at the tomb (a feature absent in Luke).

[38] Green, 831.

week that immediately preceded the Jewish Sabbath (i.e., the period between Thursday evening and Friday evening).[39] The further specification (σάββατον ἐπέφωσκεν) at *v.* 54b lends a sense of urgency to the proceedings that not only justifies Joseph's quick internment of Jesus' body, but accounts for the women's action at *vv.* 55-56 as well.[40] On the basis of the information that *v.* 55 conveys, we may safely assume that they are the very women present at the crucifixion. Indeed, they are the same ones who had come with Him ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας.

But we find an intriguing ambiguity in the phrase Κατακολουθήσασαι δὲ αἱ γυναῖκες. While the participle κατακολουθήσασαι might mean that they were literally *following after* Joseph enroute to the tomb, it can also be linked with its variant συνακολουθοῦσαι at *v.* 49. If κατακολουθήσασαι is construed in this latter way, then *v.* 55a underscores the fact that these women were *following along with Jesus* even to the grave. From this standpoint, the only thing that can justify their *returning* (ὑποστρέψασαι) at *v.* 56a is the preparation of the requisite spices (ἀρώματα) and perfumed ointment (μύρα) for Jesus' body. Once again, the time-constraint generated by the approach of the Sabbath

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[39] Marshall, 881. According to Plummer (542), παρασκευῆς may mean either the eve of the Sabbath, or Passover. But he suggests that on this particular occasion, the Sabbath itself probably coincided with Nisan 15, the first day of Passover which would also rank as a Sabbath (and assumed a doubly holy significance when it actually coincided with the Sabbath).

[40] Marshall (881) reviews the various theories that have been proposed in the interpretation of σάββατον ἐπέφωσκεν e.g., a reference to the "breaking of day" at sunset; a reference to the lighting of lamps at sunset on Friday; a reference to the appearance of the evening (the theory that Marshall endorses). He rejects as improbable the interpretation that the phrase refers to dawn on Saturday morning. Brown (1256) points out that the assertion that *the Sabbath was dawning* (i.e., approaching) reflects a later mindset in which days begin in the morning. We find an interesting example of this process in reverse, I think, in our own retention of the pre-Copernican, Ptolemaic nomenclature of "sun-rise" and "sun-set." In this case, we incorporate the terminology derived from an outmoded cosmology (despite the fact that we know that the sun does not literally "rise" or "set" in a heliocentric system), rather than impose our own terminology upon another mind-set (as Luke's text seems to do).

comes to the fore: we might assume that their initial observation as to ὡς ἐτέθη τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ (*v.* 55b) revealed that Joseph did not have sufficient time to perform a proper anointing.[41] Accordingly, they now set themselves to this particular task. In the interim, however, they rest for the duration of Sabbath κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν. Luke thereby affirms that every aspect of Jesus' earthly sojourn, from His infancy (2:21-22) to His final anointing, stands in conformity with the Law.[42]

Assessment of Luke's Redaction

What do Luke's omissions, additions, and alterations of arrangement or style tell us about his relation to Mark? This question touches upon the unresolved (and largely unresolvable) debate regarding Luke's possible use of extra-Markan sources. In light of Luke's departures from Mark's passion narrative (and its distinctive non-Markan material), some scholars contend that Luke relied primarily upon another passion account (and only secondarily upon Mark).[43] This position is challenged by those who contend

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[41] *V.* 56 has also prompted some debate regarding the temporal element. In this connection, Brown (1258) observes:

> Some scholars, doubting that the women could get the spices and myrrh ready (23:56) before sunset, have wondered whether Luke was confused about Jewish time reckoning and thought that Friday belonged to preparation day rather than to the Sabbath. This thesis would give the women till midnight to finish getting the spices ready before the Sabbath began.

In point of fact, however, *Mishna Sabbat* 23.5 stipulated that "they may prepare all the requirements for a corpse, anoint it, and wash it, provided they do not move any one of the limbs." *Sabbat* 8, however, forbade taking out "sufficient oil to anoint the smallest member on the Sabbath."

[42] Here, Ellis (270) raises an intriguing question: in view of the warm climate and the rapidity of decomposition: do we have grounds for presupposing that Joseph provided an initial, temporary anointing at the time he wrapped Jesus' body in the linen? Craddock's observation (277), however, is thought-provoking: such a concern to maintain the prescriptions of the Law is somewhat surprising, in view of the fact that Luke has already depicted Jesus' death as representing the beginning of a radical break with the religious past.

[43] See Vincent Taylor, *The Passion Narrative of St. Luke: A Critical and Historical Investigation*, ed. O. Evans, SNTSTMS, no. 19 (Cambridge: Cambridge

that any Lukan divergences from its Markan source are explicable on the basis of editorial work that was motivated by Luke's own theological interests.[44] In view of the highly speculative character of the claims regarding Luke's incorporation of other traditions, I tentatively favour the latter position. In the final analysis, the vast majority of Luke's changes find a compelling, or at least, a reasonable explanation in the broader theological framework of Luke/Acts.

1. Introduction (Lk. 23:44-46/Mk. 15:33-37)

Luke adheres to Mark's reference to the onset of darkness *from the sixth to the ninth hour.* While his addition of the terms *already* (ἤδη) and *about* (ὡσεὶ) initially appear inconsequential, they provide a means of compensating for Luke's lack of any explicit statement as to when Jesus was initially nailed to the cross. By virtue of this addition, Luke imparts a more acute sense of the prolonged character of Jesus' crucifixion to the reader. Although the darkness motif is found in each Synoptic version, its presence in Luke highlights the conflict between good and evil surrounding the crucifixion of the Son of God. A significant addendum to Mark, however, is found in Luke's explanation of the darkness (i.e., due to a failing or eclipse of the sun). What warrants such an insertion? Even if we posit a reliance upon a special source, we must still justify its inclusion in Luke's account.

As we have seen, scholars suggest that Luke drew upon the common memory of an eclipse that occurred well after the time of Christ. From Luke's perspective the insertion of this well-known event could serve a dual purpose: *first,* to emphasize the cataclysmic character of Jesus' crucifixion; *secondly,* to show the impact of this

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University Press, 1972); Joachim Jeremias, "Perikopen-Umstellungen bei Lukas?," *NTS* 4 (1958): 115-119.

[44] See J. M. Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1930); Joseph Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* X-XXIV, AB 28A (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1365-1366; Frank J. Matera, "The Death of Jesus According to Luke: A Question of Sources," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 469-485.

event upon all people (that is, both Jews and Gentiles alike). Luke further couples this unsettling occurrence with the tearing of the Temple curtain. The placement of this event at this juncture of the story is significant. Once again, the divergence from Mark (who places it after Jesus' death) could be attributed to an alternate tradition or source. But it is likewise explicable on the basis of the dictates of Luke's own understanding of the effect of Jesus' crucifixion upon the whole world. In the face of the radical transformation that Jesus' death precipitates, nothing could ever be the same. By shifting this occurrence to the moment immediately before Jesus expires, Luke also downplays the emphasis on judgment that dominates Mark's account. This retributive dimension is also evident in Mark's more hard-hitting assertion that the curtain was torn *in two* (ἐν δύο), *from top to bottom.* For Luke, the act of dying which opens the way to God finds a striking symbol in the curtain's tearing *down the middle* (μέσον).

Luke reduces Jesus' two death cries in Mark to one, and thereby, eliminates the Aramaic cry of dereliction (along with the Elijah allusion and mockery by the bystanders).[45] Luke thereby proceeds directly from the disturbing phenomena (i.e., darkness and the tearing of the Temple curtain) to Jesus' final words. In this connection, Luke opts for Ps. 31:6 instead of Ps. 22:2 as an Old Testament touchstone. The result is a sharper focus on the manner of His death. Fitzmeyer (1513) points out that much debate surrounds the question as to whether Luke's omission stems from a use of "L" (especially in view of its absence in Jn. 19:28-30). In my estimation, however, such an omission is more indicative of Lukan editing than a passive reliance upon additional sources or traditions. What might have prompted this omission and what is its upshot? In effect, it completely transforms the tone of Jesus' death. Considering Luke's christological concerns, such a change is essential. The second cry that merely reinforces Jesus' initial expression of abandonment in Mark now becomes a humble prayer

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[45] While Brown (1067) acknowledges a theological motive at work in Luke's changes here, he also attributes the excision to a general editorial policy whereby Markan duplicates (e.g., two cockcrows) are reduced to one in Luke. Luke's focus on but one final cry of Jesus is consistent with this policy.

of trust from Son to Father. Such parting words are fitting for one cast in the role of the Suffering Servant. But this characterization only emerges in the centurion's response which immediately follows.

2. The Witnesses' Reactions (Lk. 23:47-49/Mk. 15:39-41)

The next three verses describe the different reactions on the part of favourable (or at least, neutral) witnesses. Luke moves from the centurion's expression of Divine praise (*v.* 47) to the humble gesture of the crowds (*v.* 48), to the silent gaze of Jesus' acquaintances and women followers (*v.* 49). The reaction of the centurion is particularly significant, since it is here that we find the clearest indication of a Lukan redaction on theological grounds.

The Markan centurion is spontaneous in his proclamation that Jesus was *Son of God.* While the response of Luke's centurion is not so explicitly christological in content, it is no less powerful. In Luke, the assertion that *this man was righteous* coincides with an expression of Divine praise. But to some extent, these diverse confessions also complement what the centurions observe in each account: in Mark, the tearing of the Temple curtain after Jesus expires supports the claim that He is *the Son of God;* in Luke, Jesus' prayer of submission prompts a recognition of His humble status as δίκαιος.[46]

In both accounts, such laudatory claims on the part of a Roman officer carry a certain shock value; in each version, a Gentile happens to recognize Jesus for who and what He truly is. But the profundity of Jesus' depiction as *a righteous man* in Luke lies in its

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[46] Brown (1164) makes the following observation regarding Luke's alteration of the centurion's confession in Mark:

> The key to the change from Mark's "God's Son" lies in the import *dikaios* had in the Lucan storyline and for Luke's theology. In Mark that very high evolution of Jesus was prompted by God's startling intervention after Jesus' death (rending the sanctuary veil). But what precedes the confession in Luke is Jesus' trusting prayer to his Father, something less likely to lead to a full acknowledgement of Jesus' divinity.

very simplicity. Jesus is presented as one who stands in a right relationship with the Father. In this way, the centurion unwittingly casts Christ in the role of the Isaian Servant whose intimacy with God translates into a willingness to suffer and die unjustly for the sake of others. In the context of Luke's Gospel, Jesus is the exemplar of all those characterized as righteous.

Mark moves directly from the scene involving the centurion to one focusing on the group of women. Luke, however, inserts a verse devoted to *all the crowds*. This change is explicable in several ways. In literary terms, the addition of another group of witnesses allows for a triad (i.e., centurion, crowds, acquaintances/Galilean women) that nicely complements the triad of favorable witness on the way to the cross at Lk. 23:26-31 (i.e., Simon the Cyrenian, the large crowd of people following Jesus, and the so-called *Daughters of Jerusalem*). In this way, Lk. 23:26-31 and 23:47-49 bracket a scene involving a triad of hostile witnesses at *vv.* 35b-39 (i.e., leaders, soldiers, and the criminal). Accordingly, we might assume that the ὄχλοι of *v.* 48 encompasses *the people* of *v.* 35 (ὁ λαὸς), who stand watching in the midst of the scoffing and mockery. While the gesture of *beating their breasts* suggests a reverence or awe at the spectacle before them, it conveys a certain detachment here as well. In view of Luke's emphasis on the universality of the Gospel message, this anonymous mass of humanity also deserves a place near the cross. But their commitment to Christ is still tentative (as borne out by their simultaneous return home). Ultimately, the evangelization efforts of the early Church will be directed toward just such a "silent majority."

Luke inserts a group of disciples vaguely described as *those known to Him,* or more simply, *acquaintances.* Luke sacrifices Mark's detail regarding the names of the women who witness Jesus' crucifixion: no one is named and only the group from Galilee is explicitly mentioned. On the surface, their observation of the scene *at a distance* suggests the same detachment that the crowds display. But this assumption is dispelled by the verb συνακολουθοῦσαι. It is interesting to contrast Luke's use of the present participle here with Mark's imperfect ἠκολούθουν at 15:41. Whereas Mark implies that these women *used to follow* or *had followed* Jesus, Luke stresses a continuous activity. Luke thereby transforms those who appear as

passive spectators in Mark into active followers or true disciples.[47] In this connection, Brown (1169, n. 74) offers the illuminating observation that Luke merges the meanings of Mark's verbs at 15:41 (ἀκολογθέω, *to follow;* συναναβαίνω, *to come up with*). In so doing, he expresses a unique act of *following along with,* whereby the women accompany Jesus from Galilee to the foot of Calvary. The verb συνακολουθοῦσαι, in fact, is only found at 23:49 in Luke's Gospel.

3. Joseph of Arimathea (Lk. 23:50-53/Mk. 15:43)

Luke's introduction of Joseph of Arimathea adheres to the mainlines of its Markan source. At the outset, however, the identification of Joseph as *a good and righteous man* places him in a separate category from others who anticipated the Kingdom of God. Indeed, there is a vast difference between merely hoping for the Kingdom and the ability to discern its arrival. Joseph's righteousness affords him a special "lens," so to speak, through which he can appreciate Jesus' true significance. In this respect, Luke's embellishments of Mark's rather cut-and-dried description are revealing. Clearly, the third evangelist wishes to depict Joseph as something of a maverick among his own people. For this reason, Luke can omit Mark's assertion that Joseph went *boldly* (τολμήσας) to ask for Jesus' body from Pilate. Indeed, it goes without saying that a Sanhedrin member who opposed the plan and action of that august group was very bold. But Joseph also takes great pains to bury Jesus in accordance with the dictates of the Law. In a very real sense, however, such behaviour is consistent with his depiction as *a good and righteous man.* Indeed, Luke continually stresses the conformity of Jesus' life (and death) to the Law as well.

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[47] In Luke's Gospel, the vast majority of passages which use the verb ἀκολουθέω (the root of the variants συνακολουθοῦσαι at *v.* 49 and the Lukan *hapax legomenon* κατακολουθήσασαι at v. 55) use the notion of "following" in the sense of discipleship: 5:11 27-28; 9:11, 23, 49, 57, 59, 61; 18:22; 18:28, 43; 22:54.

4. Jesus' Burial (Lk. 23:53/Mk. 15:46)

The Lukan and Markan accounts of Jesus' burial are nearly identical. But Luke adopts a different word order and corrects Mark's redundancy by eliminating the initial reference to the linen cloth. (In Luke's streamlined version, it is simply not necessary to inform the reader as to how Joseph acquired the linen cloth.) A minor agreement emerges in the "new tomb" motif that Luke shares with Matthew (27:60). Luke and John (19:41), in fact, make exactly the same point here (albeit with markedly different language) that the tomb was one in which no one had ever been interred.[48] Mark's reference to Joseph's act of rolling the stone in place complements the claim that Joseph personally removed Jesus' body from the cross. Luke retains that earlier item, but omits the redundant detail regarding the closing of the tomb.

5. Transition (Lk. 23:54/Mk. 15:42)

Luke drastically alters the language of Mark here in the interests of simplification. But the crux of his redaction lies in his transference of the verse to the scene immediately after Jesus' burial. In effect, the position of the verse dictates its role in each version. In Mark, it serves to create a sense of urgency to bury Jesus before the beginning of the Sabbath. In Luke, the onset of the Sabbath does not impede Jesus' actual internment, but rather, the anointing of His body. Accordingly, the focus now shifts from Joseph to the women. In this respect, *v.* 54 provides a bridge to the concluding scene.

6. The Role of the Women (Lk. 23:55/Mk. 15:47)

Luke includes Mark's reference to the women's initial inspection of the tomb and the disposition of Jesus' body (while still not naming them). Once again, we encounter Luke's ongoing preoccupation with the notion of *following after*. Like the somewhat novel verb

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[48] Cf., Jn. 19:41:ἦν ..., μνημεῖον καινὸν ἐν ᾧ οὐδέπω οὐδεὶς ἦν τεθειμένος. On the basis of the contact of this verse with Matthew and John against Mark, Marshall (880) perceives a suggestion of the use of a non-Markan account of the burial, as well as some influence derived from oral tradition.

συνακολουθοῦσαι at *v.* 49, Κατακολουθήσασαι lends itself to a dual interpretation: the surface meaning of physically *following after* Joseph to the burial place is heavily overlaid with connotations of discipleship. While Mark's narrative concludes with this observation, Luke adds the seemingly unnecessary information (in view of what he will tell us at 24:1) that the women returned to prepare what was required for Jesus' final anointing.[49] In any case, *v.* 56 emphasizes the fact that all of this was done in a manner consistent with the prescriptions of the commandment. Its absence in Mark demonstrates the degree to which he wished to distance the Christian community from anything connected with the the Old Law. For Luke, however, such adherence is wholly consistent with the emphasis on the continuity of Jesus' mission with the Divine plan that permeates the Gospel.

Conclusion: The Message of Lk. 23:44-56

What is the point of Luke's redaction of Mark in recounting his version of the story of Jesus' death and burial? In my estimation, this question finds at least a partial response in the Lukan understanding of Christ and His redemptive activity. From this standpoint, Luke's departures from Mark in respect to the tearing of the Temple curtain (*v.* 45), Jesus' last words (*v.* 46), and the centurion's confession (*v.* 47) support the thesis that salvation can only be realized once Jesus freely submits Himself to an unjust execution. As Lk. 24:26 stresses, *Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into His glory?* In the crucifixion scene, Luke brings home the hard-hitting fact that the type of death meted out to Jesus was wholly inconsistent with His character as a righteous man.

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[49] It should be noted that Luke's account of Jesus' burial (and especially, his use of the women in this episode) represents a portion of the Passion Narrative which scholars perceive as exhibiting a reliance upon extra- Markan sources. While Fitzmeyer (1523) views the episode as the product of a Lukan redaction of Mark 15:42-47, he suggests that *vv.* 53c, 56a may have to be traced to "L." Marshall (879) likewise suggests (endorsing Taylor's view) that "Luke may have used a source which prepared for the story of the resurrection appearances by reference to the women concerned."

Paradoxically, then, Jesus becomes the Saviour of humanity by assuming the role of the Suffering Servant. Indeed, such an image dictates Luke's very choice of Psalm 31 in recounting Jesus' final prayer at *v.* 46. In the process, however, Jesus likewise becomes a model of righteousness for those who follow Him. Accordingly, it is not surprising that Luke places such a heavy emphasis on the notion of *following after* Jesus on the part of the Galilean women, both at the cross (*v.* 49) and at the tomb (v. 55). But the cost of discipleship is high. As Luke stresses at 9:62,*No one gazing at what lies behind is useful for God's Kingdom.* In effect, Jesus' brand of righteousness (which presupposes a willing acceptance of God's will, even to the point of forfeiting one's own life for the sake of others) sets the standard for His own disciples. In a very real sense, the death of Stephen at Acts 7:59 (and his Christ-like death cry) underscores the sacrifice required of those who proclaim the Gospel message to a hostile world.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are adopted for recurrent references to several sources cited throughout the paper (in both endnotes and text).

BOCK = Darrell L. Bock, *Luke.* Volume 2 of *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.* Grand Rapids, 1986.

BROWN = Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah. From Gethsemane to the Grave.* Volume 2. New York/London/Toronto/Sydney/Auckland: Doubleday, 1994.

CRADDOCK = Fred B. Craddock, *Luke. Interpretations* series. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990.

CULPEPER = Alan Culpeper, *The Gospel of Luke.* NIB 9. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.

ELLIS = E. Earle Ellis (ed.). *The Gospel of Luke. Century Bible* series. New Edition. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1966.

FITZMEYER = Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* X-XXIV. AB 28A. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1985.

GREEN = Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke.* NICNT. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmanns Company, 1997.

JOHNSON = Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke.* Volume 3 of *The Sacra Pagina* series. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991.

KARRIS = Robert J. Karris, "The Gospel According to Luke," NJBC. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990, 675-721.

KITTEL = Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (eds.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* Translated and abridged in one volume by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985.

MARSHALL = I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke.* A Commentary on the Greek Text. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978.

PLUMMER = Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke,* NICC, Sixth Edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903).