"AFTER INVESTIGATING EVERYTHING CAREFULLY FROM THE BEGINNING, I TOO DECIDED TO WRITE AN ORDERLY ACCOUNT": SOME INTRODUCTORY NOTES ON LUKAN SPECIAL MATERIAL

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Abstract: Covering all the critical aspects of an ancient bio (birth; upbringing; genealogy; ministry and teaching; death and resurrection), the Lukan special material ("L") makes a significant contribution to the portrait of Jesus as depicted by the Evangelist Luke. In every major section of Jesus' biography, the insertion of "L" material-sources creates unique contours and emphases. Among others, Jesus is portrayed as the fulfilment and culmination of God's plan of salvation, as revealed in the OT. Moreover, He is the Son of the OT God, who comes to save in Person – the infancy narratives reveal. As "the son of God" and "the son of Adam", Jesus is uniquely qualified to assume the priestly Messianic role of representative and mediator between God and humankind. He is also a remarkable miracle worker, yet so much more. His miracles comfort the afflicted; His teachings afflict the comfortable, as critical aspects of traditional Jewish

worldview are being challenged by Jesus' parables. In the face of death, Jesus is the absolute martyr-hero, rising above the remarkable heroes of the Jewish and Greco-Roman literature. In His resurrection, Jesus is vindicated by God as the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world. In His ascension, Jesus is worshiped by His followers as the exalted Lord of all.

Keywords: *Gospel of Luke; Lukan special material ("L"); ancient biography; Jesus Christ; contours and emphases*

Introduction. General matters

The Gospel of Luke is a composite document;[1] its author states this explicitly in the Prologue (Lk. 1:1-4). Luke[2] used several oral sources that he gathered from the testimonies of the eyewitnesses he interviewed[3] and also written sources that were available at the time (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.4).[4] Hence the diversified, mosaic appearance of

[1] E.g., François Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, Bd. 1: *Lk 1.1-9.50* (EKK 3/1; Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1989), 19-22; Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Vol. 2: *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (2nd ed.; New York/Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), 315-19; Michael Wolter, *The Gospel According to Luke*, Vol. 1: *Luke 1-9:50*, trans. by Wayne Coppins and Christoph Heilig (BMSEC; Waco, TX/Tübingen: Baylor University Press/Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 12-18.

[2] In this study, I follow the traditional identification of the author of Luke-Acts, i.e., Luke, "the beloved physician" (Col. 4:14) and Paul's travel companion. See, e.g., Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.1.1 (cf. 3.14.1): "Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him."

[3] In Lk. 1:3, the author uses a language similar to Paul in 2 Tim. 3:10. Implicitly, it presupposes direct interaction with the eyewitnesses referred to in the Prologue. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 42.

[4] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.4: "Luke, being by birth one of the people of Antioch, by profession a physician, having been with Paul a good deal, and having associated intimately with the rest of the apostles, has left

the Gospel, as the author tends to retain the linguistic features and data of his sources as he collected them.[5]

With regard to the materials used by Luke, the modern scholarship tends to identify three major sources. The first source is the Gospel of Mark. About 55 to 60 percent of the Markan text is included in Luke's Gospel, i.e., around 410 verses (Lk. 4:31-6:19 = Mk. 1:21-3:12; Lk. 8:4-9:50 = Mk. 4:1-9:41; Lk. 18:15-21:38 = Mk. 10:13-13:37). At the same time, the Markan source material represents only 35 to 40 percent of the Luke's final composition.[6] Secondly, Luke shares common material with Matthew that is not in Mark. This constitutes about 20 percent of Luke's final writing, around 250 verses.[7] The relationship between the common material of Luke and Matthew is highly debated among scholars. Some defend the independence between the writings of Luke and Matthew and attribute the common material to a singular shared source, the so-called "Q" material.[8] Other scholars argue for a direct and literary dependence between

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us examples of the art of curing souls that he obtained from them in two divinely inspired books: the Gospel, which he testifies that he wrote out even as they delivered to him who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, all of which facts he says he had followed even from the beginning; and the Acts of the Apostles, which he composed, receiving his information with his own eyes, no longer by hearsay."

[5] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (SP 3; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 6-7, 11-13.

[6] Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1994), 10.

[7] Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 11; David E. Garland, Luke (ZECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 34.

[8] Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 10-11; Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 14-16.

Luke and Matthew.[9] To these two sources, Luke adds novel material collected or composed by himself, which constitutes about 40 to 45 percent of the composition (around 485 verses):[10] Lk. 1:1-4; 1:5-2:52; 3:10-14; 3:23-38; 4:16-30; 5:1-11; 5:39; 7:11-17; 7:36-50; 8:1-3; 9:51-55; 9:61-62; 10:1, 17-20; 10:25-28; 10:29-37; 10:38-42; 11:5-8; 11:27-28; 12:1; 12:13-21; 12:35-38; 12:47-48; 12:49-50; 12:54-56; 13:1-9; 13:10-17; 13:31-33; 14:1-6; 14:7-14; 14:28-35; 15:1-10; 15:11-32; 16:1-15; 16:19-31; 17:7-10; 17:11-19; 17:20-21; 17:28-32; 18:1-8; 18:9-14; 19:1-10; 19:41-44; 21:34-36; 22:15-18, 27, 31-33, 35-38; 23:6-16; 23:27-31; 23:39-43; 24:13-53.[11] Scholars termed this proper source material "L".[12] It is this special material, Luke's unique contribution to the Gospel, that will be explored briefly in this study.

"L" as a Gospel in itself?

Even a quick reading of the "L" material may reveal that it covers all the major landmarks of Jesus's *bio*: birth and upbringing (2:1-52); genealogy (3:23-38); ministry and teaching

[9] See especially the works of Austin Farrer, Michael Goulder and, more recently, Marc Goodacre.

[10] Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 11-12. Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 16, has counted 550 verses belonging to "L".

[11] Luke has also some material in common with John's Gospel: Lk. 22:3 = Jn. 13:27; Lk. 22:50 = Jn. 18:10; Lk. 23:4, 14, 22 = Jn. 18:38, 19:4, 6. There is strong academic consensus that John postdates Luke. Yet the view that Luke used John's Gospel has also been defended by a few scholars. For a brief discussion, see John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 8.

[12] The designation "L", from "Luke", was used for the first time by Johannes Weiss, in 1892. See Bernhard Weiss and Johannes Weiss (eds.), *Die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas* (8th ed; KEK 1/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892), 280.

(e.g., 15:1-10; 15:11-32; 16:1-15; 16:19-31); death and resurrection (e.g., 23:6-16; 23:27-31; 23:39-43; 24:13-53).[13] Bernhard Weiss (1886) was among the first scholars to consider "highly probable" that the "L" material "belonged for the most part to *a* source that encompassed the whole life of Jesus".[14]

Furthermore, since the Markan material was inserted into Luke's Gospel in major *blocks* of text, several scholars have advanced the hypothesis that Mark was a later addition[15] to a "Proto-Luke", i.e., a primitive edition of the Gospel composed by assembling together the "L" and "Q" sources.[16] Moreover, James R. Edwards identifies "L" as the *Gospel of the Hebrews* which Patristic authors, such as Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.5), refer to.[17] Neither of the two theories have gained wide acceptance among modern scholars. However, they both show that the "L" material contains the main elements to be considered a proper (yet underdeveloped) Gospel.[18] A more cautious approach, yet impossible to prove,[19] comes from Donald A. Carson and

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[13] E.g., David A. DeSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 315.

[14] Bernhard Weiss, *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (2nd ed.; Berlin: Hertz, 1889), 543; Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 18 (emphasis original).

[15] Cf. 2 Tim. 4:11.

[16] B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (4th ed.; London: Macmillan, 1930), 199-222.

[17] James R. Edwards, *The Hebrew Gospel and the Development of the Synoptic Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

[18] E.g., Streeter, *Four Gospels*, 221: "Proto-Luke was, and was originally intended as, a complete Gospel".

[19] Such phrasing presupposes knowledge of the author's unstated thinking and motivation.

Douglas J. Moo: "we should certainly not think of Proto-Luke as a gospel in its own right, but more as a first draft of what became the gospel of Luke."[20]

On the whole, the "L" source material at least shows the author's thorough preparation. In his own words (1:3b), before he wrote the Gospel, Luke investigated ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς ("*everything* carefully from the beginning[21]"), which may refer to a complete investigation, that attempts to cover the entirety of Jesus' life span (cf. Acts 1:1).[22]

The sources behind the "L" source

The attempt to identify too narrowly the sources behind the "L" material, whether oral or written, appears to be an impossible task. For it was not a "a self-enclosed collection or even a written source whose borders are clearly defined", nor did it have a "unified origin".[23] With regard to the former, Michael Wolter warns that

> All attempts to ascribe to the Lukan *Sondergut* the character of a source that has an independent literary or theological profile commit a grave error, however. They do not take account of the fact that the only feature that all the texts of the *Sondergut* have in common is merely a negative characteristic, namely their absence from the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew, and they

[20] Donald A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 214.

[21] Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1* (SNTSMS 78; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 130.

[22] E.g., Bovon, *Lukas 1:1-9:50*, 38-39.

[23] Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 17-18.

> turn the remainder character of the *Sondergut* into a primary, positive characteristic that supposedly adheres to the texts as such and can be found in them. Against such a manner of proceeding one must raise not only positional and methodological objections but also scientific objections.[24]

Joseph A. Fitzmyer makes a similar point:

> when one considers the material that is peculiar to Luke, there is, first of all, no reason to think in terms of a written source. One cannot rule out free Lucan composition, used not only to formulate factual evidence (such as in Luke 3:1-3), literary sutures and summaries, but even possibly some scenes such as 24:50-53. By "composition" I mean free creative activity on the part of the evangelist, who was not depending on a previous source, oral or written, and not merely redacting or modifying something that he had inherited. Lucan "composition" is often evident from characteristic Lucan style. […] The problem is, How can one be sure that such material is really derived from "L" and not freely composed by Luke? The answer is, We shall never know.[25]

With regard to the issue of non-unified origin, Fitzmyer asks whether "L" depends on one or more persons. While "it is impossible to be certain about this", he prefers to think about "L" in terms of "a designation for source(s) of information about the Jesus-story in the early Christian

[24] Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 17.

[25] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 28; New York: Doubleday, 1981), 83.

community Luke would have tapped in various ways". This reading is "consonant with [Luke's] reference in the prologue to his effort to 'trace everything carefully from the beginning'".[26]

In spite of these uncertainties and caveats, there are several aspects concerning the sources behind "L" that are worthy of investigation. First, it was E. Earle Ellis who remarked the high prevalence of Semitic sources within the "L" material, in contrast to the rest of the Luke-Acts corpus.[27] Therefore, it could be inferred that the eyewitnesses that stood behind various sections of "L" belonged to the Jewish Christian circles of Luke's day.[28] Moreover, Richard J. Bauckham notices the exclusive presence of several disciples outside the circle of the Twelve, namely Joanna, Susannah (8:1-3), and Cleopas (24:13-18), that appear throughout the "L" material. The naming of these minor characters is taken to represent Luke's identification of the sources he interviewed (1:1-4). For Bauckham, "whole of Luke's special material (so-called L) derives from a circle of women disciples, including Joanna, who were the eyewitnesses, traditioners, and custodians of a cycle of Gospel traditions."[29] Indeed, the

[26] Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 85. For the view that "L" is based on a single source, see Kim Paffenroth, *The Story of Jesus according to L* (JSNTSup 147; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

[27] E. Earle Ellis, *The Making of the New Testament Documents* (BIS 39; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 1999), 388.

[28] E.g., Rainer Riesner, "Das Lokalkolorit des Lukas-Sonderguts: Italisch oder palästinisch-juden-christlich?", *SBFLA* 49 (1999): 51-64.

[29] Richard J. Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies in the Named Women in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 190; cf. Thorleif Boman, *Die Jesus-Überlieferung im Lichte der neuen Volkskunde* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967).

presence of women is prominent throughout the Lukan material – Mary, the Mother of Jesus, being but a prime example (2:19, 51):[30]

> Luke mentions thirteen women not mentioned in the other gospels, and stories about men are frequently paralleled by stories about women: the angelic annunciation to Zechariah (1:11-20) and to Mary (1:26-38); the praise of God in the temple for the child Jesus by Simeon (2:25-35) and Anna (2:36-38); mention of the widow of Zarephath (4:25-26) and Naaman the Syrian (4:27) in Jesus' first sermon; the first healings of a demoniac (4:31-37) and Peter's mother-in-law (4:38-39); the healing of a loved one, the centurion's slave (7:1-10) and the only son of the widow of Nain (7:11-17); the parable of the two debtors, representing Simon the Pharisee and the woman who was a sinner (7:36-50); the lesson on serving with the parable of the merciful Samaritan (10:25-37) and Mary and Martha (10:38-42); parables of the reign of God, the man who sowed a mustard seed (13:18-19) and the woman who hid leaven in some meal (13:20-21); those healed on the Sabbath, a daughter of Abraham (13:10-17) and a man with dropsy (14:1-6); parables about prayer, the urgent host and the reluctant neighbour (11:5-8) and the persistent widow and the wicked judge (18:1-8); parables of the last judgment, two men in bed (17:34) and two women grinding meal at the same place (17:35); those Jesus encounters on the way to crucifixion, Simon of Cyrene (23:26) and the daughters

[30] *Contra* Paffenroth, *Story*, 157. See Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 190-91.

> of Jerusalem (23:27-31); and the resurrection announcement to the women at the tomb (23:55-24:11) and the appearance to the followers on the road to Emmaus (24:13-27).[31]

Minor disciples, and especially women disciples, may have stood behind significant portions of "L".[32] If this is the case, it is no surprise that Luke has more references to women (43) than Mark and Matthew combined (39).[33] Thus, "L" becomes an important resource for understanding Jesus and His earliest followers from complementary male and female perspectives.

Scholars who take the "we passages" in Acts as historically accurate (cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.1.1), point to the fact that Luke spent two years in Palestine, while Paul was imprisoned at Caesarea (cf. Acts 21:8; 24:27; 27:1). This would have been a proper period for him to collect written evidence and to record the oral accounts of the eyewitnesses he met and interviewed.[34]

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[31] Garland, *Luke*, 35 (n. 22).

[32] Cf. Leonard Swidler, *Jesus Was a Feminist: What the Gospels Reveal about His Revolutionary Perspective* (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2007), who argues that the author/compiler of "L" was a woman.

[33] E.g., Merrill C. Tenney, *Studiu al Noului Testament* (Oradea: Cartea Creștină, 2008), 222; Mary R. D'Angelo, "Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View", *JBL* 109/3 (1990): 441-61.

[34] E.g., Carson/Moo, *Introduction*, 213: "From the 'we' passages of Acts, we know that Luke spent two years in Palestine while Paul languished in prison (see Acts 21:8; 24:27; 27:1). We can imagine him not only collecting written evidence but listening carefully for authentic oral teaching handed down in the Christian communities and interviewing eyewitnesses to the ministry."

"L", distinctive contours and emphases

Wolter is correct to express doubts about the attempt to contour a theology of "L", or even to sketch a unified and consistent "message".[35] A more valid approach would be to identify what David A. DeSilva calls "distinctive contours and emphases".[36] This is the approach taken in this study. Also, in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, DeSilva helpfully arranges the Lukan special material in broad topical categories. In the table below, the topical list is rendered alongside the textual list provided by Mark Allan Powell and Brice C. Jones:

Textual list	**Topical list**
Prologue (1:1-4)	1. The infancy narratives (1:1-2:52)
Birth of John foretold (1:5-25)	
Birth of Jesus foretold (1:26-38)	2. Luke's distinctive genealogy (3:23-38)
Mary visits Elizabeth (1:39-56)	
Birth of John the Baptist (1:57-80)	3. Five miracle stories
Birth of Jesus (2:1-20)	Miraculous catch of fish (5:1-11)
Jesus is presented in the Temple (2:21-38)	Raising the son of the widow of Nain (7:11-17)
The boy Jesus in the Temple (2:41-52)	Healing of the crippled woman (13:10-17)

[35] An attempt to reconstruct the message of "L" is Hans Klein, *Barmherzigkeit gegenüber den Elenden und Geächteten: Studien zur Botschaft des lukanischen Sondergutes* (BTS 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1987).

[36] DeSilva, *Introduction*, 315.

John replies to questions (3:10-14)

Genealogy of Jesus (3:23-38)

Good News to the poor (4:14-23, 25-30)

Call of first Disciples /Catch of fish (5:1-11)

Jesus raises widow's son at Nain (7:11-17)

Jesus anointed by a sinful woman (7:36-50)

Women accompany Jesus (8:1-3)

Samaritan village rejects Jesus (9:51-56)

Return of the Seventy (10:17-20)

Parable of the good Samaritan (10:29-37)

Jesus visits Martha and Mary (10:38-42)

Parable of friend at midnight (11:5-8)

Parable of the rich fool (12:13-21)

Repent or perish (13:1-5)

Parable of the barren fig tree (13:6-9)

Jesus heals a crippled woman (13:10-17)

Jesus heals man with dropsy (14:1-6)

Healing of the man with dropsy (14:1-6)

Healing of the ten lepers (17:11-19)

4. Other vignettes

Mary and Martha (10:38-42)

Zacchaeus (19:1-10)

5. Fourteen distinctive parables

The two debtors (7:40-43)

The good Samaritan (10:29-37)

The insistent friend at midnight (11:5-8)

The rich fool (12:13-21)

The barren fig tree (13:6-9)

Building a tower (14:28-30)

Preparing for war (14:31-32)

The lost coin (15:8-10)

The father and the two sons (15:11-32)

The prudent steward (16:1-9)

The rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31)

The servant's duties (17:7-10)

The unjust judge (18:1-8)

The Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9-14)

Humility and hospitality (14:7-14)

Cost of Discipleship (14:28-33)

Parable of lost coin (15:8-10)

Parable of prodigal son (15:11-32)

Parable of dishonest manager (16:1-12)

Parable of rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31)

Jesus cleanses ten lepers (17:11-19)

Parable of widow and unjust judge (18:1-8)

Parable of Pharisee and tax collector (18:9-14)

Jesus and Zacchaeus (19:1-10)

Jesus weeps over Jerusalem (19:41-44)

Jesus' prayer for Peter (22:31-32)

Purse, bag, and sword (22:35-38)

Jesus before Herod (23:6-12)

Pilate declares Jesus innocent (23:13-16)

Sayings about Jesus' Death (23:28-31, 34, 43, 46)

Road to Emmaus (24:13-35)

6. Certain episodes in the passion narrative, like the trial before Herod and the words from the cross (23:6-12, 34, 40-43, 46)

7. The resurrection appearances, especially the Emmaus experience (24:13-53)[38]

[38] DeSilva, *Introduction*, 315.

Appearance to the Disciples
(24:36-49)
Jesus' ascension (24:50-53)[37]

Following DeSilva's topical arrangement, some of the major themes of "L" will be explored briefly in the following sections.

The infancy narratives (1:5-2:52)

Since there are no infancy accounts in Mark and Q, "Luke was largely free to shape the narrative according to his own perceptions. These chapters are, therefore, like Acts, of particular importance in showing the reader how Luke intended his story to be understood."[39] While there are many aspects that could be uncovered from the infancy narratives, in this study only two will be considered. First, it is the obvious parallelism between the birth of John the Baptist and the birth of Jesus,[40] as this constitutes the grand structure of the section. Note, for instance, the elaborate parallelism put together by Fitzmyer:

[37] Mark Allan Powell, *Fortress Introduction to the Gospels* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 62, 86-87; Brice C. Jones, *Matthean and Lukan Special Material: A Brief Introduction with Texts in Greek and English* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 15-16.

[39] Johnson, *Luke*, 34.

[40] Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 282-85, attributes the John-Jesus comparison to "the struggle to fit [John the Baptist] into a schema of salvation history... a necessary step in the process of Christian self-understanding" and the evangelistic attempt "to persuade unconverted disciples of [John the Baptist]".

I. The Angelic Announcements of the Births (1:5-56)

1. About John (1:5-25)	*2. About Jesus (1:26-38)*
The parents introduced, expecting no child (because barren) (vv. 5-10)	The parents introduced, expecting no child (because unmarried) (vv. 26-27)
Appearance of the angel (v. 11)	Entrance of the angel (v. 28)
Zechariah is troubled (v. 12)	Mary is troubled (v. 29)
"Do not fear..." (v. 13)	"Do not fear..." (v. 30)
"Your wife will bear a son" (v. 13)	"You will bear a son" (v. 31)
"You shall call him John" (v. 13)	"You shall call him Jesus" (v. 31)
"He shall be great before the Lord" (v. 15)	"He shall be Great" (v. 32)
Zechariah's question: "How shall I know?" (v. 18)	Mary's question: "How shall this be?" (v. 34)
Angel's answer: "I have been sent to announce this to you" (v. 19)	Angel's answer: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" (v. 35)
Sign given: "You shall become mute" (v. 20)	Sign given: "Your aged cousin Elizabeth has conceived" (v. 36)
Zechariah's forced silence (v. 22)	Mary's spontaneous answer (v. 38)
Refrain A: Zechariah "went back" (v. 23)	*Refrain A*: The angel "went away" (v. 38)

3. *Complementary Episode:* The Visitation (1:39-45)
Canticle: Magnificat (vv. 46-55)
Refrain A: Mary "returned" to her home (v. 56)

II. The Birth, Circumcision, and Manifestation of the Children (1:57-2:52)

4. *The Birth of John (1:57-58)*	*5. The Birth of Jesus (2:1-20)*
The birth of John (v. 57)	The birth of Jesus (vv. 1-12) Canticle of the Angels (vv. 13-14)
Joy over the birth (v. 58)	Joy over the birth (vv. 15-18)
	Refrain B: "Mary treasured all this" (v. 19)
	Refrain A: "The shepherds returned" (v. 20)
6. *The Circumcision and Manifestation of John (1:59-80)*	7. *The Circumcision and Manifestation of Jesus (2:21-40)*
John circumcised and named (vv. 59-64)	Jesus circumcised and named (v. 21)
Reaction of the neighbours (vv. 65-66)	Reaction of Simeon and Anna (vv. 25-38)
Canticle: Benedictus (vv. 68-79)	*Canticle:* Nunc dimittis (vv. 29-32)
	Refrain A: "They returned" (v. 39)
Refrain C: "The child grew" (v. 80)	*Refrain C*: "The child grew" (v. 40)

8. *Complementary Episode:* The Finding in the Temple (2:41-52)
Refrain A: "went" to Nazareth (v. 51)
Refrain B: His mother kept all this in her heart (v. 51)
Refrain C: Jesus grew in wisdom, age, and grace (v. 52)[41]

As in the book of Acts, where he employs a complex Peter-Paul parallelism,[42] Luke shows a preference for *synkrisis* (or comparison)[43] throughout the infancy narratives. This rhetorical device, however, realizes much more than to show the superiority of Jesus to John the Baptist.[44] John is depicted by Luke as the new Isaac, the new Jacob and the new Elijah.[45] He is the

[41] Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 313-14.

[42] E.g., Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2005), xxviii.

[43] This rhetorical figure was largely used in antiquity. Authors like Plutarch (*Parallel Lives*) and Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of Philosophers*) are but a couple of examples.

[44] Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 68: "John is the forerunner who announces fulfillment's approach, but Jesus is the fulfillment. In every way, Jesus is superior to John. John is born out of barrenness; Jesus is born of a virgin. John is great as a prophet before the Lord; Jesus is great as the promised Davidic ruler. John paves the way; Jesus is the Way."; Johnson, *Luke*, 38: "John will be great before the Lord (1:15), but Jesus will be great and Son of the Most High (1:32). John will prepare a people (1:17), but Jesus will rule the people (1:33), John's role is temporary (1:17), Jesus' kingdom will never end (1:33). John is to be a prophet (1:15), but Jesus more than another prophet: he is Son of God (1:35). John will be 'filled with the Holy Spirit' as a prophet (1:15), but the overshadowing of the Spirit and Power will make Jesus 'the Holy One'."

[45] E.g., Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 54-55; C.T. Ruddick, Jr., "Birth Narratives in Genesis and Luke", in David E. Orton (ed.), *The Composition of Luke's Gospel: Selected Studies from* Novum Testamentum (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 1999), 14-19; Paula Gooder, *The Meaning is in the Waiting: The Spirit of Advent* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008), 65-66.

recapitulation and also the culmination of the OT period (cf. Lk. 7:28).[46] In Jesus, therefore, God's salvific promises made to Israel in the OT are coming to pass, but in a radical new way. In John the Baptist, "the *patterns* of God's salvific ways are being reestablished" or "God renews his work of salvation for his people, as the *patterns* of salvation are reenacted", as Darrell Bock phrases it.[47] In Jesus, there is also uniqueness, unprecedented alterations of the salvific patterns. The virgin birth, for instance, serves precisely to demonstrate Jesus' uniqueness.[48] Thus, Luke's comparison is not only about superiority; it is about different categories. Jesus is not only the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation, as revealed in the OT; He is of the OT God who comes to save in Person.

The idea of fulfilment of God's promises made in the OT is seen even in the literary style of the infancy narratives: "The imitation of the style of the Septuagint in the infancy narrative is a clue that [Luke] understood his history not just to be any history of any events but to be a continuation of biblical history. As O'Toole states it, 'God who brought salvation to his people in the Old Testament continues to do this, especially through Jesus Christ'".[49] It is this continuity, yet with unexpected innovations, that sparked Luke's interest

[46] John Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20* (WBC 35A; Dallas, TX: Word, 1989), 338; Bovon, *Lukas 1:1-9:50*, 377-78.

[47] Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 100.

[48] E.g., Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, 57-59; Johnson, *Luke*, 38. Cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Born* of a *Virgin? Reconceiving Jesus in the Bible, Tradition, and Theology* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2013), 108-115.

[49] Garland, *Luke*, 42. Garland quotes Robert F. O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology: An Analysis of Luke-Acts* (GNS 9; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), 17.

to investigate and write his Gospel in the first place (Lk. 1:1): διήγησιν περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων ("an account of the things *fulfilled* among us").

Another notable feature in the infancy narratives is the presence of the *Canticles*: Magnificat (1:46-55); Benedictus (1:68-79); Gloria in Excelsis (2:13-14); and Nunc Dimittis (2:29-32). It could be argued that the function of the four hymns is twofold: 1) they are a recapitulation of the OT major themes of divine salvation; 2) they anticipate some major themes in Luke's Gospel (and Acts).[50] Thus, they reinforce the general message of the infancy narratives: the OT promises made by God and their fulfilment in Jesus.[51]

The insertion of the hymns, especially Magnificat, Benedictus, and Nunc Dimittis, reopens the question of Luke's sources. As was mentioned above, there is the twofold hint that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, stood behind some of the infancy narratives (2:19, 51).[52] As for the hymns themselves, the bulk of scholars today would defend the view that they are pre-Lucan: either pre-Christian or Jewish-Christian.[53] Raymond E. Brown has made the suggestion that it is possible to be more specific about the Jewish community that produced the hymns, namely the *Anawim* ("the Poor Ones"): "those who could not trust in their own strength but had to rely in utter confidence upon God: the

[50] E.g., Stephen Farris, *The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narratives:* Their Origin, Meaning and Significance (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 151-59.

[51] Farris, *Hymns*, 152-54.

[52] Theodor Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Lucas* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1913), 147: "sie die hauptsächliche Trägerin der Überlieferungen ist, die in diesem ersten Abschnitt des LcEv niedergelegt sind"; Marshall, *Luke*, 114.

[53] Farris, *Hymns*, 86-98; Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 142-44.

lowly, the poor, the sick, the downtrodden, the widows and orphans".[54] In Brown's view, "It is not farfetched then to suggest that Luke got his canticles from a somewhat parallel community of Jewish *Anawim* who had been converted to Christianity",[55] as the existence of this community "is not purely hypothetical" (cf. Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-37).[56] By contrast, some scholars contend that there is little evidence for the existence of a proper community of *Anawim*, as clearly defined as Brown would have it.[57] Still, Mary (1:46-55), Zechariah (1:7, 25, 79) and Simeon (2:25) are indeed among the lowly and downtrodden.[58] Nevertheless, when the "good news" that God has renewed His work of salvation for His people reach them, they burst into praises. Their sighs are turned into songs (Ps. 30:11).[59] The "great reversal" is under way.[60]

Throughout Luke's Gospel there are numerous mentions to sickness and the sufferers: blind, dumb, crippled, lame, paralyzed, lepers, etc. There are also around

[54] Brown, *Birth*, 350-55 (351).

[55] Brown, *Birth*, 352.

[56] Brown, *Birth*, 354.

[57] E.g., Farris, *Hymns*, 97. Nevertheless, this is still a popular view among scholars. See Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 143: "The hymn comes from a Jewish-Christian source, perhaps from the "poor" (the *Anawim*); this may be the most popular current view."

[58] Cf. Brown, *Birth*, 353-54: "the characters to whom [Luke] attributed the canticles embodied the piety of the *Anawim*".

[59] Cf. Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 74: "only people in covenant can sing. New song time is when new covenant inaugurates a new mode of reality."

[60] Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 146-47. Also, John O. York, *The Last Shall be First: The Rhetoric of Reversal in Luke* (JSNTSup 46; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

twenty references to poverty and the have-nots: poor, beggars, widows, people impoverished by higher taxes. Fifteen references are made to the people on the margins of the Jewish society: shepherds, publicans, robbers, prostitutes, foreigners. In all, there are over sixty mentions or allusions to the low and the marginalized.[61] These *Anawim* are the special emphasis of Luke's Gospel, as the good news of salvation, reversal and restoration, as it was revealed in the OT, reaches the lowest points of the Jewish society and its extreme margins: God is once again "acting in the world to bring down those who are evil and to satisfy the needy".[62] This general tone is set from the beginning *via* the infancy narratives.

Luke's distinctive genealogy (3:23-38)

I have addressed elsewhere the issue of differences between the Matthean and Lukan genealogies.[63] On the whole, it was argued that Matthew renders a legal or royal and selective line of descent (Matt. 1:1-17), while Luke reproduces a familial and (quasi)successive line (Lk. 3:23-38).[64] In this study the sole emphasis is on Luke's message conveyed through his genealogical material. For, with regard to genealogies, it should be remembered constantly that they are first and foremost theological texts, aiming to make a

[61] E.g., T.R. McNeal, "Gospel of Luke", in Chad Brand et al. (eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman, 2003), 1058-59.

[62] I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL/Leicester: InterVarsity Press/Apollos, 2004), 131.

[63] Amiel Drimbe, "Isus, fiul Lui Iosif, fiul... cui? Diferențele genealogiilor din Matei și Luca", *Plērōma* 20/2 (2018): 9-34.

[64] Drimbe, "Diferențe", 40.

theological point.[65] Therefore, it is best to allow each genealogy to make their own contribution to the understanding of Jesus' identity and significance.[66]

Luke inserts the genealogical material into a Markan framework: between the Baptism (Lk. 3:21-22), where Jesus is declared by a heavenly voice to be the Son of God, and the Temptation in the Wilderness (4:1-12), where Jesus is tempted to question His status as Son of God[67] and where He recapitulates and redeems Adam's (and also Israel's) temptation and fall.[68] It is no coincidence that the Lukan genealogy presents Jesus as "the son of God", this final phrase being Luke's own addition to the pre-Lukan genealogical material.[69] It is precisely this addition that shows Luke's ultimate purpose with regard to the genealogy: to attest Jesus' divine Sonship.[70] Hence the introductory remark in v. 23: ὢν υἱός, ὡς ἐνομίζετο, Ἰωσὴφ τοῦ Ἡλὶ ("*as was thought*,[71] He was the son of Joseph son of

[65] E.g., Brown, *Birth*, 85; Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, 170, 174: "It may be, however, that the theological perspective is more important here than the historical."

[66] E.g., Brown, *Birth*, 85, 94; Drimbe, "Diferențe", 39; Marshall D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies with Special Reference to the Setting of the Genealogies of Jesus* (SNTSMS 8; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 253-56.

[67] E.g., Brown, *Birth*, 93-94; Marshall, *Theology*, 132; Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 173-74.

[68] Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, 174, 182: "Echoes of the testing of God's son Adam (3:38) in the garden and of God's son Israel in the wilderness permeate the account."

[69] Johnson, *Purpose*, 237: "there is no known parallel in the OT or in Rabbinic texts for a genealogy to begin with or culminate with the naming of God".

[70] This is also indicated by the literary context between which Luke places the genealogy: two pericopes about Jesus' Sonship. See, e.g., Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 173-74.

[71] Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 488-89, translates "in the minds of the people".

Eli"). Joseph may have been Jesus' legal father, but he was not His biological father (cf. Lk. 2:1-7, 21-24).[72] God was His father in the fullest sense (Lk. 1:30-35).

Another emphasis is on Jesus as "the son of Adam". Among the major differences between the Matthean and Lukan genealogies, two are of special interest for the current section. First, while Matthew beings his line with Abraham, the father of the Jews (Matt. 1:1-2), Luke ends his with Adam, the father of humanity (Lk. 3:38). In agreement with I. Howard Marshall, it should be noted that "the carrying back of the genealogy to Adam is meant to stress the universal significance of Jesus for the whole of the human race, and not merely for the seed of Abraham".[73] It is debatable whether Luke assigned any role to the structure of his genealogy, i.e., the 77 names that fall into 11 groups of 7. However, even if there is no obvious intention from Luke to arrange the world history into 11 weeks,[74] there is still the valid observation that his lineage encompasses all human history, from Adam to Jesus. This reinforces the idea that Jesus' significance is universal.

Secondly, while Matthew's genealogy descends from Abraham to Jesus, Luke's genealogy is reproduced in reverse order, going backwards from Jesus to Adam. As

[72] Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 178-79. Wolter offers several examples from classical literature in which the phrase ὡς ἐνομίζετο is used "for an uncertain or false attribution of paternity". Internally, Johnson, *Luke*, 70, observes: "With no exceptions, Luke uses *nomizō* to mean a false apprehension (see 2:44; Acts 7:25; 8:20; 14:19; 16:13, 27; 17:29; 21:29)."

[73] Marshall, *Luke*, 161.

[74] Cf. Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 315-26.

John Nolland notices, Jewish genealogies set in reverse order are rare. When such lists are found, however, "the concern often seems to be with ancestral qualification for office" (e.g., 1 Chron. 6:31-47).[75] Luke's genealogy is connected with the beginning of Jesus' ministry: Καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν Ἰησοῦς ἀρχόμενος ὡσεὶ ἐτῶν τριάκοντα ("when Jesus himself was beginning [his work], He was about thirty years old"). It is noteworthy that thirty was the age when the Jewish priests entered the office (Num. 4:3, 30).[76] Related to this, H. Sahlin notices the high number of priestly names that appear in Luke's genealogy.[77] This "may indicate a desire to show that Jesus was a priestly Messiah".[78] Being "the son of Adam" and "the son of God", Jesus is uniquely qualified to assume the priestly role of representative and mediator between God and humankind. In Bock's helpful summary,

> Jesus' genealogy in 3:23-38 ties all humankind into one unit. Their fate is wrapped up in Jesus. His ministry, as seen from heaven, represents the focal point of history. The introduction of the genealogy right before the commencement of his ministry serves to highlight the scope of Jesus' concern for humans. It points to his

[75] Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, 167-68. See also Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 189.

[76] E.g., Green, *Luke*, 188: "… Jesus was 'about thirty years old', thus indicating in a circuitous way that Jesus had attained the age of public service. The genealogy itself finds a natural niche here at the outset of Jesus' public ministry."

[77] Harald Sahlin, *Der Messias und das Gottesvolk: Studien zur protolukanischen Theologie* (ASNTU 12; Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1945), 89.

[78] Marshall, *Luke*, 161.

> universal perspective. Jesus is not some isolated minister to Israel; he does not merely minister to a tiny nation of subjected people seeking political deliverance from a dominating Rome. Rather, he is the culmination of a line of descendants stretching back through the great men of promise like Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. The lineage confirms his position and suggests his ministry's comprehensive character. In him, the entire hope of the OT is inseparably and eternally bound. In him, as well, the fate of all divinely created humans is bound together.[79]

Beginning His ministry (3:23a), Jesus will represent God before humans and humans before God. He will be a universal priest and mediator, standing between God and the seed of Adam.

Luke's distinctive miracles

With regard to the number of the miracles reported, Mark has 18 full reports and 4 summaries of miraculous activity, Matthew has 19 reports and 4 summaries, and Luke has 20 reports and 3 summaries.[80] Among the 20 miracles fully reported, five are unique to "L": the Miraculous catch of fish (5:1-11); Raising the son of the widow of Nain (7:11-17); Healing of the crippled woman (13:10-17); Healing of the man with dropsy (14:1-6); Healing of the ten lepers (17:11-19). At the same time, Luke has omitted six miracles found in Mark: Jesus walks on the water (Mk. 6:45-52); Healing of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter (7:24-30); Healing of a

[79] Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 360.

[80] Paul J. Achtemeier, "The Lucan Perspective on the Miracles of Jesus: A Preliminary Sketch", *JBL* 94/4 (1975): 547.

deaf man (7:31-37); Feeding the four thousand (8:1-10); Healing of a blind man at Bethsaida (8:22-26); The cursed and withered fig tree (11:12-14, 20).[81]

Below is a comparative table of the miracles omitted and included by Luke:

Miracles in Mark included by Luke	**Miracles in Mark omitted by Luke**	**Miracles unique to "L"**
Healing of the demoniac in the synagogue (Mk. 1:23-28; Lk. 4:33-37);	Jesus walks on the water (Mk. 6:45-52);	Miraculous catch of fish (Lk. 5:1-11);
Healing of Peter's mother-in-Law" (Mk. 1:29-31; Lk. 4:38-39);	Healing of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter (Mk. 7:24-30);	Raising the son of the widow of Nain (Lk. 7:11-17);
Sick healed at evening (Mk. 1:32-34; Lk. 4:40-41);	Healing of a deaf man (Mk. 7:31-37);	Healing of the crippled woman (Lk. 13:10-17);
Cleansing of the leper (Mk. 1:40-45; Lk. 5:12-16);	Healing of a blind man at Bethsaida (Mk. 8:22-26);	Healing of the man with dropsy (Lk. 14:1-6);
Healing of the paralytic (Mk. 2:1-12; Lk. 5:17-26);	Feeding the four thousand (Mk. 8:1-10);	Healing of the ten lepers (Lk. 17:11-19)[82]
	The cursed and withered fig tree (Mk. 11:12-14, 20)	

[81] Achtemeier, "Lucan Perspective", 548.
[82] Cf. Achtemeier, "Lucan Perspective", 548.

Healing of the man with the withered hand (Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 6:6-11);

Jesus heals multitudes by the sea (Mk. 3:7-12; Lk. 6:17-19);

Jesus heals the dumb demoniac (Mk. 3:22; Lk. 11:14-15);

Stilling the storm (Mk. 4:35-41; Lk. 8:22-25);

Jesus heals the two Gadarene demoniacs (Mk. 5:1-20; Lk. 8:26-39);

Jairus' daughter and the woman with the haemorrhage (Mk. 5:21-43; Lk. 8:40-56);

Jesus feeds the five thousand (Mk. 6:32-44; Lk. 9:10-17);

Jesus heals a boy possessed by an evil spirit (Mk. 9:14-29; Lk. 9:37-43);

Jesus heals a blind beggar (Mk. 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43).

Besides these, there is also the Healing of the centurion's servant in Capernaum (Lk. 7:1-10), a miracle also found in Matthew (8:5-13), but not in Mark. For scholars, Luke has drawn this miracle story from the "Q" source.[83]

Both *additions* and *omissions* are significant, as they could reveal peculiar aspects on Luke's perspective on the miracles of Jesus. Also significant are Luke's *adaptations*, the alteration of the miracle stories that Luke shares with Mark and Matthew.[84] Due to the limitations of this study, only brief comments will be made on Luke's own contribution to the miracle stories, yet in reverse order.

When Luke *adapts* materials that are shared by Mark and Matthew, there is a general tendency to remove certain details about the person being healed and add details about the healer. In doing so, Luke shifts the emphasis on Jesus:

[83] E.g., Achtemeier, "Lucan Perspective", 549; Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 292.

[84] See, e.g., Wolter, *Luke 1-9:50*, 292, for Luke's alteration of the story The healing of the centurion's servant in Capernaum (Lk. 7:1-10).

> Luke can adapt a miracle in such a way that interest is pointed away from the recipient of the miracle and toward Jesus, e.g., 18:35-43, where many details about the blind man (Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52; Luke does not name him) are omitted, thus lessening our interest in him; or 8:42-48, where details about the woman with the flow of blood are similarly omitted.[85]

Thus, Jesus' miracles are not only acts of divine power and mercy, but also acts of divine revelation: "miracles will answer the question of who Jesus is, and hence they have the power of validating his claims about himself".[86]

Furthermore, five of the six miracles *omitted* from Mark's Gospel are part of a distinct block entirely left out by Luke, Mark 6:45-8:26. Scholars call it the "Great Omission" or the "Missing Block".[87] The two basic explanations for this considerable omission are: Luke used an incomplete edition of Mark, lacking the entire section 6:45-8:26; Luke had access to Mark 6:45-8:26, yet choose to leave it out, for editorial reasons.[88] After Robert H. Stein enumerates some of the most significant explanations for the lacuna, he correctly concludes that the "many attempts to explain the great omission suggests that there is no convincing solution".[89] Still, it is more likely that Luke's omission of Mark 6:45-8:26 is "intentional", as Stein argues:

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[85] Achtemeier, "Lucan Perspective", 549.

[86] Achtemeier, "Lucan Perspective", 552.

[87] To be distinguished from the "Little Omission" of Mark 9:41-10:12. For a brief introduction, see Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 950-51.

[88] Major explanations are discussed in Robert A. Stein, *Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (NAC 24; Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 265-66.

[89] Stein, *Luke*, 265.

> Luke proceeded directly from the feeding miracle in 9:10-17 and Herod's question about Jesus in 9:7-9 to highlight the explicit Christology found in Peter's confession. Therefore he omitted Mark 6:45-8:26 [...] Luke 9:1-50 does, however form a cohesive unit centering around Jesus and the twelve disciples. The disciples are expressly mentioned in each episode except one (9:7-9) and even here the disciples' mission (9:1-6) seems to be the reason Herod "heard about all that was going on" (9:7). The result is that this is a rather homogeneous section, and this suggests that the great omission probably was more intentional than accidental.[90]

It could be that Luke omitted Mark 6:45-8:26 due, in part, to his emphasis on Christology and discipleship (Lk. 9:1-50). In this regard, the Jesus of Luke's Gospel in much more than a healer or miracle worker (9:18-22, 28-36) and following Jesus prevails over being healed by Him (9:23-27). If this reading is correct,[91] it could also explain the criteria for the *additions* of the "L" material. Four types of miracles are recorded in the Gospels: healing the sick; raising the dead; casting out demons or spirits; exerting power/authority over nature.[92] All four types appear in the "L" source.[93] Moreover, all five miracles of "L" are unique. Thus, the selection of the

[90] Stein, *Luke*, 265-66.

[91] The view that Luke knew Mark in a shortened form should be dismissed only with reservation. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 950-51.

[92] E.g., Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1999), 262-64.

[93] The crippled woman of 13:10-17 is possessed by "a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years" (13:11). Her healing is seen as a "liberation from Satan's bondage" (13:16).

miracles of the "L" material may suggest that Luke was interested mainly in *samples*. Jesus is a remarkable miracle worker, having absolute power over the natural and supernatural worlds. At the same time, He is so much more than a miracle worker, hence the sampling.[94]

Luke's distinctive parables

It is a difficult (and, probably, unproductive) task to try to bring all fourteen parables drawn from the "L" source under one unifying theme. Their content comprises a variety of subjects, of a diverse nature, stressing topics like: forgiveness and the response of love (The two debtors, 7:40-43); indifference *versus* loving service (The good Samaritan, 10:29-37); humility *versus* pride and self-reliance (The Pharisee and the tax collector, 18:9-14); perseverance in prayer and the eschatological hope (The insistent friend at midnight, 11:5-8; The unjust judge and the nagging widow, 18:1-8); the value of the lost and the joy of recovery (The lost coin, 15:8-10; The father and the two sons, 15:11-32); wisdom in the use of material possessions and kindness to the poor (The rich fool, 12:13-21; The prudent steward, 16:1-9; The rich man and Lazarus, 16:19-31); the cost of discipleship and the duties of the disciples (Building a tower, 14:28-30; Preparing for war,

[94] E.g., Achtemeier, "Lucan Perspective", 550-59 (550): "A clue to the importance Luke finds in the miraculous activity of Jesus can be seen in the way in which he, in several instances, attempts to balance Jesus' miraculous activity and his teaching in such a way as to give them equal weight." In Luke, Jesus' miracles are not only meant to restore the health, but also to lead to faith.

14:31-32; The servant's duties, 17:7-10); God's patience towards barren Israel (The barren fig tree, 13:6-9).[95]

Greg W. Forbes is among the few scholars who tried to bring all parables of "L" under one unifying theme.[96] For Forbes, the common motif of the Lukan parabolic material is *the revised portrait of God*; the main purpose of Jesus' parables in Luke is to correct the distorted images of God within the Judaism(s) of the day and reaffirm the Old Testament portrait of God ("God of Old").[97] There are three fundamental features of God's character that dominate these parables, argues Forbes: God's care and love; God's mercy and grace; God as sovereign judge.[98] All these features are found in the OT and in Luke's Gospel as a whole.[99] Besides this unifying motif, i.e., a corrected vision of God, every parable also makes a "multitude of points".[100] Some of these points are also found in the rest of Luke's Gospel: the poor and the marginalized; wealth and possession; conflict and rejection; prayer; repentance; and reversal.[101]

Forbes' attempt to synthesize the major themes of the parables into a unified whole is commendable. At the same time, one wonders if such a broad unifying theme as God – be it the more specific God of the Old Testament – is

[95] Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 12, 947-49.

[96] 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).

[97] Forbes, *God of Old*, 328-29 *et passim*.

[98] Forbes, *God of Old*, 248-57.

[99] Forbes, *God of Old*, 252-57.

[100] D. Reinstorf, "Luke's Parables and the Purpose of Luke's Gospel", *HTS* 58/3 (2002): 1284-86.

[101] Forbes, *God of Old*, 225-48.

somewhat productive. Could it be that all teaching of Jesus, regardless of the Gospel and genre, is in a sense (explicitly or implicitly) theocentric? Still, Forbes is correct to conclude that the Lukan parables challenge Jewish conventional perceptions about God.[102] However, not only the view about God is challenged. Critical aspects of traditional Jewish worldview are confronted as well: the perceptions about strangers, sinners, material possessions, human relationships, eschatology, responsibility, justice, etc.[103] It could be said that the parables of "L" are meant to challenge conventional worldviews.[104] So, a more nuanced unifying theme would be *a revised/corrected worldview, from a proper theocentric perspective*.[105]

On the other hand, these parables also reveal the human inability to live according to this theocentric worldview. With one exception (7:40-43), all parables that are drawn from the "L" source are included in the "Journey to Jerusalem" section (9:51-19:44), i.e., Jesus' way to the cross.[106] Around ten stops on the way to Jerusalem are recorded by Luke (e.g., 9:57; 10:38; 13:22; 14:25; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28). In many of these "stations", Jesus teaches or tells parables: to His disciples, to "the crowd", to His

[102] Forbes, *God of Old*, 255-57 *et passim*.

[103] Cf. Richard N. Longenecker (ed.), *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables* (MNTS; Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000), esp. 125-46, 199-305.

[104] E.g., Richard N. Longenecker, "Introduction", in Longenecker, *Challenge,* xi.

[105] One could argue that the unifying theme suggested here is just as broad and general as Forbes'. Hence my reluctance regarding the usefulness of such an approach.

[106] Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 947.

opponents. With every station, with every teaching and parable, Luke shows why Jesus should resume/continue His way to the cross. The cross is an absolute necessity, for those whom Jesus meets and teaches "on the way" are incapable of living according to His teachings or God's worldview (e.g., 10:25-38a).[107]

In the end, the obvious should not be disregarded. Luke has a clear preference for the parabolic material. Therefore, the fourteen distinctive parables were included by Luke not only to have more aspects of the Jewish worldview being challenged or to offer more reasons for the cross, but also because he is very fond of this literary genre.[108]

"L" in the Passion narratives

One of Luke's purposes in the narratives on the passion and death of Jesus is to show the excellence and exemplariness of His character. Jesus is the ultimate martyr-hero, standing above the remarkable heroes of the Jewish and Greco-Roman literature.[109] It is not only the courageous ways in which Jesus embraces His fate and faces death (cf. 22:43-44),[110] but also His selfless approach to extreme suffering: even in His most horrific and painful moments, He puts first

[107] Cf. Johnson, *Luke*, 163-65.

[108] E.g., Koester, *Introduction*, 317-18.

[109] E.g., Mikeal C. Parsons, *Luke* (Paideia; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 339.

[110] I take Lk. 22:43-44 to be no part of the original text, but a later interpolation. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London/New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 177.

the needs of others.[111] Many of these emphases are conveyed by Luke through the inclusion of unique material, mostly from "L": Jesus' prayer for Peter's repentance, following the apostles' denial (22:31-32); the saying about the two swords, at the Last Supper (22:35-38); the trial before Herod Antipas (23:6-12); the threefold assertion of Jesus' innocence by Pilate (23:13-16); Jesus' address to the "daughters of Jerusalem", on the way to the crucifixion (23:27-31); Jesus' prayer for divine forgiveness of those who are crucifying Him (23:34); the dialogue with the penitent criminal crucified beside Jesus (23:39-43); Jesus' final cry (23:46).[112]

Only two pericopes will be addressed here. First, the saying about the two swords (22:35-38) has long been "(mis-)used as a general declaration of the right of Christians to bear arms; as support for the right of the medieval papacy to exercise both material and spiritual power (two swords); and as a proof that Jesus encouraged armed revolution".[113] In this saying, however, Jesus sets a contrast between the former hospitality towards the disciples (22:35; cf. 9:2-3; 10:4-5) and the forthcoming ("but now…") hostility towards the disciples (22:36-37). Given the dramatic change of the times, the disciples need to be well armed, mentally and spiritually.[114] That Jesus' reference to "buying a sword" has to be understood metaphorically is

[111] See the sayings of Jesus on the way to crucifixion and from the cross (Lk. 23:26-43). Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), 1868.

[112] Stein, *Luke*, 533-34.

[113] Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1:270 (n. 7); Parsons, *Luke*, 317.

[114] Green, *Luke*, 771, 774.

shown in the progression of the narrative (22:49-51).[115] Also, when the disciples take Jesus' words literally ("Lord, look, here are two swords."), He reacts in exasperation. The cryptic ἱκανόν ἐστιν ("it is enough") of v. 38 should be seen as irony (cf. LXX Deut. 3:26).[116] Jesus embraces His fate serenely and peacefully. He "will have nothing to do with swords, even for defense."[117]

Second, the textual status of Jesus' prayer for divine forgiveness of those who are crucifying Him (23:34a) is uncertain, as it is omitted in many mss.[118] Based on external evidence, one could infer that the prayer is a latter addition. Still, as Bock suggests, there are strong reasons to consider the prayer as original (and going back to Jesus Himself), based on the internal evidence:

1. The parallel prayer of Stephen in Acts 7:60 argues for inclusion, since Luke frequently notes parallelism between events. (James the Just is said to utter a similar prayer in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.16.)
2. The absence of a parallel in the other Gospels speaks for inclusion here (i.e., there is no good reason to explain why a copyist would add such a remark).
3. The motif of ignorance is common in Acts (3:17; 13:27; 17:30) and finds endorsement here.

[115] Green, *Luke*, 774-75.

[116] E.g., Cyril of Alexandria, *Comm. in Luc.* 22:38 (PG 72. 917); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 28A; New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1434. See also Green, *Luke*, 774-75: "… elsewhere in the Third Gospel 'sword' has been used as an image of animosity (12:51-53; cf. 2:34-35)".

[117] Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1434.

[118] Metzger, *Commentary*, 180.

> 4. It is easier to explain the prayer's omission than its insertion. A scribe might have omitted it if he considered the remarks too forgiving of the Jews […] or if he regarded the prayer as unanswered in light of A.D. 70 (Jerome, *Letter* 120.8.2 says it delayed the judgment).
> 5. Each major subunit in Luke's crucifixion narrative contains a saying. If the prayer is omitted, then a saying is lacking from this subunit.[119]

In addition to point 5, it should be noted that all three sayings from the cross are unique to Luke (23:34, 43, 46). They all depict the portrait of Jesus as the serene and selfless martyr (23:34, 43), but also as the hero-like figure who is in complete control over His fate although nailed to the cross (23:46). The final cry of Jesus was part of a Jewish (and later Christian) evening prayer, uttered before sleep: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (cf. Ps. 31:5).[120] With the serenity of the tired longing for the repose of the night, Jesus dismisses His spirit *voluntarily*: ἐξέπνευσεν ("He breathed his last").[121]

The great heroes of Jewish and Greco-Roman literature were especially great in the face of death. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus surpasses them all. Both the Roman centurion (23:47) and the Jewish crowd (23:48) are profoundly touched by the death of Jesus.[122]

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[119] Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1868.

[120] Joachim Jeremias, "Das Gebetsleben Jesu", *ZNW* 25 (1926): 123-40 (126); Marshall, *Luke*, 876.

[121] Augustine, *Tract. in Iohann.* 19:30 (CCL 36. 660); Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1519.

[122] E.g., Brown, *Death*, 2:1160-69; Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1520.

"L" in the Resurrection narratives

In ancient biographies, Jewish and Greco-Roman, the postmortem events "are intended to disclose some aspect(s) of the protagonist's essential character".[123] Similarly, "the events after the death of Jesus are a necessary part of the story in understanding Jesus's 'essential character' as the crucified and bodily risen Lord, whom God has vindicated as Israel's Messiah".[124] Luke's major contribution to the Resurrection narratives is the pericope on the Appearance to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35). The two disillusioned disciples are used by the author as social representatives, giving voice to the popular Jewish Messianic hopes of redemption (24:19-21).[125] Yet the way to Emmaus becomes for them a journey of revelation and recognition.[126] As Jesus makes it clear "on the road" (24:32, 35), "the key to making sense of [His death] lies in construing it within the matrix of 'the Scriptures'" (24:25-27, 32).[127] It was prophesied that the Messiah would "enter into His glory" through suffering (24:26). Thus, Luke resumes here the grand theme of the Christological fulfilment of God's plan of redemption as predicted in the OT.[128] The crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus are the climax of this divine plan: through these, Jesus was vindicated by God as the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world.

The eyes of the two disciples are still "kept from recognizing Him" (24:16), even after Jesus interprets the

[123] Parsons, *Luke*, 344.
[124] Parsons, *Luke*, 344-45.
[125] Johnson, *Luke*, 394.
[126] Green, *Luke*, 842-43; Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1558.
[127] Green, *Luke*, 843.
[128] E.g., Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1558-59.

Scriptures to them. The "opening of their eyes" takes place at the table, where Jesus utters a blessing and breaks the bread (24:31). It is difficult to ascertain whether Luke intends to create here a eucharistic moment (cf. Lk. 22:19)[129] or simply to connect this act to the miraculous feeding of the five thousand (cf. Lk. 9:16).[130] Whatever the conclusion, as He seats at the table in the house of Emmaus, Jesus adopts the role of the host: He utters the blessing and breaks the bread. The risen Christ becomes the Lord of the house.[131]

Fitzmyer correctly notes that the episode is "an appearance-story... devoid of apologetic concerns".[132] As soon as the resurrected Jesus is recognized, "He vanished from their sight" (24:31). It is merely a *revelatory* moment that the two disciples probe in the fellowship of the whole group (24:33-35). The similar experience of Peter and the appearance of Jesus Himself attests their miraculous encounter (24:36). As Luke Timothy Johnson observes,

> Luke shows us how the process of telling and interpreting these diverse experiences begins not only

[129] For one thing, Cleopas and his companion were not present at the Last Supper (Lk. 22:14). For a eucharistic interpretation of the meal at Emmaus, see (*inter alia*) Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1559-60.

[130] E.g., Wolter, *Luke 9:51-24*, 547: "The narrative slope of the Emmaus episode has its mirror image in the sequence of the narratives of the feeding of the five thousand, the messianic insight of the disciples, and the first announcement of the passion and the resurrection in 9:12-22."

[131] Wolter, *Luke 9:51-24*, 559: "Luke has Jesus adopt the role of a *paterfamilias*, for he does the same thing as in 9:16 (see further there) and 22:19. An explicit connection to the Last Supper is not established, for the words of interpretation of 22:19b are lacking. Rather, Jesus practices only what is common at every meal."

[132] Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1557.

> to build a community narrative, but actually begins to create the community itself. The scattered fragments that have whirled in different directions (the women, Peter, those who had run to the tomb, the men on the road) are being gathered together in one place with one shared story, which is "the Lord has truly risen."[133]

At the appearance of Jesus, the experience of the two is replicated to all the disciples, in reverse order: He shares a meal with them (24:36-43) and interprets the Scriptures to them (24:44-49). It is this meal that has apologetic function: Jesus was risen not in spirit, but in His physical body.[134] Also, the interpretation of the OT Scriptures has here a distinct missiological function, besides the Christological one.[135]

The remaining Lukan unique materials (24:36-53) become trajectories that link together Luke's two volumes, the Gospel and Acts of the Apostles. First, the risen Jesus sits at the table with His disciples (Lk. 24:41-43). This practice goes on for forty days, the period between His resurrection and ascension: Lk. 24:41-43; Acts 1:4; 10:40-41. The verb συναλίζομαι of Acts 1:4 is taken by Joseph A. Ratzinger to mean "to eat salt [with the disciples]":

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[133] Johnson, *Luke*, 399.

[134] Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1573-75.

[135] Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1573: "The parallelism [...] between this composite scene and the Emmaus incident has to be noted. There is again an appearance that is not comprehended; an instruction based on Scripture, which leads to proper revelation; a meal (taken by Jesus himself), and finally his departure (not by vanishing, but by ascension). *The only element that is added, which was not present in the Emmaus episode, is the commission that Christ gives to his disciples*" (emphasis mine).

> Luke must have chosen this word quite deliberately. Yet what is it supposed to mean? In the Old Testament the shared enjoyment of bread and salt, or of salt alone, served to establish lasting covenants (cf. Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5; cf. Hauck, TDNT I, p. 228). Salt is regarded as a guarantee of durability. It is a remedy against putrefaction, against the corruption that pertains to the nature of death. To eat is always to hold death at bay—it is a way of preserving life […] When Luke summarizes the post-Resurrection events at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles and makes reference to the risen Lord's table fellowship with his followers by means of the expression "eating salt with them" (1:4), on the one hand, the mystery of this new table fellowship remains. On the other hand, though, its essential meaning is made clear: the Lord is drawing the disciples into a new covenant-fellowship with him and with the living God; he is giving them a share in real life, making them truly alive and salting their lives through participation in his Passion, in the purifying power of his suffering.[136]

Sharing meals with His disciples, Jesus deepens His covenant relationship with them, consolidates His instructions "about the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3), prepares them for His departure, and offers them a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.

The second trajectory is the Christological fulfilment of the OT and the mission of the disciples (24:44-49). The

[136] Joseph A. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Jesus of Nazareth: From His Transfiguration Through His Death and Resurrection* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2011), 3298-3301, 3310-14 (loc. Kindle).

resurrected Jesus explains the Scriptures to the whole group of followers, just as He did on the way to Emmaus to Cleopas and his companion. The major Lukan motif of the fulfilment of God's salvific plan as predicted in the OT is concluded here. The disciples are then sent to proclaim this plan, in the power of the Spirit, "to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (cf. Lk. 24:47-49; Acts 1:8), which becomes a major theme in Acts.[137]

The final scene in Luke's Gospel, the Ascension of Jesus (24:50-53),[138] is set in Bethany. Thus, Luke maintains the centrality of Jerusalem, from where God's plan of salvation will be proclaimed "to the ends of the earth" (cf. Lk. 24:47-49; Acts 1:8).[139] The ascension of Jesus near Jerusalem is the final trajectory that ties together the two volumes.[140] While a comparison between the two accounts in Luke and Acts, that differ in so many ways (cf. Lk. 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11), goes beyond the aim of this study, the presence of the verb προσκυνέω in Luke 24:52 is noteworthy. As Richard J. Dillon observes, "this is the first time the verb προσκυνέω is appearing in this gospel... Proper adoration was saved, so to speak, to be tendered here at the ascension, with the proper term in use, depicting what could only be the relation of the believing disciple to the Christ of Easter".[141] In the final lines of the Gospel

[137] Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1573, 1579-81.

[138] Luke is the only Evangelist to record Jesus' physical ascension.

[139] E.g., Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts* (SNTSMS 146; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 40-41.

[140] E.g., Mikeal C. Parsons, *The Departure of Jesus in Luke-Acts: The Ascension Narratives in Context* (JSNTSup 21; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987).

[141] Richard J. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the World: Tradition and Composition in Luke* 24 (AnBib 82; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 223; Justin A. Mihoc, *The Ascension of Jesus Christ: A Critical and*

of Luke, Jesus is worshiped as the exalted Lord of all,[142] right in the centre of the world, where the Temple of God is.[143]

Conclusions

Covering all the critical aspects of an ancient *bio* (birth; upbringing; genealogy; ministry and teaching; death and resurrection), the "L" source-materials make a significant contribution to the portrait of Jesus as depicted by Luke. In every major section of Jesus' biography, the insertion of Lukan special material creates unique contours and emphases. According to the infancy narratives, Jesus is more than the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation, as revealed in the OT; He is of the OT God who comes to save in Person. The good news of His salvation is for all. Even the poor, lowly and marginalized may hope to have their sighs of misery turned into songs of joy. Then, the Lukan genealogy presents Jesus as a "priestly Messiah". As "the son of Adam" and "the son of God", Jesus is uniquely qualified to assume the priestly role of representative and mediator between God and humankind.

When His ministry is in view, Jesus is portrayed as a remarkable miracle worker, having absolute power over the

Exegetical Study of the Ascension in Luke-Acts and in the Jewish and Christian Contexts (MA Thesis; Durham: Durham University, 2010), 80.

[142] Jesus ascends into heaven in Bethany, from where His triumphant/royal procession towards Jerusalem has begun (Lk. 19:29-38). Green, *Luke*, 860; Wolter, *Luke 9:51-24*, 572.

[143] Cf. Jean-Marie Guillaume, *Luc interprète des anciennes traditions sur la résurrection de Jésus* (EB; Paris: Gabalda, 1979), 7; Mikeal C. Parsons, "The Place of Jerusalem on the Lukan Landscape: An Exercise in Symbolic Cartography", in Richard P. Thomson and Thomas E. Phillips (eds.), *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 155-71 (164-68).

natural and supernatural worlds. All four types of miracles are recorded in "L": healing the sick; raising the dead; casting out demons or spirits; exerting power/authority over nature. Yet there is a selection of only one of each, which suggest that Luke is interested to record only *samples* of Jesus' miracles. For He is so much more than a miracle worker. His miracles comfort the *afflicted*. His teachings, mainly the Lukan parables, afflict the comfortable. Critical aspects of traditional Jewish worldview are challenged: perceptions about strangers, sinners, material possessions, human relationships, eschatology, responsibility, justice, etc. These conventional worldviews are revised, in order to convey a proper theocentric perspective.

In the face of death, Jesus is the absolute martyr-hero, rising above the remarkable heroes of the Jewish and Greco-Roman literature. It is not only the courageous ways in which Jesus embraces His fate and faces death, but also His selfless approach to extreme suffering: even in His most horrific and painful moments, He puts first the needs of others. As a consequence, Romans and Jews alike are deeply moved by His death.

The crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus are the climax of God's plan of redemption as predicted in the OT. Jesus' disciples are to proclaim this salvific plan to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. In His resurrection, Jesus was vindicated by God as the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world. In His ascension, Jesus is worshiped by His followers as the exalted Lord of all, right in the centre of the world, where the Temple of God is.