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# CHAPTER 4: THE LUKAN STORY

## 4.1 Metaphor and Luke's narrative as a story of opposites and reversals

This study leads us on towards an interpretation of three *Sondergut* parables of Luke. At the end of the previous chapter it was noted that such an interpretation needs to be made within both the social setting of the first-century Mediterranean world (Luke's community), as well as within the literary context of Luke as a whole (Luke's narrative). It is believed that through their function within the larger whole, the individual episodes receive their meaning. Any exposition that ignores the whole will inevitably lead to interpretative limitations. This chapter is therefore primarily devoted to the macro-story told by Luke, within which the micro-stories of the three identified Lukan parables are to be interpreted. Before continuing to expound the macro-world of Luke, it is necessary to recall some of the important characteristic of metaphors and parables discussed in chapters two and three.

It has been argued that metaphors, especially diaphors, in which opposing entities are juxtaposed, are excellent tools to ignite new thought and a new vision of reality. As such tools, metaphors function like models: they reorganise, re-describe, and reshape the world as we see it. The notion of metaphors was extended to include narratives, hence "metaphorical stories". Metaphorical stories, it was said, often fulfill a subversive function, especially when a known story (either an everyday life experience, or a traditional story relating the history of Israel) is retold along expected lines, but disrupted by unexpected twists and turns. In this way story challenges its listener to see reality differently. We further advocated that Jesus being a sage of an *alternative* wisdom invariably told stories (parables) of a diaphoric nature (tension metaphors). He was not confirming traditional Israelite wisdom, but challenging it. As a result his parables often contain an "imaginative shock" (Funk 1966:138), which not only captured the attention of his listeners, but jolted them out of their "comfort zone" and made them face reality from a different perspective.

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Our focus now falling on Luke, it is postulated that the tensive nature of Jesus' parables is mirrored in the literary structure of Luke's narrative as a whole. Not only are the parables diaphoric in nature, but the whole of Luke-Acts is cast in the tension of *opposites*: Jesus - Israelite leaders, Israelites - Gentiles, success - opposition, hope - failure, rich - poor, social outcasts - aristocrats, and so on. This tension, as it will be shown, features at all literary levels, both at macro-level and micro-level, and constitutes an important characteristic of Luke's literary style. In view of this, Luke's narrative can be termed *A Story of Opposites and Reversals*. Luke's story of opposites comprises the juxtaposition of two main story lines, those of "God's purpose" and "Israelite opposition", which run throughout Luke-Acts. Influential on my understanding of Luke-Acts has been an article by Robert Tannehill, *Israel in Luke-Acts: A tragic story*, published in 1985. This was followed in 1986 by *The narrative unity of Luke-Acts* (vol 1). It was this work in particular which created an awareness of a correspondence between the diaphoric structure of parables, and the Lukan narrative as a whole, as one of *opposites*. The tension of opposites is often intensified by a *reversal* of roles. It is however not merely a matter of the "first being last, and the last being first". The reversals serve a "metaphorical purpose", to make the listeners "sit up", and to make them see reality in a new light, that is to "convert" (μετάνοια - Lk 3:8; 5:32; 13:3, 15:7; 24:47; Ac 2:38: 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4, or ἐπιστρέφω - Lk 1:16; 22:32; Ac 3:19; 9:35; 11:21; 14:15; 15:19, 36; 26:18, 20). The call to "convert" invariably leaves the door of Luke's narrative open. Like Jesus' parables, Luke's story is metaphorical in nature, challenging the reader to a new vision of reality in general, and of God in particular. It is the task of this chapter to test and verify this hypothesis.

### 4.2 Formulating an approach

In discerning the *literary* structure of Luke as one of diaphoric opposites the methodological approach will invariable be that of "literary criticism". Ultimately,

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of course, Luke is not simply a narrative text, but also a "cultural product" (cf Van Aarde 1988:236-237; Green 1997:11). The narrative is more than just the narration of events or theological data, it is itself a representation of the values and contexts within which it was generated. Our investigation will therefore also reflect on the complex of social dynamics within which this narrative first arose. The social setting will serve to heighten the *tension* of opposites and reversals and present a world in which they had meaning for the narrative readers. The association of literary and socio-scientific, or socio-historical analysis of text is not new, but has dominated recent debate and formed the core of the "new" approaches to biblical interpretation. As the methodology of both literary criticism and that of social analysis of text has been explained in detail by a number of scholars, it needs not to be repeated (see, inter alia, Petersen 1985; Elliott 1986, 1993; Esler 1987:6-16; Roads 1992:135-161; Robbins 1995:274-289; Van Eck 1995:71-123). We will confine ourselves to issues relevant to the focus of our study and the definition of certain key terms.

Tannehill (1986b:21-22) in his literary analysis of the Gospel of Luke identifies four kinds of material which help to disclose the purpose of God. These may of course overlap.

- Previews and reviews. Attention is secured by events that are referred to or narrated *out of chronological order*. More often than not such interruptions are a review of past events, or a preview of coming events - in Luke especially apparent in the annunciation and birth narratives (see also Tiede 1988:24; Moessner 1988:36).
- Repeated or highlighted Scriptural references. The narrator finds the will of God revealed in Scripture, in particular in passages from the Septuagint which are placed at strategic points. These passages not only fulfill the purpose of rooting the story of Jesus in the authoritative story of Israel, but they also witness to God's purpose and express a particular understanding of it (see also Green 1995:24-28).

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- Commission statements. Important for the understanding of God's purpose are commission statements received by Jesus, the twelve, Paul, or others. An example is the narration of Jesus' announcement of his mission in Nazareth (Lk 4:14-21), an event which Luke (in contrast to Mark) places strategically at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. The commission statements are programmatic of the will of God and form keys to the plot.
- Interpretative statements by reliable witnesses. The will of God is often revealed by what reliable characters within the story have to say about the meaning of the events being narrated. They often become God's spokesperson. Reliable characters are often those who are characterised as being "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Elizabeth, Zechariah, Simeon and others), or are designated as a "prophet" or "prophetess" (Anna). Whether a character is reliable or not, can of course only be judged from the narrative as a whole.

As characterisation will form an important part, especially in analysing the opposition to God's purpose, Tannehill's reference to the role that characters play needs to be elaborated. A careful discernment of the characters, among other elements, helps to distinguish the narrative's "ideological point of view" (cf Uspensky 1973:9; Van Aarde 1988:235-239; 1991a:112-126; Van Staden 1991:68-102). Just as the author arranges selected events in such a way as to constitute a "linear, chronological" order (or intentionally "out of chronological" order), he may characterise people, who in essence may be quite unique or represent historically diverse groups, in a unifying manner, in order to present or to promote a particular understanding of reality. This particular understanding of reality is termed the "ideological point of view". The term "ideology" is used as non-pejoratively as possible, simply referring to the way the implied author and/or the narrator sees reality, which can be juxtaposed with the vision of reality attributed to the different characters within the narrative. The ideological point of

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view is in essence an "imagined" vision of reality (cf Van Aarde 1988:236; Van Tillborg 1986:2; Van Staden 1991:80). Critical for our reading of narrative is the fact that the narrative cannot simply be equated with reality in a positivist sense as something universal, absolute, and unchangeable (cf Vorster 1985:27-65; Lategan 1985b:67-93; Wright 1992:50-69). Narrative text is not simply a window on reality, but rather the reflection of a particular reality.

In discerning this vision on reality, characterisation is a helpful tool. The description of the characters, as well as their reciprocal relationship to one another can be visualised at various levels, phraseological, psychological, temporal and spatial, all linked to the position taken by the narrator (cf Uspensky 1973:8; Van Aarde 1988:238; Resseguie 1982:42-43; Van Staden 1991:180). These cannot all be demonstrated here, and partly overlap with the four kinds of text identified by Tannehill above. Phraseological observations concern the "voice" of the characters. We have referred to the voice of "reliable characters" above. Reliable characters, especially the voice of Jesus in conflict with his opposition, constitute from the narrator's perspective the *authoritative* voice which also gives expression to the ideological point of view of the narrative as a whole. Jesus' voice, for example, shifts and evaluates all other voices. These voices are not confined to individual voices, but often represent groups of people as arranged by the author. In Luke's narrative the "Israelite authorities", for example, are all grouped together by the author so as to speak out of one mouth (cf Moxnes 1988:17). They constitute the "opposing point of view".

Psychological observations relate to the motivations and feelings of characters (cf Resseguie 1982:42-43). These comments, supplied by the narrator, are highly evaluative and heighten for the reader ideological different points of view. Within Luke's narrative they are used, for example, to sharpen the difference between the ideological point of view of Jesus and that of the Israelites leaders. Our effort in discerning the way Luke presents his characters will by necessity of the focus of this study be chiefly confined to the main characters,

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those of Jesus as representing the βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ and that of the Israelite opposition. Luke's presentation of the characters relates to Luke's own point of view. And Luke's view, as that of the "implied author" (as reconstructed from the narrative), and that of the narrator, always coheres - bar a few exceptions with that of Jesus. These two views will be used interchangeably (see Knight 1998:33).

That Luke's narrative is written by "Luke" (the real author) draws attention to the fact that his narrative is rooted in time and space, and is intended to influence the lives and visions of real people whom we will call the "community of Luke" (the intended readers). The community of Luke is a world outside Luke's narrative, situated within the Greco-Roman Mediterranean world of the first century, and needs to be distinguished from the world created by Luke within his narrative. Literary-sociological critics refer to these two worlds as the "contextual world" and the "narrative world" (cf Petersen 1985:7-14; Green 1995:2-6; 1997:11-14). These two worlds in turn correlate with two forms of text, "context" and "co-text" respectively. (On the terms co-text and context, see Brown & Yule 1982:46-50.)

Applying these notions to Luke's narrative, the "contextual world" refers to the socio-historical circumstances within which Luke's narrative is set. Luke employs various cultural and chronological markers that root his work in the late first century BCE (references to King Herod of Judea, the emperor Augustus and others) and up to the second half of the first century CE (references to the emperor Claudius, King Agrippa, and others). More subtle are the many cultural markers assuming knowledge concerning "insiders" and "outsiders", "clean" and "unclean", "rich" and "poor", "Israelites" and "Samaritans". These can easily be multiplied. They all demonstrate that Luke's narrative also refers beyond its literary composition to the world of Luke's implied readers. In literary terms, this is the "context" of Luke's narrative, the socio-historical setting. The term "socio-historical" refers to both the social and the historical setting. Within the historical-critical paradigm, guided by an analytical approach, the emphasis has been

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primarily on the historical setting, that is the "place" where the story unfolds. "Place" is the *where* and the *what* of a text. The social setting is the *why* and the *how* of a text. It involves the social dynamics of some particular community. The scientific approaches of historical and sociological research are quite distinctive. Philip Esler (1987:4) explains that the historical method is directed to the particular, the unique, and the unusual. Sociology on the other hand endeavours to examine the usual, typical, and recurrent aspects of social behaviour and institutions. These are arranged in a conceptual model, which serves, among other, as an instrument of discovery. The discovery is more than the *what* or the *where* of a text, it encompasses the "reality" to which the text refers. In many ways this correlates with what linguists have called the "perceptual" dimension of a text and the "extratextual" (outside of text) component of the communication process (cf Van Aarde 1988:237). The interpretation of text does not merely involve an understanding of the meaning of words, but also of the reality to which the words refer. The reality *outside* the text, to which the text refers, and from which the text emanates, constitutes the "contextual world" of the text.

The "narrative world" is the specific discourse situation that gives rise to the narrative itself. It involves the *co-text*, that is the sentences and larger textual units surrounding the text. "Text" here can range from a sentence, to a paragraph, a pericope within the narrative, to the whole narrative itself. As this narrative may draw on other "narratives", some scholars make a further distinction between "co-text" and "intertext". "*Intertext* refers to the location of a text within the larger linguistic frame of reference on which it consciously or unconsciously draws meaning" (Green 1997:13). In the case of Luke, "intertext" involves primarily quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures on which the narrator frequently draws to develop his narrative world. Both co-text and intertext involve the "linguistic" dimension of text and the "intratextual" (within the text) component of the communication process, that is, the world created within the text itself (cf Rousseau 1985:95-29; Petersen 1984:38-43; Van Aarde 1988:237; Van Staden

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1991:79). "Narrative world" as articulated by the co-text (and intertext) is also referred to as the "referential world", that is, the world which the author assumes. The "referential" world is not a "real" (historical) world, and should also not be confused with the world *outside* the text, which the interpreter may reconstruct through historical and social inquiry, and to which text "extratextually" refers to. It is an "imagined" world, which exists out of an "imagined reality" (albeit "real" reality), which the author bestows on his actors and their actions, and which is "actualised" by the narrative (cf Green 1985:4-5).

In chapter 2 reference was made to Gottfried Frege's distinction between meaning and reference (*Sinn und Bedeutung*). Meaning has to do with that which a sign (a word, or a number of word's strung together) signifies. This must not be confused with the reference of a sign. It has been argued that the referent points to the world or reality *outside* the text (see Lategan 1985a:17-23). But the phrase, "reality *outside* of the text", may within this context be misleading. There is also a reality *inside* the text to which the signs of the text refer, that is the reality of the "narrative world". Both the "narrative world" and the "contextual world" are "worlds" to which the narrative refers. The "narrative world" is the world into which Luke invites his audience to venture. The "narrative world" is juxtaposed with the "contextual world" (outside of the text). By juxtaposing these two worlds, Luke invariably challenges his audience. We postulate that this juxtaposition leads to a challenge aimed at creating a new vision of reality and, in particular, a new vision of God and his purpose for humankind.

Our investigation of the Lukan story will proceed with an investigation of Luke's "narrative world" as a *Story of Opposites*, which invariably will involve a literary reading (4.3). This reading will be undertaken at a macro-level in order to highlight the juxtaposition of the two main story lines in Luke's narrative. This will be followed by a study of the socio-historical context in which the identified oppositions are to make sense, the "contextual world" of Luke (4.4). The macro investigation will be followed by a second literary investigation of the "reversals

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of fortune" in Luke's narrative, this time at a micro level confined to Luke's Gospel (4.5). Again the results will be placed within the social context of the first-century world, in particular its view of God. The double oscillation between a literary and socio-historical reading is to serve as a reciprocal verification of results. This will be followed by a paragraph on Luke as a reconciler of opposites (4.6). The chapter will be concluded with a reflection on the results attained (4.7).

### 4.3 God's purpose and Israelite opposition

It is the purpose of this section to explicate the two main story lines that characterise Luke's narrative, that of "God's purpose" and "Israelite opposition". The expression "Israelite" here connotates the term Ἰουδαῖοι. As the term Ἰουδαῖοι features frequently in Luke's narrative and is central to this study, it is necessary to focus briefly on the possibilities of its interpretation.

Various essays and books have been published on the Ἰουδαῖοι in Luke-Acts. Usually the term Ἰουδαῖοι is translated by the word "Jews" (see Liddell & Scott 1977:381; Louw & Nida 1988:824; and most Bible translations). Most scholars have uncritically accepted this translation as it is seen, for example, in Joseph Tyson's (1988a) book, *Luke-Acts and the Jewish people,* which contains eight critical perspectives on some of the most best-known Lukan scholars on the "Jews" in Luke-Acts. Invariably, as reflected in the titles of seven of the eight essays, each scholar when referring to the Ἰουδαῖοι (and its variables) speaks of the "Jews", "the Jewish people", and "Judaism": The church of *Jews* and godfearers (Jacob Jervell); "Glory to thy people Israel": Luke-Acts and the *Jews* (David Tiede); The *Jewish* people in Luke-Acts (Jack Sanders); Insider or outsider? Luke's relationship with *Judaism* (Marilyn Salmon); Rejection of *Jews* and turning to Gentiles (Robert Tannehill); The mission of the *Jews* in Acts: Unravelling Luke's "Myth of the 'Myriads'" (Michael Cook); The problem of *Jewish* rejection in Acts (Joseph Tyson) (italics mine).

More recently however John Pilch (cf 1991, 1993, 1997) has argued that

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the translation "Jews" for the term Ἰουδαίοι, as well as the use of the term "Christians" to refer to the followers of Jesus in the first century CE, are anachronisms; and that there are, strictly speaking, no Jews and Christians in the Bible. Although the word "Christian(s)" is used in the New Testament, it is a term used pejoratively by outsiders in a mocking sense, and can as such not be equated with the contemporary meaning of the word (Ac 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pt 4:16-17). We will therefore use the historically more accurate phrase "followers of Jesus". With regard to the word "Jew", Pilch (1997:119-120) shows that the word can be traced linguistically to the Middle English period (c 1200 CE). It derives from the Old French *Giu/Juiu*. Being a word first used in the twelfth or thirteenth century, the word "Jew" is an inappropriate translation of the word Ἰουδαίος as it is used by the gospel writers and others within the period of the Second Temple and shortly thereafter.

In his quest for precision terminology, Pilch (1997:122) draws on a three-fold division of "Jewish" history:

- The period of the First Temple (950 BCE - 586 BCE). The temple referred to is the temple build by Solomon in Jerusalem which was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. In this period the country is known as *Israel* and the people are described as *Israelites* ("people of Israel"). The religion is properly termed the *Israelite religion*.
- The period of the Second Temple (520 BCE - 70 CE). The temple in Jerusalem was rebuild by Herod the Great and again destroyed; this time by the Romans in 70 CE. In this period the country is called *Judea* and its inhabitants are called *Judeans*. The religion is called *Judean* or *Judaic religion*.
- The period of Rabbinic Judaism (beginning perhaps as early as 90 CE, the gathering of the so-called Council of Jamnia and continuing to the present day). This is the period of *normative Judaism* deriving from Pharisaic

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scribalism. The people (who for most of the period were without their home-county until the twentieth century) are called *Jews*. The religion is termed *Judaism* or *Jewish religion*.

Against this background the term 'Ιουδαίοι as referring to the inhabitants of Judea (as a region) is best translated by the word *Judeans*, although the people (adhering to the Israelite religion) were geographically not confined to the state of *Judea*. Strictly speaking therefore a distinction can be made between the 'Ιουδαίοι who lived in Judea ('Ιουδαία) and those who, for example, lived in Galilee (Γαλιλαιôς). To note these distinctions one needs to take cognisance of the "Ingroup and Outgroup" dynamics of the first-century Mediterranean world (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:87-89). From the outside, that is, from the view point of an "outsider", all those who showed allegiance to the *God of Israel* and adhered to the religion determined by the temple in Jerusalem in Judea, irrespective of their geographical locality, were regarded as 'Ιουδαίοι. 'Ιουδαίοι here clearly does not refer to the inhabitants of Judea alone. The translation "Judeans" will therefore be a misname. The term "Israelites" is a more correct translation. From the inside, however, that is, from the view point of an "insider", those who worshipped the God of Israel when referring to themselves as one large ingroup, used the phrase "house" or "people of Israel" (Lk 1:16; Ac 9:15; 10:36; 13:17, 24). From an insider viewpoint this ingroup could, however, be divided into a number of subgroups, based either on geographical divisions and/or ideological differences (Pilch 1997:119-125). In the first century the "house of Israel" recognised three geographical boundaries: Judea, Perea, and Galilee, the people of these regions being referred to as Judeans, Pereans and Galileans respectively (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:88). For the Judeans, resident in Judea as such, Perea and Galilee were not only situated concentrically around Judea, but were regions with a lesser claim to purity (cf Malina 1993:149-162). Both states were situated further away from the temple and were populated by more outsiders than

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Judea. Historically the Samaritans of Samaria formed a fourth ingroup within the "house of Israel". However, based on the antagonism between the Judeans and Samaritans, any ingroup association would be fervently denied.

For outsiders all Israelite ingroups fused into one. The Romans, for example, called the entire land of historical Israel "Judea" and all its inhabitants "Judeans" (Ἰουδαίοι). Although Jesus was not a Judean, the title placed upon his cross by the Roman authorities reads, "The king of the Judeans (τῶν Ἰουδαίων)" (Lk 23:38). Likewise the "people of Israel" stereotyped all outsiders into one large group of "non-Israelites", the גוים or ἔθνη, often translated into English as "Gentiles" (Lk 2:32; 18:32: 21:24; 22:25). Such stereotyping is normal for group-centred cultures and is part and parcel of the insider-outsider view of the situation.

Based on ideological differences, those who worshipped the God of Israel would distinguish between a number of Israelite factions: Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, Samaritans, and followers of Jesus. For outsiders such distinctions did not exist. They all formed part of the one large ingroup called Ἰουδαίοι who all practised what traditionally has been called "Judaism". Pilch (1997:122-123) rightly rejects the word "Judaism" as a designation for the religion practised during the Second Temple period. He does so on two grounds: First, Judaism strictly speaking refers to contemporary Jewish belief and practise as formed by Rabbinic Judaism after the Second Temple period. And second, based on ideological differences between the different factions, one can hardly speak of "Judaism" in the singular. Contemporary Jewish Scholars who choose to use the word "Judaism" for this period therefore insist on the plural "Judaisms". But, as we will see below, the author of Luke-Acts (at a literary level) often stereotypes the pluralistic religious groups within Judea (the house of Israel) as constituting a unified opposition to the purpose of God. Instead of talking of "Judaism" or "Judaisms", it is, according to Pilch (1997:122), more appropriate to speak of the "Judean" or "Judaic religion". Such a designation distinguishes the "Judean

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religion" not only from contemporary "normative Judaism" but also from the First Temple period *Israelite religion*. This latter distinction is equally important, as both the Judeans and the followers of Jesus often claimed to constitute the authentic continuation of the traditional *Israelite religion*; but from an insider viewpoint one group frequently made a distinction between itself and the other groups.

In the light of the social dynamics underlying the usage of 'Ιουδαίος in the first century, the terms "Jew(s)", "Jewish", and "Judaism" are to be discarded. The appropriate term is "Israelite(s)", used to refer both to the "people" and their "religion" (Israelite religion). It must be noted however, that the word 'Ιουδαίος does not have a single, plain, unified meaning in Luke-Acts, the word always referring to the same people (on the use of the word 'Ιουδαίος in Johannine literature, see Von Wahlde 1981-82:33-36). Apart from the geographical differences (the 'Ιουδαίοι living in Judea, Perea, Galilee or in the Diaspora) , a distinction can also be made on the basis of the point of view adopted by the characters in Luke's narrative. One person may in one instance be called an 'Ιουδαίος only to be contrasted with the 'Ιουδαίοι in another instance. Paul, a follower of Jesus, for example, can, in defence of accusations levelled against him by the Judean people, call himself an 'Ιουδαίος (Ac 21:39; 22:2). But when the author of Luke-Acts wishes to distinguish between the "followers of Jesus" and those who oppose the purpose of God, the latter are called 'Ιουδαίοι ("Israelites") in contrast to the followers of Jesus (cf Ac 13:45). In this study I use the term "Israelite opposition" for this opposite ideology. When the context in Luke's narrative clearly indicates that the opposition came from the Jerusalem élite, I will use the term Judean opposition, meaning that the "Israelite opposition" centres in Judea.

The above observations highlight our conviction that the two "oppositions" that characterise Luke's narrative involve not two fixed groups of *people* but two opposing *ideologies*, Luke's intention being to effect change, to convert one group (people who maintain a certain point of view) to the point of view of the other.

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Instead of the tension being caused by a dispute between two fixed groups, the tension should rather be seen as that between "conventional Israelite wisdom" (enforced by the Israelite leaders) and the "alternative wisdom" of Jesus (and his witnesses). Marcus Borg (1984:56-61) refers to the ideology of conventional Israelite wisdom as a "politics of separateness". Jesus' alternative wisdom in contrast is inclusive and works for reconciliation (cf Borg 1994:80-85). In reading Luke-Acts our emphasis should therefore not fall on the historically different groups of people as separate and distinctive groups, but on the *characters* in Luke's narrative and the points of view they present - hence our literary critical approach.

It is the literary-critical approach that has raised awareness of the two main story lines in Luke's narrative, story lines that are continually juxtaposed. In the past, attention was focused almost exclusively on certain aspects of Luke's teachings. The methodological approach was primarily *historical*. It sought answers on questions such as: Who was Luke? Who were the recipients of Luke's Gospel? Was Luke a theologian, or a historian, or both? What are the major (theological) themes of his teaching (see Barrett 1961; Fitzmeyer 1989; Marshall 1989)? Although valuable information has been gathered, especially in determining the uniqueness of the Third Gospel, one has often lost sight of the *overall* picture which Luke was trying to narrate and the tensions that develop as the plot of his story unfolds. The saying, "not to see the wood for the trees" applies here. Literary critics have since restored a *holistic* picture of Luke - and indeed not only of Luke, but of Luke-Acts as a *narrative unity*. It is this approach that has led to the observation of the "opposites" in Luke's narrative.

That Luke wants his two-volume work to be read as a *narrative* is indicated by Luke himself. In contrast to the other Gospel writers, Luke explicitly categorises his work as a "narrative" (διήγησις) (Lk 1:1). Although all the canonical Gospels are narratives in the sense that the author relates a story which is mediated to the reader by a narrator who elates in order a linear, chronological

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series of events forming "a story", the specific use of the word διήγησις, instead of εὐαγγελίου (Mk 1:1) more than ever invites a mode of reading appropriate to narrative. Some scholars have therefore advocated that Luke-Acts as a whole "überhaupt nur als Erzählung verstanden werden kann" (Löning 1997:9; see also Green 1997:1-10).

That Luke-Acts is a unity, and should be read as one book, should be clear. The two narratives display remarkable similarities (cf Knight 1998:8-9). Both are addressed to the same person, Theophilus (Lk 1:1; Ac 1:1). The introduction to Acts clearly presupposes an earlier work: "In my first book I made, Theophilus, I wrote all about what Jesus began to do and to teach" (Ac 1:1). Both relate the purpose of God (βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ), to which the author frequently refers and which is known by his readers (Lk 7:30; Ac 2:23; 4:28; 5:38-39; 13:36; 20:27). Both works describe a geographical progression. Luke ends in Jerusalem, Acts in Rome. There is a deliberate parallelism between Jesus and his journey to Jerusalem, and Paul and his journey to Rome. Distinctive from the other Synoptics, both Luke and Acts recount the ascension of Jesus. The ascension of Jesus in the closing episode of Luke is directly linked to the opening episode of Acts. With a continued proclamation of the gospel, both anticipate certain future events in their concluding episodes. Both are open-ended.

As noted above, "characterisation" forms an important part in observing the main story lines in Luke's narrative. The central character, albeit an unseen character, is God himself. He is "the veritable director of the action" (Knight 1998:58; cf Green 1997:50). All the other characters are introduced as persons with whom or through whom God's purpose will be either advanced or opposed. They fall into two main groups (1) Jesus and his witnesses (acting as the protagonist, they promote the purpose of God), and (2) the Israelite leaders and those who accept their ideological point of view (acting as the antagonist, they oppose the purpose of God and constitute the opposition).

For the identification of these two main groups I am indebted to Tannehill

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(1985, 1986b). Tannehill (1985:69) distinguishes between "Jesus and his witnesses", on the one hand, and the "people of Israel and its representatives", on the other hand. The latter group is changed by me from the "people of Israel" to the "Israelite leaders" to indicate, as I will argue below, that the opposition emanated not from the people of Israel in general but their *leaders* in particular and all those who adopted their ideological point of view.

With the exception of Jesus, all the other characters in Luke-Acts sway from time to time from the one group to the other, depending on the point of view they adopt. The disciples of Jesus, for example, although being grouped with Jesus as the protagonist, may at times take the role of the antagonists and oppose the purpose of God (cf Lk 22:54-62). Similarly, the Israelite people may side with Jesus and then later again with the Israelite leaders (cf Lk 5:26; 23:13, 28). This confirms once again that Luke's narrative is not about two fixed groups of people, but about two opposing ideologies. Although I will focus primarily on the main characters comprising the "opposites" in Luke's narrative, the remaining characters, often the silent witnesses, the undecided who are committed neither to one ideology or the other, play an important role too. Extratextually they comprise the core of the group whom Luke wants to reach through his narrative.

God's purpose (one of the two main story lines) involves the salvation of humankind. But as narrated by Luke, God's purpose comprises one *particular* understanding of God's salvation, which both coincides with and extends beyond the expectations of Israel and its own particular view of God and God's salvation. It is this extension, among other issues (they are numerous and complex), that leads to the *opposition* which throughout Luke-Acts is diaphorically juxtaposed with the purpose of God as realised by Jesus and his witnesses. Our focus now falls on these two major story lines "God's purpose" and "Israelite opposition."

### 4.3.1 God's purpose

As indicated above, "God's purpose" as narrated by Luke consists of two strands.

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For the sake of clarity these two strands, which are continually juxtaposed with one another in Luke's narrative, will be presented separately. The first strand coincides with "Israel's hope", the long awaited salvation of God through Israel's Messiah. The second concerns the "Gentiles".

**4.3.1.1 The realisation of Israel's hope**

"Israel's hope" is previewed in the introductory chapters of Luke's Gospel. Like any good storyteller, Luke first captures his listeners' attention and draws them into his narrative with frequent references to the realisation of *Israel's* hope. He only introduces the second strand later. The realisation of Israel's hope is narrated prominently in the opening chapters (cf Tiede 1988:24-26). In the announcement of John's birth (Lk 1:13-17) there are a number of pointers, within a co-text of reliable witnessing, confirming that Israel's hope has been fulfilled (cf Tyson 1992:47). The message is given by "an angel". The son to be born will be "filled with the Holy Spirit", and he will go before the Lord "in the power of Elijah". Reference to "Elijah" raises traditional expectations. This is the first of a number of intertextual reviews of promises made to the fathers of old. The message itself is characterised by "joy": "He will be a *joy* and *delight* to you, and many will *rejoice* in his birth" (Lk 1:14). That this joy is a joy to be realised among the *people of Israel*, is likewise indicated in the passage by the words "children of Israel" and the term λαός (a people), a term "frequently used in the Septuagint to the people of Israel in its distinctiveness" (Tannehill 1986b:143; see also Sanders 1988:57). The son to be born will clearly initiate the realisation of "Israel's hope."

In the announcement of Jesus' birth a similar pattern is followed (Lk 1:26-38). Again the fulfilment of *Israel's* salvation is anticipated. The child will be called "Jesus" (Redeemer); the Lord God will give him the "throne of his father *David*" and he will reign over the "house of *Jacob*" forever (Lk 1:29-33). The theme of *Israel's* hope being realised is also carried through in the two songs of Mary and Zechariah, the Magnificat and Benedictus. Mary glorifies God and says:

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"He has helped *Israel*, his servant, to remember mercy to *Abraham* and *his seed* (descendants) forever" (Lk 1:55). Zechariah sings: "He raised a horn of salvation to us in the house of his servant *David* ... salvation from our *enemies* and from the hand of all those who hate us" (Lk.1:69-71). In Zechariah's song "God's salvation" ostensibly alludes to expectations within Israel of political deliverance. The Israelites would immediately have called to mind "enemies" like Antiochus Epiphanes, who tried to eradicate the Israelite religion, as well as the Romans, with whom there was repeated danger of conflict (see Lk 13:1) - all leading them to an intensified hope of deliverance.

The fulfilment of "Israel's hope" is also a central topic in the annunciation of Jesus' birth to the shepherds (Lk 2:8-13). The child that is born is given the name "Messiah, Lord" (Χριστὸς κύριος). Messiah is clearly to be interpreted in the light of what has already been said to Mary and by Zechariah about the salvation of the *people of Israel* (cf Tannehill 1986b:26). Announced by Gabriel is the long awaited appearance of the Messiah *of Israel*. The same applies to Jesus' presentation in the temple. Simeon "righteous and devout" and "filled with the Holy Spirit", and Anna "a prophetess" both waited expectantly on the "consolation of *Israel*" and the "salvation of *Jerusalem*" respectively (Lk 2:25, 38) (cf Tiede 1988:26-27).

The theme of "Israel's hope" being fulfilled is not confined to the annunciation and birth narratives, but is indeed a preview of what is to follow, an important topical strand that runs (mostly in the background) throughout Luke (see Jesus' announcement of his mission in Nazareth in Luke 4:18-19 and the repeated use of the word ἄφέσις - release, relief); and it resurfaces strongly towards the end of the Gospel and early in Acts. "Israel's hope" is especially revived after Jesus' resurrection. The followers of Jesus on the road to Emmaus explain their disappointment of the past few days to Jesus, saying: "We were hoping that he was the one who is going to redeem *Israel*" (Lk 24:21). Early in Acts, their hopes rekindled, the disciples of Jesus ask him: "Are you at this time restoring the

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kingdom of *Israel*?" (Ac 1:6). The actualisation of "Israel's hope" is not rejected by Jesus (Ac 1:7), but reinforced in various episodes in Acts. It is shown by Peter's statement in Acts 3:19-21, a statement directly linked to Acts 1:6 by the unusual word ἀποκαθιστάνω, the verb being used only twice in Luke-Acts (Ac 1:6 and Lc 6:10) and the noun only once in the New Testament (Ac 3:21) (Tannehill 1985:76). That Christ will "restore" everything as he promised through his holy prophets (Ac 3:21) shows that the prophecy of salvation for Israel is not dead. Most mission speeches to the Israelites in Acts refer to this hope. The oath made to David and the promise of a saviour from David's seed feature prominently in both Peter's sermon in Jerusalem (Ac 3:27-35) and Paul's sermon in Antioch of Pisidia (13:22–41). The message is always the same: The promised king of David's line has appeared to fulfill the hopes of the house of Israel. The fulfilment of this hope is expressed by quotations from a number passages from the Hebrew Scriptures: Psalm 2 (Ac 13:33); Psalm 16 (Ac 3:25-28; 13:35-37), 1 Samuel 3:14 (Ac 13:22), 2 Samuel 2:7 (Ac 3:30), Isaiah 53:3 (Ac 13:34). Tannehill (1985:77) highlights the use of the pronoun "to you" (ὑμῖν). In Acts 3:39 Peter says: "*To you* is the promise, and to your children," and in 3:25-26: "*You*, the sons of the prophets and the covenant ... to *you* first God raised up his servant ...." The purpose of God clearly includes first and foremost the *people of Israel*. That through Jesus "Israel's hope" is being fulfilled is further enhanced by Paul's defence speeches. Paul repeatedly argues that he is on trial for the "hope of *Israel*" (cf Ac 23:6; 24:15, 21). The climax is reached in the defence speech before King Agrippa II: "It is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today" (Ac 26:2-8); and again in the concluding chapter of Acts: "It is because of the *hope of Israel* that I am bound with this chain."

Our exposition has briefly expounded the one strand of God's divine will and purpose which runs throughout Luke-Acts. Luke narrates that Israel's hope and long-awaited anticipation of salvation and liberation of all its enemies is actualised and realised in the life and death of Jesus and the testimony of his

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witnesses. This view clearly forms a major part of the "narrative world" of Luke-Acts and constitutes a major component of the "symbolic universe" created by the author (see 1.3.2 above).

#### 4.3.1.2 Gentile salvation

Apart from the realisation of Israel's hope, Luke's story of God's divine purpose consists of another component that leads to a number of unexpected "twists and turns". One strand, that of God's salvation for Israel, is repeatedly juxtaposed diaphorically with another strand which is inclusive of the Gentiles, that is, it speaks of salvation for *all* (universal salvation). From an Israelite point of view such a juxtaposition of socially exclusive entities (Israelites and Gentiles, both participating in God's salvation), inevitably leads to an initial response of dismay, so characteristic of Jesus' parables. By juxtaposing these entities, however, the author challenges his readers to re-think and re-consider the world into which they have been socialised. It is this strand, however, that also leads to the *opposition* of Jesus and his witnesses.

The "twists and turns" are not introduced immediately, but as late as the second half of the second chapter of Luke's Gospel (Lk 2:21-39). The late introduction of "salvation for all" is based on narratological considerations. Luke first captures the attention of his readers by referring to what is generally known as the hope of Israel (exclusive salvation), and then slowly introduces the notion of salvation for the Gentiles (inclusive salvation). This introduction occurs in sporadic touches, forming a series of jolts, and prepares the reader for something new - the "new" gaining momentum as the full story in Luke's narrative unfolds. This constitutes a literary explanation for what Hans Conzelmann ([1954] 1973:9-11; [1963] 1972:6-7) termed the shift in salvation history from the "Zeit Israels" to the "Zeit des Wirkens Jesu". Note that the shift may not at all be the result of an ancient historian (Luke) conveying salvation history in clearly defined periods, one period chronologically following the next, but the art of an author (a literalist) who

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by diaphoric juxtaposition (one period being juxtaposed with the next) intends to ignite a new understanding of and insight into God's purpose.

The intertext of Luke's narrative indicates that salvation for all is not an afterthought, but coheres with the eternal will of God. Salvation for all is first introduced in Luke's narrative at Jesus' presentation in the temple (Lk 2:21-39). Simeon, a righteous man, who was waiting for the "consolation of Israel", glorifies God with the words that he has seen God's salvation (σωτήριον), which will not only be to the "glory ... of Israel", but also a "light ... to the *Gentiles*." Notably, Simeon is given special credentials by the narrator. He is not only filled with the Holy Spirit, but is also characterised as "righteous" and "devout" (Lk 2:25). Indeed his credentials surpass those of Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary, whose understanding is clearly limited by the narrator (cf Moessner 1988:40-42). Simeon's song witnesses a shift from an exclusive salvation for Israel alone to an inclusive salvation for all. The former constitutes conventional Israelite wisdom, the latter the alternative wisdom promoted by Jesus and his witnesses. Simeon's song is a paraphrase of themes from Second Isaiah (Is 40:5; 42:6; 46:13; 49:6; 52:9-10) (see Brown, cited by Tannehill 1985:40).

The strategic placing in his narrative of paraphrased quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures is a feature of Luke's work (cf Green 1995:24-28). These quotations not only serve his purpose of showing that the "shift" narrated by Luke is rooted in prophetic tradition, they also accentuate the significance of the "old" story shedding light on the "new" story as narrated by Luke (Green 1995:24). In Isaiah 42:6 we read that the "servant of God" will be made to be a covenant for the people, "and a light to the *Gentiles*". Of importance is the word σωτήριον, which also lays the bridge to the next episode referring to a salvation of "all" flesh (Lk 3:4-6; cf Tannehill 1985:71; 1986b:39-41). The word σωτήριον features regularly in Isaiah 40-66, but is rarely used in the New Testament, and only three times in Luke-Acts. After Simeon's song (Lk 2:29-32) it appears in the description of John's mission (Lk 3:4-7), a quote from Isaiah 40:3-5. John's work of "preparing

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the people" for God's salvation, already referred to in Luke 1:18, is explained here as the levelling and smoothing of roads so that "*all flesh* will see the salvation (σωτήριον) of God." This paraphrased quotation from Isaiah 40:3-5 reinforces what Simeon said, and forms one of the Scriptural roots of the narrator's (and implied author's) vision of God's saving purpose. It is worth noting the full passage as narrated by Luke:

> A voice crying loud in the desert, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths for him, every valley will be filled, and every hill and mountain will be made low, and the crooked (roads) will be made straight, and the rough ways smooth. *And all flesh will see the salvation* (σωτήριον) *of God.*

The importance of this Isaiah passage to the narrator is shown by the fact that in contrast to Matthew and Mark, whose quote ends with "make straight his path", the narrator of Luke continues the quote "And *all flesh* will see the salvation of God". The third, and only other occurrence of the term σωτήριον is in Paul's concluding statement to the Israelites in Rome at the end of Acts, "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation (σωτήριον) has been sent to the Gentiles" (Ac 28:28). This frames the whole narrative of Luke-Acts in God's one unified, universal salvation-purpose.

After Simeon's song, the universal salvation of God features on a regular basis. We see John denouncing any salvation based on the virtue of ethnicity: "Bear fruits that benefit repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father ....'" (Lk.3: 8). Moreover, when Luke gives Jesus' genealogy, he does not only indicate that Jesus is a son of David (Lk 3:23) and of Abraham (Lk 3:34), but also son of Adam, the first human, and son of God (Lk 3:37). Salvation for all, as noted above, is often juxtaposed with some reference to Israel's salvation. We see such a juxtaposition in Jesus' announcement of his

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mission in Luke 4:18-19. Jesus stands up and reads a passage from Isaiah. The passage is a paraphrased quote from Isaiah 61:1-2. In its original setting, it is addressed to the Israelites (the people of Zion). They, the prisoners and oppressed, will experience "release" (ἄφεσις). But in Luke's version of Isaiah 61, Jesus also speaks about "the blind" whose sight will be recovered. Although Jesus could be referring to his ministry of (physical) healing, Sharon Ring (cf Tannehill 1986b:66) has noted that Isaiah 61:1-2 are connected with a series of other Isaiah passages. Isaiah 58:6 refers to the oppressed being freed. This is followed by a promise of light rising in the darkness in Isaiah 58:8,10. In Acts 13:47, after being rebuffed by the Israelites the narrator explains why Paul and Barnabas are turning to the Gentiles by quoting Isaiah 49:6: "I have made you a *light for the Gentiles,* that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." For the narrator at least, the "giving of sight" is clearly related to a "light for the Gentiles", which becomes an important theme in Luke-Acts, confirmed with its return in Paul's last major speech before Agrippa II: "... that the Christ ... would proclaim *light* to his own people and to the *Gentiles*" (Ac 26:23).

In Nazareth, the Gentile mission is further emphasised in the scene immediately following the reading of the Isaiah scroll. Although the initial reaction of "all" the people of Nazareth is favourable (Lk 4:22), Jesus' response is rather harsh, suggesting as it does that once they understand more fully what the nature of his mission is, he would no longer be acceptable to them (cf Tannehill 1985:69-73). He indicates that their favourable response rests on self-centred desires by virtue of which the people of Nazareth would wish to restrict his mission of healing to themselves. Reference is made to two prophets, Elijah and Elisha (Lk 4:24-27). The very fact that this story seems out of place emphasises its importance to the narrator. Neither of these prophets fulfilled the desire of those within Israel wanting healing. Both experienced opposition, especially Elijah, whose life-story is dominated by his conflict with the king and queen of Israel and the widespread rejection of God's covenant by the people (cf 1 Ki 19:10). But instead of "healing"

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(only) Israelites, both prophets rather healed Gentiles, the widow of Zarephath in the region of Sidon, and Naaman the Syrian.

Reference to the actions of Elijah and Elisha highlights what is seen to be two important points within the larger frame of Luke's narrative (cf Tannehill 1986b:71). On the one hand it provides scriptural witness to the inevitable conflict between God's purpose (salvation for all) and the human desire to restrict God's salvation to a chosen few (salvation for Israel alone). On the other hand it foreshadows the development of the Gentile mission in Acts. (For an alternative understanding of the function of the references to Elijah and Elisha, see Brawley 1987:9-11.) It is strategically placed at the commencement of Jesus' public ministry, and provides an interesting twist in the Lukan story, accentuating the universal scope of God's purpose already alluded to earlier in Luke 2:30 and 3:6. Accordingly, the proclamation of "the Lord's favourable year" (Lk 4:19) is undoubtedly to be understood as a favour that rest on *all* people.

After the announcement of Jesus' mission in Luke 4, the salvation purpose of God rises in crescendo (see Prior 1995:48-60). The inclusiveness of Jesus' mission is evidenced by various healing stories, stories of fellowship, sayings, parables, and other stories involving not only Samaritans (cf Lk 10:25-37; 17:12-19) and Roman officials (cf Lk 7:2-9; 23:47), but also socially (and religiously) marginalised and ostracised Israelites, such as toll-collectors, prostitutes, widows, the poor and the sick (cf Lk 5:12-32; 7:36-50; 8:40-47; 15:1-33; 16:19:1-19; 21:1-4). The mission of the Seventy or Seventy-Two (Lk 10:1-14), set at the beginning of Luke's Travel Narrative, prepares the reader for the mission to both Israelites and Gentiles that transpires throughout Luke-Acts (cf Matson 1996; Van Aarde 1999:795-826). Together with his synoptic counterparts, Luke records a mission of the Twelve (Lk 9:1-6; cf Mt.10:1-23; Mk 6:7-13). But Luke is unique in recording the additional sending of seventy-two-messengers. Matson (1996:33-34) argues that the mission of the Twelve points to the reconstitution of the tribes of Israel (Lk 6:13; 9:1-6; 22:30), the mission of the Seventy-Two pointing towards the

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evangelisation of the Gentiles. This interpretation finds support in the universal significance of the figure seventy-two, calling to mind the seventy-two nations of the world according to the Septuagint reading of Genesis 10. It is also important, as Van Aarde (1999:800) notes, that Luke in contrast to his synoptic counterparts expanded the "mission of the disciples" . According to Luke, Jesus included his disciples in his journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (commencing at Lk 9:51) which lead them through Samaria - despite the disapproval of the sons of Zebedee (James and John). This is followed by the narrator's comment in Luke 10:1 that the Seventy-Two travelled to "every city and place" where Jesus lead them. Invariably the Gentiles respond positively to the gospel message.

Note that Luke does not simply narrate the evangelisation of Gentiles, he juxtaposes their responds in a diaphoric reversal of fortunes (see 4.5 below). This is also evidenced at the death of Jesus. His own followers are portrayed as being distant (Lk 23:49), while a criminal and a Roman centurion respond favourably to his death, recognising the hand of God in what was happening (Lk.23:40-43, 47). Luke's Gospel concludes with the commission of the resurrected Jesus to his disciples to be his witnesses and to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to "all nations" (Lk 24:47).

The "salvation for all" reaches a climax in Acts. The programmed spread of the gospel throughout the world is set by Jesus' repeated commission to his disciples: "... you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, *and to the ends of the earth*" (Ac 1:8). Acts records great initial success amongst the "Judeans" (cf Jervell 1972:45). The Lukan summary statements tell of 3000 being converted in Acts 2:41; of an unspecified number in Acts 2:47; with the number of men growing to 5000; of a "multitude" in Acts 5:1; and general increases in the numbers of disciples in Acts 6:1 and 6:7. With the Israelite opposition in Jerusalem growing, success is carried beyond the boundaries of Judea to include "all", already prefigured in the sermons to the "Judeans" in Jerusalem (Ac 2:21,39; 3:25). Samaritans are "filled with the Spirit" (Ac 8:17), an

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Ethiopian eunuch is baptised (Ac 8:26–30), a Greek centurion and "all who heard the message" receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are baptised (Ac 10:44-48). Conversion passages are characterised by a juxtaposition of Israelites and Gentiles: "They receive the Holy Spirit just as we have" (Ac 10:47). What by us is deemed "unclean" is made "clean" by God (Ac 10:14). Especially prominent are the speeches of Peter and Paul (cf Jervell 1972:47). In Jerusalem, Peter quotes the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on *all* people ... and *everybody* who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Ac 2:17,21). These lines are juxtaposed with direct references to Israel and the use of the pronoun ὑμῶν: "*your* sons and daughters ... *your* young men ... *your* old men ..." (you - everybody; your people - all people).

The same juxtaposition is continued in the life of Paul and his speeches (cf Tannehill 1985:69-85). It is Paul's divine commission to carry the Lord's name "before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel" (Ac 9:15), which is interpreted by Paul before the council of Jerusalem as his mission to be a witness to "all men" (Ac 22:15). Accordingly he calls "*all* people *everywhere* to repent" (Ac 17:30). Both Israelites and Gentiles react positively to his call for repentance (Ac 13:42-43; 14:1; 17:4; 18:17; 19:17-18). Israelites and Gentiles are again juxtaposed in Paul's defence speech before Agrippa II. Again he explains his commission as one directed to both: He is "to be rescued from his people (λαός) and from the Gentiles (ἔθνος)" to whom he has been sent "to open their eyes" and proclaim "light to them", both to the "Israelites (λαός) and the Gentiles" (Ac 26:17-18; 22-23; cf Lk 2:29-32). Acts closes with a scene of some Israelites being convinced (Ac 28:24), and a final proclamation concerning God's salvation to the Gentiles.

The βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ, as presented by Luke, includes both the people of Israel and the Gentiles. It does indeed follow the pattern of first to the Israelites and then to Gentiles, witnessed by Paul's invariable "first stop" in the synagogue of the towns visited (Ac 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1,10,17; 18:4,19; 19:8; 24:12; 26:11).

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But from the outset of Luke-Acts, the narrator portrays God's salvation as universal. God's purpose encompasses salvation for everyone. This purpose is narrated within Luke-Acts in a tensive, diaphoric juxtaposition of two opposing views, the view of God which is all-inclusive, and the view of the Israelites, which is particularistic. Within the tension between these two poles, the narrator develops the conflict arising from *Israelite opposition* to God's "salvation for all". This constitutes the second major story line that runs through Luke-Acts.

### 4.3.2 Israelite opposition

The early chapters of Luke already provide hints of the looming conflict within Israel which Jesus and his witnesses will produce (cf Tannehill 1986b:71-74). Mary speaks about God scattering the proud, bringing down the rulers, and sending the rich away (Lk 1:51-53). Simeon blesses Mary with the sombre words that "this one is set to cause the falling and raising of many in Israel and for a sign spoken against" (Lk 2:34). And Jesus' ministry in Nazareth begins with his rejection and an attempt to kill him (Lk 4:22-30). These previews indicate and prepare the reader for the now threatening opposition to the fulfilment of God's purpose. The lines themselves are juxtaposed with scenes of immense joy and jubilation: joy - hardship; salvation - opposition.

The initial opposition to Jesus in Nazareth involves everyone (all people): "all in the synagogue were filled with anger" (Lk 4:28). Opposition to Jesus by the people of Israel in general is, however, not developed further. In the remainder of Luke they (the people) are, in contrast to the Israelite authorities, presented as *essentially* neutral towards Jesus. They do not share the public commitment of the disciples, but neither do they side with the Israelite authorities against Jesus until the final scenes of the passion narrative when they agree that Jesus must be killed (Lk 23:13). It is true, of course, that during the mission of the disciples in Acts, the opposition by the people is often presented as one of progressive intensification, so that the term "the people" can at times be equated with "the authorities" (see

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especially Sanders 1987:37-83). But this presentation of the people is not fixed, it rather relates individual instances when "the people" side *with those who oppose Jesus*, that is, the Israelite authorities. This view is also held by Robert Brawley. Brawley (1987:139) notes that Luke can differentiate the people (the crowds) by having them undergo transformation: the role of the crowds is " fluid and they wear different masks." This ambiguous presentation of the people fulfills an important role in Luke-Acts. It challenges its readers ("the peoples" of Luke's community, both Israelites and Gentiles) not to side with those Israelites who oppose Jesus, but to "convert" their beliefs to accord more fully with the divine will and purpose of God as presented in Luke-Acts.

The juxtaposition of two diametrically (diaphroically) opposed views is also noted by James Resseguie (1982:75-76) in what he terms the "rhythmic oscillation between audiences". There is a continuous switch from the one audience to the next. The central section of Luke serves as an example: Disciples (9:51-56); crowd (9:57-62); lawyers (10:25–37); disciples (10:38-11:13); crowd (11:14-36); Pharisees (13:37-53), and so on. By this rhythmic change of the audience the reader is continually being presented with conflicting points of view. And these points of view are juxtaposed in order to satisfy Luke's purpose, which is to persuade his readers to embrace life within the reality of God's divine will and purpose.

The Israelite authorities are presented as those who oppose God's purpose. They, and those people of Israel who submit to their ideological point of view, constitute the 'Ιουδαίοι in Luke's narrative. After the initial rejection of Jesus in Nazareth by "all" the people, they constitute the official opposition. It has been noted above that the Israelite authorities, although historically differing among themselves, are presented as a united group. That is not to say that Luke no longer refers to distinctive groups as such, or to the opposing views of Pharisees and Sadducees (for example with regard to the question of resurrection); but when he considers their *opposition to Jesus*, Luke, in spite of individual exceptions (Lk

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8:41, 23:50-53), "stereotypes" them (cf Kingsbury 1991:79-81; Moxnes 1988:17-18). In their opposition to Jesus they constitute a "united front".

The conflict between the Israelite authorities and Jesus erupts in the middle of Luke's Gospel (Lk 3:1-21:38). It goes through several stages, during which opposition progressively intensifies. There are the conflict in Galilee (Lk 5:17-9:50), the conflict on the way to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:46), and that in Jerusalem itself (Lk 19:47-21:38). In all these episodes the Israelite authorities are the main antagonists. The people (λαός) and the crowd (ὄχλος) respond favourably to Jesus' ministry, albeit apart from a few, without much commitment. The disciples follow Jesus, but in their understanding of Jesus' mission they leave much to be desired. Simon Peter, for example, may identify Jesus as the Messiah (Lk 9:20), but he denies him at the trial (Lk 22:54-62). The Israelite authorities however *oppose* Jesus. The ensuing controversies, strategically placed at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, constitute a kind of test for Jesus. They involve a number of critical issues which revolve primarily around Israelite traditions, matters of purity, understanding of the Law - the underlying issue always being one of "authority". This being so, those who oppose Jesus in the first stages are those who traditionally are perceived as having authority in matters of the Law, the scribes and the Pharisees. The scribes were commonly recognised as having authority to teach the Law. Luke characterises them accordingly with a number of synonymous terms such as the γραμματεῖς, νομικοί, and νομοδιδάσκαλοι. The Pharisees as lay-men could not automatically claim the same authority as the scribes. But Luke nevertheless represents them as persons who *claim* to have such authority (cf Tannehill 1986b:169). In Luke's narrative they continually interact with Jesus by objecting to what he does, posing testing questions, or taking a position which Jesus corrects. These stories are all characterised by numerous evaluative comments of the narrator which help to disclose the opposing ideological points of view of the protagonist (Jesus) and the antagonists (Israelite authorities).

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The very first controversy (Lk 5:17-26) centres directly on authority, a story which the narrator uses to condition his readers for a correct evaluation of the stories which follow. According to Numbers 15:25 only priests had the authority to facilitate reconciliation when an unintentional sin was committed. When Jesus therefore forgives the paralytic his sins, the scribes and Pharisees criticise him ("thinking by themselves"). Their authority, however, as the authoritative interpreters of the Law of God, is immediately undermined when Jesus continues with his healing of the paralytic as a sign that "... the Son of Man has *authority* on earth to forgive sins ...." (Lk 5:24). The narrator comments: "*Everyone* was filled with awe and went home praising God" (Lk 5:26). The response of "everyone" (ἅπας), a term with which the readers are to identify, is contrasted with that of the Israelite authorities. "Awe" in everyone is juxtaposed with the general responds of "rage" by the scribes and Pharisees (Lk 6:11), which concludes the first cycle of controversies.

In subsequent episodes we find an explicitly unfavourable evaluation of the scribes and Pharisees by the narrator (cf Tannehill 1986b:176-180). In Luke 7:24-28 they are again contrasted with "all the people" (λαός). The narrator comments: "All the people, even the toll-collectors, when they heard [Jesus' words], declared God righteous, because they had been baptised by John. But the Pharisees and the scribes rejected the purpose of God, because they had not been baptised by John" (Lk 7:29). Here for the first time reference is made to the "purpose of God" which is *rejected* by the Israelite authorities, the scribes and Pharisees. Again the two opposing views in Luke's narrative are juxtaposed, this time with the ironic comment that even the toll-collectors acknowledged God's work of salvation in Jesus, while those who should see, don't, because they have failed to follow John's call to repentance (cf Moxnes 1988:20). The opposing views above are enhanced in the succeeding passage (Lk 7:31-35). Jesus speaks of the people of this generation (τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τῆς γενεᾶς) who reject both John and himself. "This generation" needs to be interpreted within the co-text of the preceding

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passage, where the narrator had asserted that "all the people" responded *favourably* to Jesus. The key to an understanding of this passage is given by the concluding remark, "but wisdom is proved right by *all her children*" (Lk 7:35). The juxtaposition is between "the people of this generation" (scribes and Pharisees) and "all her children" (toll-collectors; cf Lk 7:29), which leads to a similarly ironic reversal of roles as we noted above. The "*wisdom* children" are not the scribes and Pharisees, but rather the toll-collectors on the grounds that these have accepted God's divine will and purpose (Tannehill 1986b:177).

Luke's stance towards the scribes and Pharisees is softened by the appearance of individual exceptions, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, asking Jesus to come to his house (Lk 8:41), and "some" Pharisees being concerned about Jesus' safety (13:31); nevertheless the opposition to Jesus is again reemphasised towards the close of this stage. The majority of the religious leaders continue to oppose Jesus. In Luke 9:22 Jesus remarks that he will be "rejected" and "killed". Again the antagonists are the Israelite leaders, the "elders, chief priests, and scribes". Rejection on the part of the leaders is juxtaposed with the general call to take up one's cross and follow Jesus, despite adversaries (Lk 9:23-27).

The second stage, on the way to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:46), is characterised by a number of parables, some of which will be explicated in detail in the following chapters of this study. Our findings above, that the narrative structure of Luke mirrors the juxtaposition of two opposing ideological points of view, is confirmed by Resseguie's essay, *The point of view in the central section of Luke* (1982:44-48). Resseguie explicates three parables, all concerning a banquet (Lk 14:7-11; 14:12; 14:15-24), at both psychological and phraseological levels. Again the Pharisees and scribes are singled out as opponents by evaluative comment from the narrator at the beginning of the first parable, "He [Jesus] was being carefully watched" (Lk 14:1). The Pharisees and scribes characterise the view opposed to Jesus' own. In these parables Jesus initiates the

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controversy and attacks their point of view. That their response, as noted by the narrator, is each time one of silence and shame, serves to confirm that Jesus' point of view is unassailable, while theirs cannot be defended (Resseguie 1982:45). The very concepts on which their point of view is founded are concretised in a number of critical allusions in the first two parables: they seek the place of honour (Lk 14:7), exalt themselves (Lk 14:11), invite only those to dinner who can repay them (Lk 14:12). These characteristics are juxtaposed with Jesus' point of view which reflects the opposite attitude: humbleness and humiliation, actions of love seeking no repayment. Resseguie (1982:44, 46) defines the point of view of Jesus' opponents as representing an "exaltation-orientated point of view", which is "humankind's way of thinking and acting". Jesus' point of view is diametrically opposed to that of his opponents. It is "humiliation-orientated", "God's way of thinking and acting". Not only are these two points of view juxtaposed, but there is also an unexpected reversal of positions (Ressiguie 1982:46): everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted (Lk 14:11); those who were invited, fail to attend the banquet, while those who were not invited are brought in to enjoy it (Lk 14:23).

Immediately preceding these parables the audience shifts to the crowds. In contrast to the scribes and Pharisees the crowds do not yet have a consistent point of view. They may either side with Jesus or with his opponents. At times Luke presents them as being Pharisee-orientated (Lk 11:29), then again as being Jesus-orientated (Lk 14:25) and so potential disciples. The juxtaposition of these opposite points of view prepares both the crowds within Luke's narrative, as well as the readers, for the call of discipleship: "Whoever does not bear his own cross and follow me, cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:27).

In Jerusalem (Lk 19:47-21:38) the conflict between Jesus and the Judean authorities is intensified. The Pharisees are no longer mentioned. Instead, the narrator concentrates his attention on the "official body of leaders", the chief priests, scribes, and elders. The conflict reaches a climax in the temple of

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Jerusalem, which constitutes both the centre of the authorities' rule and the place of God's presence. Again the controversy centres around Jesus' authority and the public proclamation of Jesus' kingship at his entry into Jerusalem (Lk 19:38). Whereas in the past the controversy has had the character of an "extended conversation", it now becomes "acutely confrontational" (Kingsbury 1991:98). Questions by the "authorities" are posed directly to Jesus (Lk 20:2). Each time Jesus successfully counters his adversaries and reduces them to silence, "No one dared to ask him any more questions" (Lk 20:39). In the presence of the people (λαός) a warning is directed against the attitude (point of view) that prevails among the "scribes" (γραμματεῖς) who walk around in long robes, love to be greeted in the market places, have the best seats in the synagogues and the place of honour at banquets (Lk 20:46). The word "synagogue" (a narrative construct of Luke; cf Pilch 1997:121) is a key word in Luke's rhetoric concerning the opposition to Jesus and his disciples (cf Lk 11:43; 12:11; 13:14; 21:12). The warning in Luke 21:12, "they will deliver you to synagogues and prisons ...." foreshadows future events in the mission of Jesus' disciples.

The trial and crucifixion scenes are the climax of the rejection of the βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ by the Israelite authorities. However, as Jesus is brought before Pilate (Lk 23:1-43), "the people", who so far have been presented by the narrator as a distinctive group, are suddenly lumped together with the Israelite leaders, only to revert to their more neutral and friendly status thereafter. This puzzling observation has initiated intensive scholarly debate; it questions whether the distinction drawn so far between "the leaders" and "the people" is indeed valid. Sanders (1987:37-83), especially, argues at length that the opposition to Jesus' work should be ascribed to "the Jews" (the "Israelites") as a collective unity consisting of both "the leaders" and "the people". Sanders' (1987) book, *The Jews in Luke-Acts*, was compiled (among other reasons) in order to confirm antisemitic features in Luke's writing (see also Sanders 1988:51-75). The crucifixion passage forms a central part of his argument; it is here that Luke frequently refers

collectively to the "Judeans" as those responsible for Jesus' death. Luke 23:1 begins with the line: "Then the *whole* (πλῆθος) assembly rose and led Jesus to Pilate." This is followed by the directive: "Pilate called together the chief rulers, *and the people* (λαός)" (Lk 23:13), and "they *all together* (παμπλεθεί) cried out, Away with this one" (Lk 23:18). Thereafter, however, the people clearly revert to their neutral status. At the scene of the cross, the narrator states: "The people (λαός) stood watching." The authorities, however, continue their opposition: "... and the rulers (ἄρχοντες) were mocking him" (Lk 23:35). Still later, the Emmaus disciples remark to the resurrected Jesus: "Our chief priest and rulers delivered him and crucified him" (Lk 24:20). These passages are compelling. Sanders, however, resists any distinction between Israelite leaders and the rest of the Israelite people. Apart from drawing attention to the fact that on the way to the cross no reference is made of "the people" joining "the women of Jerusalem" (see Lk 23:27-30) in mourning the fate of Jesus, Sanders' (1987:67-68; cf 1988:68-70) main argument rests on whether the people could "excuse" themselves from guilt. But the question posed by Sanders is a *theological* question, which does not correspond with the main thread running through Luke's narrative at a *literary* level. Tannehill's (1985:189) explanation is more plausible. For him the "success of the plot seems to depend on undermining Jesus' support by the people." The narrator had earlier reported that the Israelite leaders sought a way to kill Jesus, but could not find a way to do it "because all the people hung on his words" (Lk 19:48). Thereafter several attempts are made to catch Jesus. But the narrator reminds his readers, that this was not possible, because the leaders "were afraid of the people" (Lk 22:2). The opportunity comes with Judas' offer to betray Jesus. The narrative continues with the active role of the Jerusalem authorities (chief priests, officers of the temple guard, elders) in bringing Jesus before the Sanhedrin and Pilate (cf Lk 22:52,54,66). But in order for the public denunciation of Jesus to succeed, it was necessary for "the people" to join those opposing and rejecting Jesus. Now the trend of the story at a literary level is clear: The *driving*

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*force* behind Jesus' rejection and crucifixion are none other than the Israelite leaders. Whether the executioners were actually "Jews", as Sanders (1987:9-15) argues, and not Romans, is not compelling for the plot of Luke's story. In fact this thesis has been countered more recently by Crossan in his book, *Who killed Jesus?* In this historical research into the death of Jesus, Crossan (1995:147-159) demonstrates that the *Roman government* tried and executed Jesus. Crossan traces Israelite responsibility for Jesus' death back to Christian propaganda. Volker Stolle (2001:1-13) avoids the word "propaganda" but argues in a similar way to Crossan that, although Jesus was crucified by the Roman government, (Israelite) followers of Jesus refrained from blaming the Romans, as Jesus' death and resurrection was seen as his vindication as the promised Messiah. At the literary level of Luke's Gospel, there is little doubt: Luke narrates the crucifixion as a Roman process. The Israelite leaders however are the accusers, and constitute the main opposition to Jesus and the realisation of God's purpose. But according to Luke, so do all, both Israelite and Gentiles, who submit to the *ideological point of view* of Jesus' opponents.

In the closing chapter of Luke's Gospel the narrator shifts attention to the disciples. Jesus' appearances to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-33), and to the Eleven (Lk 24:45-49), show a development among his disciples "from blindness to sight, from minds without understanding to opened minds" (Tannehill 1986b:281). Concerning the disciples at Emmaus, the narrator comments: "Then their eyes were opened completed and they recognised him" (Lk 24:31). This is paralleled by a similar observation with regard to the Eleven: "Then he opened their minds completely so they could understand the Scriptures (τὰς γραφάς)" (Lk 24:45). This development confirms the disciples' growth in their seeing and understanding God's purpose, now realised ironically with Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection. This serves as a call to the readers not to be swayed by the "ideological point of view" of Jesus' opponents, but to accept the βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ as realised by Jesus.

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That Luke's story does not end with Jesus' resurrection is made plain in the closing verses of the Gospel, which contain both a review of past events and a preview of events to follow (cf Tannehill 1986b:294-298). Referring to the Scriptures and the work of John in preaching repentance and forgiveness (review), Jesus commissions his disciples to be his witnesses to "all nations", beginning in Jerusalem (preview) (Lk 24:48). The references to "all nations" and "Jerusalem" confirm our earlier analysis of God's purpose as one that encompasses both Gentiles and Israelites. The disciples are to return to Jerusalem. But in returning to Jerusalem and "the temple" (Lk 24:53) they enter the very centre of Israelite opposition, vividly portrayed in Acts.

The call to accept God's salvation, extended by the disciples of Jesus to the people in Jerusalem, is emphatic, with frequent references to the promise of God to Israel which has been fulfilled in the crucified and resurrected Jesus. The disciples' witness includes not only persuasive language, but accusations. Indeed Israelite denial and rejection of Jesus form an important component of most of their sermons (cf Ac 2:23, 36; 3:13-15; 4:10-11; 5:30), not only the leaders being addressed, but everybody (cf Ac 2:36; 3:17; 4:10; 5:30; 7:51-53). With the exception of Stephen's speech, all speeches are characterised by the call to repentance (cf Ac 2:38; 3:19; 4:12); a call that is heeded by many and results in great joy (cf Ac 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:1, 14; 6:1, 7).

Scenes of mass conversions of Israelites are, however, soon juxtaposed by Luke with the emergence of intensified Israelite opposition. Again the opposition is initiated by the "Israelite leaders". "The people" revert to their more passive and neutral role attributed to them by the narrator before the crucifixion narrative. A distinction between "the people" and the "leaders" is again apparent. In Acts 4:1-3 the narrator explains that "the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees" seized Peter and John, while they were speaking to "the people (λαός)". The opposition of the Israelite authorities is further accentuated in the following passage. With the popularity of the apostles rising

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among the people, "the rulers, elders and the teachers of the law" (Ac 4:5) meet in Jerusalem to contrive ways to halt it. Again in Acts 5:17 the narrator comments that it is "the high priest and all those with him" who arrest the apostles and put them in jail. In Acts 5:26 the narrator parallels the support Jesus enjoyed with "the people" before his crucifixion with the support of the apostles in Jerusalem: "They [the Sanhedrin] did not use force, because they feared that *the people* would stone them." In Acts 6:9 the "synagogue", which later on features as the centre of Israelite opposition, is mentioned for the first time in Acts. Its leaders are the instigators of Stephen's death, followed by wide-scale persecution in Jerusalem and surrounding areas.

Within these first scenes of Acts, there is an interesting juxtaposition of "conversion" (to God's purpose) and "opposition" (from the Israelites) which turns into persecution (cf Jervell 1972:47). Peter's speech in the temple (Ac 3:11-26) leads to mass conversion (Ac 3:41; 4:4). This report however is juxtaposed with a report on rising opposition, resulting in the persecution of the disciples by the Israelite leaders (Ac 4:1-2). Again, reference to the large number of men and women who believed in the Lord (Ac 5:17-40) is juxtaposed with the scene of the second trial of the apostles and the subsequent flogging (Ac 5:17-40). Some of the passages reporting mass conversion are awkwardly placed as if it had been the author's deliberate intention to set conversion over against opposition and persecution.

In the second half of Acts, opposition invariably follows from within the ranks of the synagogue, which Paul regularly visits as the first stop on his missionary journeys (Ac 13:5,14; 14:1; 17:2,10; 18:4; 19:8). In contrast to the early chapters of Acts, however, not only does the opposition become more intense, but more Israelites (from among the Israelite people) emerge among those who oppose and reject the gospel of Jesus. This results in a rather ambiguous use of the word Ἰουδαῖοι. In Acts 17:4, for example, the pronoun τινές clearly refers to the Israelites, some of whom (together with a large number

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of Gentiles and a few prominent women) were persuaded by the missionary efforts of Paul and Silas. However, in the immediately following verse, the narrator comments that they were jealous and started to oppose Paul and Silas. The term 'Ιουδαίοι is interpreted by Sanders (1987:272-273) as referring to Israel as a whole. This interpretation complements Sanders' thesis that Luke's narrative presents a progressive and ultimately unified rejection of the gospel by Israel. Our thesis, however, leads to a different reading of Luke-Acts. Instead of 'Ιουδαίοι referring to Israel as a whole, it rather refers to those Israelites (an increasing number) who had conformed to the "ideological point of view" advocated by the "Israelite leaders" and had kept their base firmly rooted within the synagogue. This understanding correlates with the "divided Israel" theory put forward by, among other, Jervell (1972) in his book, *Luke and the people of God* (see also Jervell 1988:11-20). Jervell's view goes back to Adolf Harnack and has also been proposed in one form or another by Hans Conzelmann and Gerhard Lohfink (cf Sanders 1988:45-55). According to this theory, 'Ιουδαίοι compose two groups, the repentant Israelites (the Israelite followers of Jesus) and the unrepentant Israelites. Jervell (1972:41-55) argues persuasively that any scholarly opinion that Israel as a whole rejected the gospel, contradicts the repeated and regular reports of mass conversion of Israelites, strategically placed throughout Luke's narrative (2:41; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:42; 12:24; 13:43; 14:1; 17:12; 19:20; 21:20). This strategic and systematic placing not only suggests that Luke had a particular purpose in mind, to which we will come later, but also correlates with the literary pattern of juxtaposing "conversion" and "opposition", leading to "persecution".

Paul's mission speeches and the subsequent response by the people follow the same pattern of juxtaposing contrasting behaviours: (1) witness to the Israelites of God's promise to Israel being fulfilled in Jesus, and the conversion of some Israelites, juxtaposed with (2) the opposition from some Israelites resulting in Paul leaving the synagogue and turning to the Gentiles. This structure is most evident in a comparison of Paul's visit to three major cities in the Diaspora,

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Antioch (Ac 13:13-52), Corinth (18:1-17), and Ephesus (Ac 19:1-10):

| | God's purpose | Israelite opposition |
|---|---|---|
| Antioch | Paul enters the synagogue (13:14). | The Israelites are jealous and oppose Paul and Barnabas (13:45). |
| | He emphatically appeals to the Israelites (and Gentiles) to accept salvation in Jesus (13:16-40). | They incite others and stir up persecution (13:50). |
| | Positive response from Israelites and Gentiles (13:43-44). | Paul and Barnabas solemnly declare that as a result of their rejection they now turn to the Gentiles (13:46-47). |
| Corinth | Every Sabbath Paul enters the synagogue to persuade Israelites and Greeks (18:4). | The Israelites oppose him and become abusive (18:6). |
| | Paul testifies to the Israelites that Jesus is the Christ (18:5). | Paul announces that he will be turning to the Gentiles and leaves the synagogue (18:6-7) |
| Ephesus | Paul enters the synagogue and argues persuasively (to the Israelites) about the Kingdom of God (19:8). | Some Israelites (τινες) become obstinate, publically denouncing the Way (19:9). Paul leaves and preaches in the hall of Tyrannus (19:10). Israelites and Greeks hear the word (19:10) |

The same pattern is followed throughout Acts, being most apparent in Paul's final visit to Jerusalem (Ac 21-23) and his subsequent arrival in Rome (Ac

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28:11-31). On each occasion Paul fervently proclaims the gospel to the Israelites only to experience opposition, culminating in his mission to the Gentiles. It is important to note that the juxtaposition of opposites is not one of Israelites and Gentiles but of the "purpose of God" and "Israelite opposition" in which Israelites and Gentiles, as particular groups of people, play a subordinate role. Noting this will help us to eliminate certain interpretations of Luke-Acts otherwise advanced. Paul's repeated declaration that he is turning to the Gentiles because of the rejection of the gospel by Israelites cannot mean that Gentile mission is an afterthought of God, a second-choice after the first-choice people have proved themselves to be unworthy of God's salvation (cf Tannehill 1986a:130; see also Brawley 1987:71-73). Neither can it mean, to use the well-known terminology of Conzelmann ([1954] 1973; [1963] 1972), that the new "salvation period" of the Gentile mission was initiated only after its failure among the Israelites. It was noted above (4.3.1) that ever since the birth narrative, the narrator of Luke-Acts has made it clear that the purpose of God which shapes his story is intended for *all* (Lk 3:30-32), this point being reinforced subsequently by a number of quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures. An inclusive mission of preaching is entrusted to the disciples by the risen Messiah both at the end of the Gospel (Lk 24:47) and at the beginning of Acts (1:8), reaffirmed in Paul's commission to which he frequently refers (Ac 9:15, 22, 15; 25:16-18). According to the narrator of Luke-Acts, Gentile mission is clearly not the result, then, of wide-scale Israelite rejection, but is firmly rooted in Scripture.

Wide-scale Israelite rejection of the gospel cannot mean that Israelites *as a whole* are now excluded from God's divine will and purpose. This point has been touched on above. Such an opinion does not only contradict continued conversions of Israelites strategically placed throughout Luke-Acts, but is also countered by Paul's resolute preaching within the synagogues (despite his solemn declaration of turning to the Gentiles) whenever entering a new mission field. For the narrator it is clearly important to convey that not all the *Israelites* are rejected

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by God, nor that *all* Israelites rejected the gospel. This applies not only to the people of Israel in general, but also to the Israelite leadership, which constitutes the main opposition to God's purpose. We noted the exceptions among the Pharisees and scribes who responded positively to Jesus. But in the latter half of Acts too, with Israelite opposition growing on a wide scale, the narrator registers important exceptions, notably Crispus and his entire household, to whom the narrator explicitly refers to as "the synagogue ruler" (cf Ac 18:8). Paul himself, a Pharisee, never discards his Israelite heritage. He preaches as an Israelite to the Israelites, accentuated by his repeated passionate and personal address to the Israelites in the synagogue: "men/people of Israel", "our fathers", "my brothers", "sons of the family of Abraham", reminding them continually of their joint heritage (see especially Ac 13:13-41).

For Marrilyn Salmon (1988:76-82) the question of universal damnation of the Israelites, as advocated by Sanders, is a matter of perspective. Does Luke write as an insider or outsider? If Luke himself is an outsider, then universal or blanket damnation of all Israelites is highly probable: outsiders invariably form opinions of people collectively. If however, as our reading suggests, he is an insider, the "story" changes (see also Tyson 1988b:127-130). Depending on the insider-outsider perspective, the same words or the same story can have different meanings. From an outsider perspective the harsh words of criticism as in Stephen's speech in Acts 7:51-53, are invariably words of condemnation. From an insider perspective, however, the same words may be prophetic, their purpose being to effect change (Salmon 1988:77-78). Similarly, if Luke's audience consists of outsiders (Gentiles), it is probable that Luke will build an image of general Israelite guilt. If however, the audience consists of insiders (Israelites), any general condemnation of *all* Israelites makes no sense. Although there seems to be no weakness in Salmon's logic, she does however fail to provide an answer to the widely accepted notion that Luke's audience is a mixed audience, consisting both of Israelites and Gentiles (cf Esler 1987:16). It is in view of the mixed

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audience that we propose that the two oppositions in Luke's narrative are not of two ethnically distinguishable groups of people (Israelites versus Gentiles and vice versa), but two opposing *points of view*, one being that of God's purpose conveyed by Jesus and his witnesses, and the other being that of the Israelite leaders and those who adopt their ideological point of view, whether Israelites or Gentiles. The question whether Luke himself ethnically belonged to Israelites or Gentiles remains open and constitutes a widely contested scholarly debate (cf Duling & Perrin 1994:367-369). More important, however, is the perspective Luke *adopts* in effecting change among those who oppose the "purpose of God."

In the light of the arguments presented above, repeated references in the second half of Acts of Paul "leaving the synagogue" should not be interpreted as shutting the door on the Israelites as a whole, but as a rejection of a particular "ideological point of view" expressed by Israelites (potentially also by others) under the influence exerted from within the synagogue. Interestingly the narrator frequently notes that Paul leaves the synagogue only reluctantly, and indeed only after the situation has gone down hill to such a point that continued preaching in the synagogue has become difficult or impossible (cf Tannehill 1986a:133). His reluctance to turn his back on the Israelites is also highlighted in his final visit to Jerusalem in Acts 21-22. Despite a divine command to leave Jerusalem and go "to nations afar" (Ac 22:18, 21), Paul continues to preach to the Israelite crowds and testifies concerning the gospel before the Sanhedrin. Paul leaves Jerusalem, we are told, only because of a plot against his life.

How important these continued encounters with the Israelites are to the narrator, is confirmed by the last scene of Acts (28:17-31), which to a significant extent is decisive in determining Luke's treatment of the Israelites. Tyson (1988b:124) draws attention to the fact that in dealing with the Roman ministry, the only incident that Luke wants to report is that of Paul's relationship with the Israelites. On arriving in Rome, Paul explicitly calls the Israelite leaders together (Ac 28:17). Notably, he again addresses the "leaders" (πρώτοι) who in Luke's

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narrative are the proponents of the ideological point of view that opposes the purpose of God. The scene falls into two parts (Ac 28:17-22 and 28:23-28), which the narrator allows to resonate against each other as the final note of his story (cf Tannehill 1986a:135-141; Tyson 1988b:124-137). Paul's statement in Acts 28:17-20 is a summary of the preceding defence speeches in Acts 22-26 and comprises the most important elements of Luke's long narrative, those which the narrator want his readers to retain. Considerable stress is placed on Paul's loyalty to Israel and his innocence of any crime. He does not only speak as someone loyal to Israel but asserts that his imprisonment is directly linked to the "hope of Israel" (Ac 28:2). Paul's words echo the angelic announcement to the "priest" Zechariah in Luke 1:14-17 of the "hope of Israel" which will be realised by the one whose way John will prepare. It seems critically important for Luke to show that the Jesus movement is not something new to be opposed by the Israelites, it is, instead, based on the realisation of authentic Israelite hopes and beliefs. The initial response by the Israelite leaders in Rome to their hope's having been realised in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, is a blend of open-mindedness on one hand and reluctance (based on talk about a new "sect") on the other (Ac 28:22).

In Acts 28:23-28 the narrator recalls the subsequent intense effort by Paul to convince the Israelite leaders in Rome (and possible other Israelites who joined the meeting) concerning Jesus on the basis of the Torah and the prophets. The meeting however culminates in the bitter words of Isaiah 6:9-11 (Ac 28:26-27). These word's express Paul's frustration and bitter disappointment in a people whose ears do not hear, whose eyes do not see, and whose minds do not understand. This is followed in Acts 28:28 with a final contrast between the deafness of the leaders of Israel in Rome and the readiness of Gentiles to hear the gospel.

This harsh ending has prompted various scholars to conclude that Luke narrates a final rejection of Israel and the end of Israelite mission. Jervell (1972:68-69; 1988:19-20) interprets Acts 28 as an end to the mission, not

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however because it had failed, but because the mission among the people of Israel had been completed. The true Israel, that is, the repentant Israelites, had been gathered, thus opening the door for the mission to continue solely among the Gentiles. Sanders (1987:244; 1988:72-75) supports Jervell's conclusion, but for different reasons. He argues that due to the continued rejection of the gospel by Israelites, the plea for Israel's conversion had come to an end, leading to the separation and eternal enmity between Israel and the Jesus movement.

There are however a number of signs in the concluding passage that indicate a continued mission among both Gentiles *and Israelites* and an open-ended conclusion to Luke's narrative. The first of these signs is the reference in Act 28:24 to some Israelite leaders (and possibly other Israelites) who were persuaded by Paul's message. This reference is included despite the harsh rebuke in Acts 28:24-27 which seems to be directed to *all* Israelites ("this people [λαός]"). Not only does this constitute a tension and ambivalence, but the specific use of the imperative in Acts 28:24 (πείθοντο) radiates hope that the process of persuasion will continue in future. The tension is noted by Tyson (1988b:126-127,136-137) who argues that the positive response of some Israelite leaders is an example of *individual* Israelite response, and the negative response of the others designates the *corporate* Israelite response, culminating in his thesis that the *wholesale* conversion of Israel has indeed failed at the end of Acts, but not that of individual Israelites. Whether Paul was initially thinking in terms of a conversion involving *all* Israelites, whose failure is narrated by Luke, is not critical for our understanding of Luke-Acts. Luke generally juxtaposes what to us (particularly in the mind-set of the Western world) seems to be irreconcilable tensions (diaphoric in nature). Group generalisation on the part of Luke obviously does not necessitate an interpretation wherein one group (in this instance the Israelites) is rejected at the expense of another group (the Gentiles) whose positive response seems predetermined (cf Ac 28:28). By juxtaposing opposing responses, often in general terms, Luke intends to prickle and stimulate the mind

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of his listeners.

A second sign of continued hope, albeit more subtle, is the reference to the people who hear, but will not understand, who see, yet will not perceive, in the quote from Isaiah (6:9-10; Acts 28:26-27). This quote, although pointing out the negative response of the Israelites, mirrors the *positive response* on the part of Jesus' disciples (also Israelites) at the end of the Gospel, whose eyes initially did not see, but began to see, whose minds did not understand, but were opened (Lk 24:31,36). By diaphorically juxtaposing opposing responses to the message of Jesus, Luke provokes new thought and encourages his listeners to see things differently and embrace an inclusive salvation purpose, both for Israelites and Gentiles. Furthermore, it was noted above (4.3.1.1.), that Luke previewed Israel's hope in the introductory chapters of his Gospel, based on a number of intertextual reviews of promises made to the fathers of old. Luke 3:6, for example, quotes Isaiah to the effect that "all flesh will see the salvation of God". That "all flesh" includes both the Israelites and the Gentiles is anticipated by Simeon's declaration in Luke 2:30-32. Tannehill (1985:82) notes that this "understanding of God's purpose in Jesus is still valid in the latter half of Acts." God's purpose is not abandoned because of the Israelites' refusal to see and to hear. On the contrary, the quote from Isaiah 6:9-10 shows that the refusal is anticipated in Scripture. That one cannot infer from such an anticipated refusal on the part of the Israelites, a *rejection* of Israelite mission, is also echoed by Brawley (1987:75-77). Brawley (1987:75,77) argues that the quote from Isaiah 6:9-10 functions not to write off the Israelites, but to *explain* their unbelief: "It accounts for the rejection of the gospel by Jews, but not for the rejection of the Jews for the gospel." There is indeed little doubt that Luke continues to cling to the "hope of Israel" being realised *beyond* the situation at the end of Acts.

This hope also resonates in the closings verses (Ac 28:30-31). The narrator records that Paul proclaimed the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ for a whole two years, welcoming "all" those who came to him.

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There is not reason to believe that the "all" excludes the Israelites. On the contrary, as Brawley (1987:77) notes, on the basis of the pattern of turning to the Israelites after the declarations in Acts 13:46 and 18:6, there is every reason to interpret πάντες in 28:30 as *including* the Israelites. It is the ambiguity of the word πάντες that invariably leaves Luke-Acts open-ended: will the hope of Israel be realised? That Israelite mission has not come to an end is also postulated by Green (1995:22) who writes: "... the aim of God at the end of Acts had still not reached its consummation; nor had it done so by the time of Luke's own writing." Similarly Tiede (1988:22) argues that Luke's narrative is not told at the expense of the Israelites, but is a story within the history of Israel. In all Scriptural, intertestamental, and New Testament documents, God is never done with Israel, and Luke-Acts is no exception. The story witnesses major tensions in the realisation of God's purpose, for which the leaders of Israel and those submitting to their point of view are to blame. Luke, however, has not given up hope. Indeed it is this hope that prompted him to compose his narrative as a narrative of tensions challenging his listeners. The question posed is: Will they submit to the point of view of the Israelite leaders and their followers, or will they accept the purpose of God as presented by Jesus and his witnesses? This challenge is put to the unrepentant Israelites as to the non-believing Gentiles (see also Forbes 2000:241-242).

Our reading of Luke's narrative has yielded a revised understanding of Luke-Acts, a shift in nuance. In the past, scholarly debate has mainly revolved around the issue of "first" Israel and "second" the Gentiles, and indeed as two totally separated groups of people. Although scholars disagreed on various internal issues, Luke-Acts was invariably understood as written in some or other way to *justify* the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles. Our reading of Luke's narrative suggests that Luke does not necessarily seek to explain this phenomenon - "first" or "second" may not be the primary issue for Luke at all. Instead "first" should rather be understood as *proceeding* from: the blessing of the

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gospel is to proceed from the "offspring" of Abraham (Ac 3:25). This understanding correlates in part with Brawley's (1987) reading of Luke-Acts. Brawley (1987:73), in fact, regards it as a fallacy to consider Acts as an account of the expansion of the gospel to Gentiles *in general*. Instead of Acts relating a progressive spread of the gospel from Israelites to Gentiles, Acts (especially in the second half) rather describes *Pauline* mission work in the Diaspora that includes the Gentiles *as determined by God* (and not as a result of Israelite rejection).

A number of reasons may also be advanced to *explain* in the latter parts of Acts the increasing number of Gentile converts in contrast to the decreasing number of Israelite converts. Again, Luke may not necessarily seek to explain this phenomenon at all. Instead, his narrative may simply reflect the (tragic) reality of the Lukan situation: many Israelites have not accepted the message of Jesus, while many Gentiles have.

It is our thesis that continued juxtaposition of Israelites (who submit to a exclusive point of view whereby salvation is confined to the people of Israel) and Gentiles and some Israelites (who accept an inclusive point of view whereby salvation is for all) is first and foremost a literary device to impact extratextually on the listeners to Luke's narrative, thereby challenging fixed perceptions of reality and the purpose of God. Furthermore, it seems highly improbable that the accentuated reference to Israelite opposition within Luke's narrative and a turning to the Gentiles, reflects a wholesome rejection of Israelites on the part of God as a result of their continued opposition to the gospel. It is more probable that the opposition reflects extratextually on the political and social pressures to which the Lukan community was exposed, and which had caused uncertainty and division within its own rank. That Luke's community is characterised by uncertainty, in need of assurance, is narrated by Luke himself. The narrator undertakes his task, he states, so that Theophilus (the implied reader) may "know assurance" concerning matters of which he has already been informed (Lk 1:4). For some reason, the way Luke "orders his narrative" should lead to assurance and renewed

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confidence (Lk 1:3). That the "order" cannot mean a chronological order that is historically accurate, is self-evident (cf Green 1995:18-19). Tannehill (1986b:10) postulates that it is an order "appropriate to narrative". It forms part of Luke's "narrative world". It is a world ordered (and thereby created) by Luke in such a way as to impact effectively on his listeners. The point of view of Jesus and his witnesses is juxtaposed with that of the Israelite leaders and those who submit to their point of view so as to challenge fixed perceptions concerning God among Luke's community and to ignite new insight.

The narrative world of Luke has been the focal point of our investigation above. It is a world of opposites. Our focus now falls on the political and social world of Luke-Acts, that is, the "contextual world". Within any narrative, the narrative world is invariably set aside the contextual world of its readers. Only when both worlds have been investigated, will the narrative make sense and reveal *why* and *how* it was to have an impact upon its listeners.

### 4.4 The political and social context of the intended readers of Luke-Acts

Our literary analysis of Luke's narrative has shown strong opposition to the realisation of God's purpose by Jesus (Luke's Gospel) and his witnesses (Acts). We argued that the opposition emanated from the Israelites, in particular the Israelite leaders. Our investigation of the socio-historical contexts of Luke-Acts is intended to illuminate this opposition and provide a background in which it can be understood.

Although scholars differ concerning the date of composition of Luke-Acts, most scholars put the date between 80 CE and 90 CE, the intended readers living possibly somewhere in the northern or western part of Asia Minor (cf Maddox 1982:7-8; Schmithals 1985:367). Our investigation of this period and its people will move progressively from predominantly historical questions to an analysis of the social context of Luke-Acts. In 4.4.1 we will seek to identify the extent of the opposition. This will be followed in 4.4.2 by a critical presentation of what has

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traditionally been termed the *purpose* of Luke-Acts, this based on the probable motives of the Israelite opposition. In 4.4.3 both "opposition" and "motives" will be placed in relief by applying a socio-scientific model to an identification of the effect of the encountered opposition upon the Lukan community, an opposition that elicited Lukan response.

### 4.4.1 Opposition not persecution

Based on a composition date between 80 CE and 90 CE scholars have highlighted two far-reaching events as a probable backdrop for Luke-Acts: (1) The reorganisation of the Israelites under Pharisaic leadership after 70 CE, and (2) the persecutions of the followers of Jesus in Asia Minor during the reign of the Emperor Domitian from 81 CE to 96 CE. The events are seen as interrelated (cf Schmithals 1985:367; 1987:366-389).

Before the Judean war in 70 CE various heterogeneous Israelite groups and currents found themselves all under one roof (cf Van Aarde 1988:245-246). They all formed part of the Israelite religion, centred in the temple in Jerusalem. Being part of the second Temple religion, they enjoyed the same legal rights, those of a permitted religion (*religio lecita* theory) as attributed to the Israelites by the Roman state. The situation however changed, when after 70 CE Emperor Vespasian, following a political policy of eternal peace, allowed Johanan ben Zakkai to open a "Pharisaic Academy" in Javneh (Jamnia). Schmithals (1987:372) argues that the reorganisation of the synagogue under Pharisaic rule was to benefit the Roman state as the Pharisees had taken a stance against the Zealot-uprising. When however the Javneh-Pharisees instituted a one-side Pharisaic interpretation of the Torah, the legal status of the Jesus movement (among other) as belonging to a "permitted religion" was under threat. Those who did not wish to comply with the Pharisaic interpretation of the Torah were in danger of being excommunicated from the synagogue. Without any legal protection, the continued practice of confessing Jesus as the "Lord" would be interpreted by Roman

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authorities as a revolutionary activity. Any splinter groups were to be viewed as a threat to the state. Intratextual evidence in Acts (17:7; 25:8) indicates that the followers of Jesus were indeed presented as such a threat to the Roman state.

According to Schmithals (1985:359; 1987:236-238) Luke already reflects on the excommunication of the followers of Jesus from the synagogue culminating in the fierce persecution of the Jesus movement attributed to Emperor Domitian. That the followers of Jesus were banned from the synagogue finds support in the use of the word ἀποσυνάγωγος in the Gospel of John (9:22; 12:42; 16:2), and the role of the *birkath ha-minim*, the curse against heretics (cf Schmithals 1987:376-377). The *birkath ha-minim* forms part of the Eighteen Benedictions (a standard synagogue prayer). One version of the Twelfth Benediction reads:

> For the apostates let there be no hope,
> And let the arrogant government be speedily uprooted in our days.
> Let the Nazarenes and the heretics (*minim*) be destroyed in a moment,
> And let them be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be inscribed together with the righteous.
> Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who humblest the arrogant.
> (in Sanders 1987:311)

Although little doubt of a formal break between the synagogue and the Jesus movement at some point exits, the arguments on which influential theories have been build are widely questioned today, both with regard to the ἀποσυνάγωγος as well as the role played by the *birkath ha-minim*.

On examining the material available, Katz (1984:48; cf Van Aarde 1994a:253) postulates that there is no direct evidence (in Israelite and other literature) of a formal banning of Jesus followers from the synagogue in the latter half of the first and/or the early second century. Katz, it seems, does not deny that

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during this time a conflict existed between the leaders of Javneh and the followers of Jesus; but he discounts any formal ban. In order to reach better understanding of the actions taken against any heretics (*minim*), Katz (1984:48-49) draws attention to two types of "ban" mentioned in rabbinic sources, the *Niddui* and the *Herem*. The *Niddui* was a means of communal discipline used to support and defend halakic decisions against disobedient members, especially the sages of the community. The *Herem,* in contrast, was indeed a means of excommunication, but as Katz notes, used only after 200 CE. It would therefore seem that the disciplinary action used by the Yavneh leaders was the *Niddui*, which was, as noted above, a disciplinary procedure aimed at bringing dissident Israelites back into the fold, but never to exclude them from the Israelite religion on a permanent basis. Furthermore, both the *Niddui* and the *Herem* applied to *Israelites*, and could not therefore refer to a disciplinary action taken against the followers of Jesus in general. The ban did not apply to Gentiles.

Katz's analysis is supported by our literary reading of Luke-Acts. It was noted above (4.3.2) that the reason why Paul and his helpers left the synagogues, as narrated by Luke, was the result of the direct *opposition* they encountered which at times reached a point which made preaching difficult or impossible. Although Paul and his helpers were harassed by some Israelites and "chased out of town" (cf Ac 13:50; 17:10, 17), there is not a hint of formal excommunication from the synagogue.

Based on the lack of evidence of a formal excommunication from the synagogue in the first century, the role attributed to the *birkath ha-minim* in effecting such a ban needs to be revised. According to a tractate from the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Ber.* 28-29) a "prayer against the heretics" was drawn up by Samuel the Small at request of Gamaliel II at some time or other between 85 and 95 CE (cf Katz 1984:63; Esler 1987:55; Sanders 1993:57). This prayer, referred to as the Talmudic version, which in its original form includes only the term *minim*, was directed not against the followers of Jesus in particular but

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against the Israelite "heretics" of *all* persuasions. It included opponents of the Pharisees, like the Sadducees, and perhaps the Essenes. In contrast to the Talmudic version, the date of the later Nazarene version (quoted above) which includes the specific damnation of the *nozrim* remains uncertain. It seems as if the word *nozrim* was added to the prayer for individuation and emphasis at a time when the followers of Jesus became the main "heretics", and it was *projected* into the first century from as late as 135 CE (cf Katz 1985:67-70; Stegemann & Stegemann 1997:206-207). Van Aarde (1994b:183) agrees with Katz that there is no evidence of *official* "anti-Christian" propaganda which emanated from Javneh - although oral propaganda by the Israelite leaders against the followers of Jesus will have been made.

Besides the probable late date of the Nazarene version of the *birkath ha-minim*, it further seems clear that the "prayer against heretics" was not *aimed* at synagogue excommunication. The lack of evidence of a formal excommunication, as stated above, indicates that the *birkath ha-minim* was no more than what it at first glance seems to be, a curse. The curse was *not* a ban, but served as a *filter* in the sense that it made life for those who participated in synagogue gatherings extremely uncomfortable, ensuing their gradual withdrawal (cf Katz 1984:51, 74-75).

The theory of a large-scale Roman persecution of Jesus followers at the time of the composition of the Luke-Acts under the rule of Emperor Domination also needs to be placed in relief. It is well-known that early *church* tradition portrays Domitian as a persecutor. Extra-ecclesiastical evidence of such a persecution is however lacking (cf Sanders 1987:311). Furthermore, in an analysis of the early Jesus movement sources, Stegemann (1991:188-190) shows that these sources reflect only *limited* instances of conflict, rather than large-scale official persecution as would have been undertaken by the state or its representatives. Stegemann's analysis is supported by our literary reading of Luke-Acts which shows no evidence of any large-scale persecution of Jesus

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followers in general, neither by Romans nor Israelites. Although Acts 8:1 reports a great persecution which broke out against the church in Jerusalem and was followed by Saul's intentions to persecute the Jesus followers in Damascus (Ac 9:1-3), these reports reflect *earlier* persecutions of Jesus followers and not a persecution of Jesus followers *in Luke's day*. The same applies to the reports of persecution and martyrdom of the apostles in Jerusalem (Ac 5:17-18, 40; 7:54-59; 12:1-4). To be noted is the observation made by Sanders (1987:310) that persecution reports in Luke are often *less* pregnant than those in Mark and Matthew. The Lukan version of the admonition to pray for one's "persecutors", for example, does not employ the word "persecute", but the more vague term ἐπηρεάζω, "to mistreat" (Lk 6:28). Similarly, in the Lukan version of the last Beatitude, Jesus warns not against "persecution" (Mt 5:10), but the "hatred of people" (Lk 6:22).

Our reading of Luke-Acts suggests that (1) persecution was confined to the apostles and missionaries of the Jesus movement, that is, its leaders, and had not spread to the followers of Jesus in general; and (2) persecution was not the result of excommunication from the synagogue, but rather the result of Israelite leaders *opposing* the preaching of the gospel and handing over the leaders of the Jesus movement to the Roman authorities. Both assertions are well documented in the narrative account of Acts, and are, in typically Lukan literary style, previewed in the Gospel. In contrast to Matthew, for example, the "killing of prophets" saying (Mt 23:34) is extended by Luke (11:49) to include the "apostles", affirming the persecution of the *leaders* of the Jesus movement. Similarly Luke previews the action that will be taken against the *apostles*. In contrast to Matthew (10:18), the Lukan Jesus explicitly refers to a time when his disciples (apostles / leaders of the Jesus movement) will be brought before the "rulers and authorities" (Lk 12:11) and "kings and governors" (Lk 21:12). Both passages suggest a handing over of the Jesus movement leaders to the Roman authorities.

At first glance this procedure in itself seems rather strange. If, as narrated

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by Luke, the *Israelite* leaders constituted the main opposition to the purpose of God, why did they not unilaterally act against the Jesus movement? Flogging (forty-less-one) is a well attested synagogal disciplinary action. Both Mark (13:9) and Matthew (10:17; 23:34) report such floggings *within* the synagogue. Surprisingly however, such floggings (exercised by the Israelite leaders) are not narrated by Luke (Stegemann 1991:99). In Acts the "disciples" are always "handed over" to the Roman authorities, who at times themselves authorise a (Roman) flogging (cf Ac 16:22-23).

According to Stegemann (1991:104) the most plausible reason for this phenomenon is that synagogue discipline was "unknown" to Luke within his own historical setting. This is attributed to the location and composition of the Lukan community. Synagogue discipline was confined to the Israelites (not Gentiles) in Judea, the jurisdiction of the Israelite leaders, but was unknown in the Diaspora. This view is supported by the narration of Saul's attempt to persecute the followers of Jesus in Damascus. Saul seeks permission not to exercise discipline himself, but to take the followers of Jesus as prisoners *back to Jerusalem* (cf Ac 9:1-2). In such cases, where the followers of Jesus among the Israelites in the Diaspora could not be brought back to Jerusalem to face a Judean tribunal, discipline was confined to a "handing over" to the Roman authorities. But then again the discipline exercised, be it a flogging or an imprisonment of the leaders of the movement, was not the result of a Roman decree within the setting of a large-scale persecution, but the result of *Israelite* accusations and reporting.

In view of our analysis, one can hardly characterise the context of the intended readers of Luke-Acts as that of *large-scale persecution* of the Jesus movement, based on *excommunication* from the synagogue. The context is one of *opposition* culminating in a *threat* of persecution, and a *dissociation* of church and synagogue. Instead of using the term "persecution", Wolfgang Stegemann (1991:29) suggests the use of the word *Gefährdung* to describe the context of the Lukan community. A term like *Gefährdung* would indicate both the "persecution"

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(harassment, abuse) of individual Jesus movement leaders, as well as the evolving general "threat" of persecution for the rest of the Jesus movement.

This evaluation may seem to discount (in part) a thesis contesting that Luke's narrative is one of opposites. But this is not so. Even if Luke's community was not (yet) faced with large-scale (formal) persecution, one should not underestimate the *effect* of the dissociation of church and synagogue and that of looming persecution on the Lukan community. The uncertainty and fear created, could have been just as disturbing and unsettling as that of physical persecution on a large scale. This also applies to the use of the *birkarth ha-minim*. Even if, as it has been contested above, the original *birkarth ha-minim* was not directed against the followers of Jesus in particular, but against *all* heretics, the effect it will have had on the followers of Jesus among the Israelites (and indirectly on Gentile followers as well) will nevertheless have been damning. Katz (1984:73-43) draws attention to the difference between speakers and hearers. When the followers of Jesus, who knew of the animosity of the Israelite leaders against them and of the feeling that they were heretics, "heard" the *birkarth ha-minim*, they undoubtedly heard it as aimed at *them*. This would also explain how second-century sources would speak of "Christians" being cursed in the synagogue, when in fact the curse was directed at *all* heretics. It would furthermore explain, among other, John's use of the term ἀποσυνάγωγος when describing the *effect* that the *birkarth ha-minim* had on the followers of Jesus.

There is little doubt that the context of Luke's narrative was most unsettling for Luke's community. It is characterised by fierce opposition. Its leaders are denounced and harassed. Its members fear similar action against themselves. Church and synagogue are in the process of dissociation and separation. It is a situation that will undoubtedly have shaken the members of Luke's community in their faith, and will have demanded reassurance from community leaders.

Before analysing the social context in which such a dissociation of church and synagogue can be understood, it is necessary to gain more understanding of

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some of the probable motives leading to Israelite opposition and the response it may have elicited from Luke when he sat down to the composition of his narrative.

### 4.4.2 Opposition motives

Although Luke's narrative witnesses to a progressive separation of church and synagogue, the relationship between the two was not indifferent. It resembled the relationship of a quarrelsome married couple, the purpose of God being the inseparable bond that holds both together. That is clearly the way Luke wishes to present the relationship. However from a synagogal standpoint, the view was that any relationship that might exist between the two should be severed. Seeking to understand the motives for such dissociation and opposition may be complex: we must assume from the start that such motives may be many and diverse. Analysing these motives will provide us with a better understanding of the opposition which the intended readers of Luke-Acts had to face. Such "opposition motives" will be explained here from a historical point of view. The explanation will serve as an introduction to the larger topic on hand, reflecting on past scholarly debates, while also showing the necessity and value of more recent socio-scientific investigations (see 4.4.3 below). As the opposition has been identified as that of the Israelite leaders, the motives will be presented from a "Israelite-leader perspective", with a short critical reflection on the traditional debate concerning Luke's response to "opposition" in the composition of his narrative. This response will be analysed from the standpoint of the Lukan community, Israelites and Gentiles (both Greeks and Romans). Stegemann (1991:147-186) identifies three opposition motives, which will constitute the skeleton of our presentation.

The first motive is a *political* one. Although the context of Luke's narrative is hardly one of physical persecution or the harsh suppression of an imminent "revolutionary" uprising at the hands of the Romans, the association of Jesus followers and Israelites ("Judeans") could, from a Israelite perspective, clearly

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jeopardise the peaceful existence of Israelites within the Roman empire. Whether this peaceful existence can indeed be attributed to the "privileged" position (*religio licita*) of the Israelites within the Roman empire remains questionable (cf Maddox 1982:92). The phrase *religio licita*, which has dominated scholarly debate for some time, appears only once in Tertullian's *Apology*, 21:1. Even if it was used in a technical sense then, the date (about 174 CE) sets it so far apart from Luke's writing that its relevance for the Lukan situation cannot be determined. But there is nevertheless enough historical evidence that any movement which could be interpreted as an anti-Roman uprising would be ruthlessly crushed. Stegemann (1991:151-156) draws attention to two historical analogies, the Sicarii of Alexandria, and the conflict in Cyrenaica. Both conflicts reflect movements motivated by the search for political freedom, their leaders both trying to gain the support of Israelites. Each time however, when the Israelite leaders realised the danger which the rebel movement would invariably impose on them, they handed the rebel leaders over to the Roman authorities as a sign of their loyalty to the Roman state. There is enough evidence within Luke's narrative to draw a parallel between these rebel movements and the Jesus movement of the Lukan community. Roman suspicion of the followers of Jesus could have been raised by their explicit confession to Jesus as the Χριστός (Lk 9:20), and the repeated testimony of Jesus to his being the eschatological king on the throne of David. That the Israelite leaders tried to discredit the followers of Jesus with the Roman authorities is well attested. The Sanhedrin presents Jesus to Pilate as an anti-Roman rebel, subverting the nation, opposing the payment of taxes, and declaring himself to be Christ, a king (Lk 23:1-2). Similarly, Paul and Silas are accused by the Israelites in Thessalonika as "trouble-makers" who defy Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus (Ac 17:6). Similar accusations follow thereafter in Acts 21:38 and 24:5-8, and there is also reference to a rebel movement in Acts 5:36-39.

A political motive in handing the leaders of the Jesus movement over to the

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Roman authorities cannot be denied. The question remains, however, whether such political motives on the part of the Israelite leaders are central to the composition of Luke's narrative. It is well-known that many scholars understand the purpose of Luke-Acts as being that of a "political apology", addressed to the Roman authorities as an appeal for tolerance and so not speaking directly to the community of Jesus followers (cf Esler 1987:205-207). The theory of a political apology is based on two observations: First, a presentation of the Jesus movement in Luke-Acts as being innocent of all charges of subversion; and second, a favourable presentation of the Roman authorities (cf Wright 1992:377-377). Paul's defence before Agrippa II in Acts 25 and 26 serves as an illustration of both (see also Lk 23:47; Ac 5:33-39; 16:35-39; 26:32; 27:3, 43). But it remains doubtful that such an apology forms the *central* purpose of Luke's narrative. A political apology assumes a Roman audience. But it does seem most unlikely that such a voluminous work would be addressed to the Roman authorities. Barrett's (1961:63) remark is well-known: "no Roman official would ever have filtered out so much of what to him would be theological and ecclesiastical rubbish in order to reach so tiny a grain of relevant apology."

Luke's narrative therefore, should make sense on the understanding that it is addressed to the Lukan community. That Luke was trying to prevent resentment and retaliation by the followers of Jesus against the Romans arising from the persecution of its leaders, as Maddox (1982:96) suggests, is not convincing. Luke himself tells of no such animosity towards the Romans. It seems more probable that Luke is guided by Israelite propaganda that Roman allegiance and the faith of the Jesus movement are mutually exclusive, that is, in order to be a follower of Jesus one must be anti-Roman. In view of the number of Roman sympathisers and converts (Lk 7:1-10; 23:47; Ac 10:24-48; 13:6-12; 18:7; see also Ac 16:37-40; 22:25-29) it does seem important to Luke to convey to his readers that the Romans are not excluded from God's purpose; and that submitting to Roman authority (whether you are Roman, Greek, or Israelite) does not disqualify

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you from practising the faith of the Jesus movement (cf Esler 1987:210).

The second motive is a *cultural* motive. In the light of recent sociological studies, the word "cultural" is misleading. It is used here in the narrow sense to refer to the communal sphere of influence (Stegemann 1991:156). As this motive is interrelated with the political motive discussed above, a brief presentation will suffice. The anger of the Israelites was clearly aroused when prominent members of the community, who were sympathetic to the Israelite faith, "defected" to the Jesus movement. An example is the proconsul of Pathos, Sergius Paulus (Ac 13:6-12). He is portrayed as open-minded, a man "eager to hear" (Ac 13:7). His conversion is fervently opposed by Elymas, not because the proconsul accepted the faith of the Jesus movement as such, but because of the potential loss of influence which such a high-profile person could exert on the Roman authorities. We should note that Elymas does not attempt to convert the proconsul to the Israelite faith. What he does is prevent his joining the Jesus movement (Ac 13:8). The converts to the Jesus movement from the Gentile community invariably came from within the ranks of those who had been attenders at the synagogue, the "Godfearers", who soon constituted the core of the Jesus movement. Apart from individual men, Luke also narrates the conversion of various women who were either rich themselves or married to prominent and influential personalities (cf Ac 13:50; 16:14; 17:4, 12). The loss of such people will undoubtably have been felt by the Israelite leaders and will have curbed not only financial and other contributions to the Israelite cause, but, above all, Israelite political influence. Again, Luke's reasons for narrating the stories of prominent Gentile converts may well have be numerous and diverse. Based on our "literary" reading the inclusion of these records in Luke-Acts would serve Luke's purpose in stressing the impartiality and inclusiveness of God's salvation - a salvation which suppresses all cultural and political boundaries and includes people from all spheres of life.

The third motive is a *religious* one. On the one hand Luke presents the Jesus movement as authentic Israel, deeply rooted in Hebrew Scriptures. On the

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other hand, however, the gospel message of the Jesus movement is presented as diametrically opposed to the exclusiveness of the Israelite faith. Such opposing views invariably lead to conflict. Both the "temple" and the "Torah" play a prominent role in the opposition of the Israelite leaders to the Jesus movement (cf Stegemann 1991:163-186). From the viewpoint of the Israelite leaders, the matter is simple: Touch the temple and the Law, and you are labelled an enemy of Israel. The temple is presented by Luke not only as the *focus* of events, or the *scene* of an ensuing conflict, but also as the *subject* of conflict itself (see 4.5.2 below on the ideologies involving "temple" [representing the Israelite leaders] and "house" [representing the Jesus movement]). It is Jesus' criticism of the temple that provokes thoughts of murder among the Israelite leaders (Lk 19:45-47). The same scene repeats itself in Acts with regard to Stephen and Paul, where the accusation levelled against them is presented in a parallel structure (cf Stegemann 1991:164). In both cases, Diaspora Israelites accuse Stephen and Paul of teaching against the "temple" and the "Law" (Ac 6:13; 21:28). Stephen calls the wrath of Israelite leaders on him with an apparent reference to the "destruction" of the temple through Jesus (Ac 6:14) and the statement that the temple is not the dwelling place of God (Ac 7:48:50). Paul in turn is accused of bringing Greeks into the temple and thereby "defiling" the temple (Ac 21:28). Stephen is accused of wanting to change the customs handed down by Moses (Ac 6:13). Similarly, on his arrival in Jerusalem, Paul is informed by James, that according to rumours, he is responsible for the fact that Diaspora Israelites no longer listen to Moses and no longer adhere to Israelite customs (cf Ac 21:21). From an Israelite standpoint, the gospel message undermines the heart of the Israelite faith and triggers a response which in both cases mentioned above culminates in an outbreak of violence, one ending in murder (Ac 7:54-59), the other in attempted murder - only prevented by the intervention of a Roman commander and his soldiers (Ac 21:30-32). Stegemann (1991:171-172) recognises an analogy between the "defiling" of the temple in Acts 6:13, and the events surrounding the defiling of the temple by

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Antiochus Epiphanes, recorded in the books of Maccabees. By allowing Greeks to enter the temple, Paul provoked horror fully equal to that caused by the hated Seleucid king. The gospel message is experienced as a breaking down of boundaries which serve to distinguish the Israelites from other nations, undermining their sense of uniqueness as the chosen people of God.

It is well known that Luke makes every effort to save the tarnished image of Paul as someone who obstinately ignores temple laws and Israelite customs. This is most apparent in Luke's presentation of the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem (Ac 15:1-35; cf Ac 16:1-5; 21:17-26). The "liberal" Paul is forced into the background. The stage is taken by the "conservative" James in an interesting reversal of roles (cf Jervell 1972:187-193). Luke places the main responsibility for the decree supporting Gentile mission on James, whose Judean background and dedication to the Law is not questioned. Paul in turn is portrayed as the "Law-abiding Judean", who demonstrates his obedience to the Law by joining four men in their purification rites (Ac 21:24-26) and also circumcising Timothy (Ac 16:3). James, as Paul's defender, explains Gentile mission as firmly grounded in Scripture in full coherence with God's universal purpose (cf Ac 15:13:18).

In view of these and other passages, scholars have argued that Luke-Acts was called into being as an "ecclesiastical apology" (see Cassidy 1987:156). But again it remains a question whether a word like "apology" captures Luke's intentions. Although Gentile inclusion remains a central theme, and indeed an issue that provokes Israelite opposition throughout Luke-Acts, Luke seems far more pro-active in *creating* something new, than *defending* a "theology" under attack. Luke allows Paul to drift into the background while Gentile inclusion is discussed, but he is soon portrayed again as one who zealously seeks to include both Israelites and Gentiles in the realisation of God's purpose (cf Ac 21:8; 26:6-7; 28:20). It can hardly be doubted, however, that the rumours surrounding the actions of Paul as a "liberalist" without any support among those known as the leaders of the church will have strained the confidence of the followers of Jesus

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in the Diaspora (cf Jervell 1972:192).

Our analysis has shown multiple, diverse motives for Israelite opposition to the Jesus movement, paralleled by an equal number of possible motives on the part of Luke in writing his narrative. Although it has helped us to understand particular aspects of the tension inherent in the relationship between the Israelites and the followers of Jesus which may have initiated the Lukan response, it has failed on two accounts: First, it has failed to portray these aspects within a *unified whole*. The question of the "interrelationships" between the various areas of opposition within the dynamics of such a complex socio-religious society remains unanswered. Second, it has failed to interpret the *affect* of the conflict on the Lukan community - which prompted Luke to write a narrative which in some or other way was to give the community back some sort of "assurance" (Lk 1:4). Answers to these questions would greatly enhance our understanding of the intentions surrounding the composition of Luke's narrative. Reading Luke from a socio-scientific perspective will provide us with more answers. Clearly, it will not be a matter of one interpretation superseding another, but of applying different tools at different tasks.

### 4.4.3 Opposition and the need for legitimisation

Socio-scientific investigation is a helpful tool that leads beyond the *what* and *where* questions of historical research, to provide answers to the *why* and *how* questions. These answers are provided by engaging in *comparative* studies and the use of socio-scientific models. In this section we will make use of two models, that of a "conflict theory" and a "sectarian typology model" to highlight aspects of the social dynamics of Luke's community. Because these models have been developed and demonstrated by other scholars ("conflict theory"- see, inter alia, Malina 1993:20-25; Sanders 1993; Vledder 1997:57-116; "sectarian typology model" - see, inter alia, Wilson 1961; Scroggs [1975] 1999:69-92; Esler 1987:1-70; Elliott 1995:75-95;) it is not our intention to describe them in detail. We will

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restrict ourselves to short descriptions and aspects important to the focus of our study. We intend to argue that the need for legitimisation is a key to understanding the social dynamics that characterise Luke's narrative.

As our literary analysis has identified Luke-Acts to be a narrative of two *opposites*, confirmed by our historical analysis as that of *Israelite opposition* directed towards the followers of Jesus within a situation of conflict, the use of "conflict theory" to describe the inner dynamics of our situation, seems obvious and appropriate. *Conflict theory* works with the premises that conflict forms a integral part of society (cf Malina 1993:22). In contrast to *structural functionalism* which tends to view conflict as deviant or abnormal within society, conflict theory focuses on the positive effects of conflict as a creative tool for change (cf Vledder 1997:57-63).

There are many causes of conflict within society. In an investigation of the different causes of conflict, Vledder (1997:111) concludes that on a high level of abstraction, "almost all conflicts can be reduced to a basic cause; that is the *strife/drive for the maximizing of own interest*." "Interest" is a loose term which can refer both to individual interest (the strife of the individual to survive) and social interest (the strife of the dominant group in society to maintain its power and authority). It belongs to the interest of a society (especially its leaders) to maintain cohesion and harmony. From the standpoint of the dominant group, cohesion within a conflict situation is not attained my means of integration, but by enforced constraint (cf Van Gennep 1989:389-415). Force (in the sense of ostracism, harassment or persecution), however, is not the first action taken by a dominant group to regain lost harmony. The first action it takes is the propagation of its ideology. "Ideology" is defined as a "set of values that legitimizes a society, or a system of legitimation that characterizes a particular society" (Vledder 1997:88). For the dominant group in society, the ideology can be termed "conventional wisdom"; for that of the minor group seeking to survive in that same society, "alternate wisdom". Within the context of Luke-Acts the former applies to the

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Israelite leaders, the latter to Jesus and his witnesses. The act of legitimisation can also be described as the justification and/or clarification of one's "identity". Only when challenged by another group does one become conscious of one's identity. Consequently, in terms of this assertion, conflict has a clarifying effect. Coser (1957:35) states: "Conflict serves to establish and maintain the identity and boundary lines of societies and groups. Conflict with other groups contributes to the establishment and reaffirmation of the identity of the group and maintains its boundaries against the surrounding social world."

Sanders (1993:125-129) provides a helpful analysis revealing how conflict theory can explain many aspects of the relationship between the opposing ideologies of the Israelite leaders and the Jesus movement. But central to all the different principles discussed is that of lost identity. Conflict by nature leads to disorder in what is otherwise an ordered world. Confidence is replaced by doubt, leading in turn to a loss of identity and the need for justification. In Luke-Acts, a loss of identity is observed on both sides involved in the conflict, the respective leaders striving fervently to restore their identity. Israelite opposition to the Jesus movement is in essence none other than an attempt at restoration of Israelite identity in the face of the message (ideology) taught by Jesus and his witnesses. As noted above (4.4.2), the motives may be termed political, social, and religious; but they all inherently involve the loss of identity and reflect the process of attempting to restore that identity. The reorganisation of the synagogue by the Pharisees after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, and the implementation of a strictly Pharisaic interpretation of the Torah, can be seen in this light. The same applies to the Jesus movement. Conflict, the harassment and discrediting of its leaders, culminating in the dissociation of the followers of Jesus from the synagogue, will have caused uncertainty within its own ranks. For the followers of Jesus among the Israelites the dissociation of church and synagogue will have been especially traumatic as it meant separation from their very own people. But also for the Gentile followers of Jesus, the Godfearers and others, the

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experience will have been unsettling, as the Jesus movement is deeply rooted in Israelite tradition, epitomised in Luke-Acts by the frequent references there to the Hebrew Scriptures.

Identity crises accentuate the need for assurance (cf Lk 1:4). Luke's narrative is to be understood then as a *response* to the opposition which the Lukan community was experiencing. It is plain that, in responding to this situation, Luke *creates* a "world" (symbolic universe) that will effect a work of assurance (re-assurance) for his community. Esler (1987:16) maintains "that much of what is unique in the theology of Luke-Acts should be attributed to Luke's desire to explain and justify, to 'legitimate', the Jesus movement to his contemporaries ...." In investigating the social context of Luke-Acts as a history of conflict in which the Jesus movement stands in need of legitimisation, Esler (1987:46-70) makes use of a "sectarian typology model", on which our focus now falls. The model is based on insights gained from Max Weber, Ernst Troeltsch, and Bryan Wilson. It works with the categories "sect" and "church": Luke's community as an Israelite reform movement is modelled on "sect" (from an Israelite perspective), and the Israelite opposition as the dominant social institution, on "church".

The use of a "sectarian typology model" has not been without its critics. Wolfgang Stegemann (1991:21-23, 271) who identifies the need for legitimisation for the Lukan community, fervently rejects the use of this model to describe the conflict in Luke-Acts (see also Stegemann & Stegemann 1997:213-214). In his early work, Stegemann's (1991:21-23) criticism is based primarily on what can be termed a misunderstanding on how a socio-scientific model works.

First, it should be noted that a model does not *represent* the reality to which it refers. It is a tool which *reflects* on that reality, and as an instrument of discovery it *exposes* aspects of social behaviour which would otherwise have gone unnoticed. Second, a model focuses on the *common* and *typical*. That means, in spite of certain (historical or empirical) differences between Luke's community and that of a "sect", those areas which do reflect a *resemblance* and give witness to

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typical and recurrent aspects of social behaviour can indeed throw some light on the context of Luke-Acts. One should guard against throwing the baby out with the bathwater. The question is not whether there are *distinctions* between the model and the situation of Luke-Acts, which would indicate an inherently historical approach, but whether there is enough *correspondence* to warrant the use of such a model (see Esler 1987:6-16). What is valid is the criticism from Seland (cf Elliott 1995:76; see also Sanders 1993:124) that the model (as developed by Troeltsch) in speaking of the church as an established (modern day) institution is an anachronism. But as noted by Elliott (1995:76), since the work of Troeltsch, the model has undergone extensive modifications, in particular through the research of Bryan Wilson on pre-industrial, tribal communities. Attention, consequently, is directed away from the relation of church and sect (which can indeed be confusing and constitutes a weakness in Esler's 1987 use of the model) to the relation of sect and *world*, whereby "world" represents the dominant group within a particular society. In Luke-Acts the dominant group is not the Roman government, but the propagators and defenders of the Israelite religion, who constitute the primary opposition to the Jesus movement. It is also to be noted that within this model, the term "sect" is not used in the modern technical sense as a splinter group of an established church, but in a general sense to refer to any "small and 'deviant' reference-group ... in the wider society" (Wilson 1961:354).

Needless to say, different models can be used to explore the need for legitimisation in Luke-Acts. The process of "labelling and deviance" is for example a useful model (see Malina & Neyrey 1991b:97-122; Sanders 1993:129-149; Stegemann & Stegemann 1997:214-216). Maintaining one's boundaries by identifying what is believed to be deviant and labelling it negatively, while labelling one's own social order or behaviour positively, amounts essentially to "legitimisation". However, the use of a sectarian typology models has its merits, especially in the light of the dissociation of church and synagogue as narrated by Luke. Elliott (1995:76-78) shows that the model is not suitable for the Jesus

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movement in its earliest phase. He argues that in its earliest phase, that is, during Jesus' lifetime, the Jesus movement was not a sect, but a faction. A faction is defined as a "coalition of persons" recruited personally by its leader, the most noteworthy distinguishable feature being that a faction, in contrast to a sect, remains a social identity *within* - not separated from - the dominant institution. Only with the separation of church - ἐκκλησία - (faction) and synagogue (parent body) did the Jesus movement gradually assume the status and the strategies of a sect (see Elliott 1997:79-80).

The use of a "sectarian typology model" to explicate the process of legitimisation in Luke-Acts is also enhanced by the *literary* structure of Luke-Acts. Luke's narrative is framed by the words "assurance" in Luke 1:4 and "sect" (αἵρεσις) in Acts 28:22. These two words, from the opening and concluding chapters of Luke's narrative respectively, identify Luke's intention to work assurance (legitimisation) in the face of the uncertainty created by the spread of rumours concerning the "sect". Although the word αἵρεσις can be used neutrally to refer to another "party" (cf Sanders 1993:129), the use of the word in Acts 28 is by implication *negative*; a minority religious group *in tension* with the dominant institutional order (see also Louw & Nida 1988:129). Faced with repeated opposition by the Israelites, resulting in the harassment of its leaders, the author of Luke-Acts intends to work "assurance", thereby "legitimising" the existence of the Jesus movement (sect).

The features of a sect are numerous. A summary of features are given, inter alia, by Scroggs ([1975] 1999:72-76) and Esler (1987:53-7), the most comprehensive list being compiled by Elliott (1997:80-89). Features such as the following are clearly applicable to Luke-Acts:

- The sect emerges as a faction or coalition within a corporate body or as a minority group within a particular society.
- The sect arises under general societal conditions of stress and tension,

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instability, and social change.

- The sect is a defined community perceived by both its members and others as an identifiable social entity.
- The sect is critical of and rejects the view of reality taken for granted by the establishment.
- The sect is open to all adherents from all sectors of society.
- The sect promotes equity. It is egalitarian in its orientation and seeks generalised reciprocity among its members as typical of family relations (household).

As Elliott (1997:80-82) has applied these features to the early church, including Luke-Acts, they will not be discussed here in detail. Central to our study is the observation that a sect invariably *rejects the view of reality* taken for granted by the dominant institution. But rejection itself does not lead to assurance (Lk 1:4). Underlying this feature (as all others) is therefore indeed as Esler (1987:16) contests the "need for legitimisation".

The process of legitimisation is discussed extensively by Berger and Luckmann (1967) in *The social construction of reality*, which also forms the basis of Esler's (1987:16-23) reflections on Luke-Acts. Whenever a new social institution comes into being, it invariably needs to be legitimised. The process of legitimation is defined as "the collection of ways in which an institution is explained and justified to its members" (Esler 1987:16-17). It is a process of giving a new institution its own identity. The central purpose that motivates the process of legitimisation is *integration*, which features at two levels, a horizontal and a vertical level (cf Esler 1987:18-19). The former involves the integration of the often diverse parts of a new institution (Luke-Acts: Israelites - Gentiles; salvation - conflict), which may give rise to conflicting questions, to be harmonised into a plausible whole. The conflicting parts need to make sense. This in turn concerns the task of making the individual man and woman and child feel that their life is

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meaningful within the broader framework of the institutional order.

This integrative process of legitimisation is most clearly seen in what Berger and Luckmann called the "symbolic universe" which constitutes a particular *view of reality*, fashioned for a new social order by its legitimators (Esler 1987:18; see also 1.3.2 above). The symbolic universe is a constructed or created reality, so put together as to make sense of the everyday reality experienced. It creates cohesion between its parts and fulfils the task of giving members of a particular institution the experience of everything being ordered and in the right place. The ordering takes place not only in view of the present order of things, but also the past and the future. The ordering of the past is especially striking in Luke-Acts. In our literary reading above (4.3) we noted many examples: The Gospel of Luke begins with a number of incidents involving pious men and women firmly located within the Israelite tradition. Reference is made to a *priest* named Zechariah, a descendant of *Aaron* (1:5); the child to be born (John) will be driven by the spirit and power of *Elijah* (1:18); Mary's child (Jesus) will be given the throne of *David* (1:32), and so on. All of these and other passages serve to illustrate against accusations from the dominant institution (the Israelite religion) that the Jesus movement is not something new, it has not risen *ex nihilo*, but is deeply rooted on firm historical foundations. Especially as the sermons of Peter, Stephen and Paul in Acts show, Luke presents the Jesus movement with a past, and indeed as authentic Israel.

That the creation of a symbolic universe always faces forces that *impede* its creation is a natural societal phenomenon. Invariably it poses a threat to the dominant institution, and even more so to its leaders (cf Esler 1987:21). This is most apparent in Luke-Acts. When Israelites and God-fearing Gentiles (sympathisers with the Israelite faith) convert to the Jesus movement, the opposition is never initiated by the people in general, but by the Israelite leaders, the upholders and defenders of the dominant social order, those who stand to lose the most. The threat posed by any new institution should not be underestimated.

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For the Israelite leaders, the emergence of the Jesus movement was a direct threat both to their honour, the pivotal value in the first-century Mediterranean world, and to their privileged position within the Roman state (cf Malina & Neyrey 1991a:25-64). As the threat increases, the machinery developed to maintain the dominant social order is less conceptual (theoretical) and more violent (forceful) with the clear aim of eradicating the opposition. It is remarkable that the theories developed are seldom rational. In Luke-Acts they involve a number of "non-doctrinal" issues, such as the process of "labelling and deviance". Examples already noted above are: unfounded accusations against Jesus at his trial (Lk 23:1), paralleled by similar accusations against Stephen and Paul of subverting the Israelite religion by their teaching against the temple and the Law (Ac 6:13; 21:28).

The emergence of a new institution, and the opposition it evokes, cohere within the scientific world with the emergence of a new paradigm, characterised by a period of scientific *revolution* (cf Kuhn [1962] 1970; see also 1.3.1 above). In both of these cases the opposition is countered not by the development of sound, scientific data, but rather by ways and means that should *suppress* its emergence. This is clearly narrated in Luke-Acts. As the threat to the dominant institution increases, the gospel message is countered *not* by sound teaching or clear proclamation on the part of the Israelite leaders, but by pejorative labelling and violent action. Such actions are apparent also today. That is not to say that in a situation of conflict "teaching" becomes irrelevant. But if it were merely a matter of teaching, logical and sound "scientific" data would suffice to resolve tension.

This observation puts in relief what we termed above the "religious motives" for Israelite opposition (4.4.2). The main source of Israelite hostility is hardly the teachings of the Jesus movement per se, but threatened Israelite identity. Esler (1987:22) draws attention to the close relationship between identity and ethnicity. The individual human being always identifies with a particular ethnic or cultural

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group. When however, as in the context of Luke-Acts, the boundary lines defining Israelites and Gentiles become enmeshed and entangled, the dominant Israelite group in particular will perceive the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Jesus movement as endangering its identity. What previously were clearly marked boundaries between clean and unclean, insiders and outsiders are shattered. The tension is manifested in Acts 10, in the course of Peter's encounter with Cornelius, the Gentile. Despite divine order, Peter resists the eating of animals deemed unclean by Israelite custom.

Although Luke in his narrative, apart from a brief indication in Acts 6:1-4, does not focus on the tension within his own community, but on the tension between Israelites and followers of Jesus at large, it is a general social phenomenon that even within the same community, different ethnic and cultural groups feel threatened by the presence of others and tend to erect boundaries in order to maintain their cultural identity. This phenomenon can be well observed in a multi-cultural country like South Africa. In the "old" South Africa, various conceptual theories were developed to promote and justify separate development, also within the church. But even in post-Apartheid South Africa, despite goodwill, integration remains a difficult task. This cannot be attributed solely to Apartheid and its policy of separate development. The same phenomenon is observed where two cultural groups which traditionally belonged together, like German-and-English-speaking whites of European descent (the social composition of my own congregation) are grouped together. The dominant group (Germans in this instance, who form a minority group within the wider South Africa) readily feel threatened by the influx of English-speaking members. The tension that evolves is rarely, if ever, based on teaching, that is, doctrinal issues. It is a matter of threatened *identity*. Confrontations that do arise are therefore also seldom settled by a process of rational discussion leading to an amicable and peaceful solution. More often than not, rather than relying on "negotiation", or on the power of rational persuasion, the dominant group applies pressure to reach a solution. The

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solution is often one of continued domination. The weaker is "crushed" by the stronger and is in turn in constant need of re-assurance.

It has been argued above that with the rise of a new institution (a sect, which invariably leads to tension and conflict with the dominant institution), the process of integration can be achieved through the construction of a symbolic universe which provides all its members with a feeling of "being at home". The construction of such a symbolic universe is one of the strategies followed by a sect to establish and foster a distinctive social identity (cf Elliott 1995:85). The central question is whether the construction of such a symbolic universe by Luke is inherently inclusive (promoting a worldview which includes both Israelites and Gentiles) or exclusive (a universe in which the followers of Jesus form a distinctive group in reciprocal opposition to the Israelites). The latter would be typical behaviour for most sects. The former would provide a distinctive feature, unique to Luke and his narrative. Our hypothesis is that Luke endeavours to work "assurance" for his unsettled community, not by turning the spear around, that is, apportioning blame everywhere on the irreconcilable Israelites, but by composing a narrative (telling a story) in which he juxtaposes the view of the Israelite leaders with an alternative view of reality, thereby creating a symbolic universe which provides an inclusive and unified whole in which all, both Israelites and Gentile, can live.

An investigation of the "reversals of fortune" in Luke's narrative will serve as further confirmation of our assertion above. It will both highlight the literary structure of Luke's narrative as one in which opposites are diaphorically juxtaposed (4.5) and reveal the "opposites" to be two contrasting worldviews in the process of creating a new vision of God (4.6).

### 4.5 Reversals and a world that is "turned upside down"

We have maintained so far that Luke's story is one of opposites and reversal. Our literary reading of Luke-Acts at macro-level has revealed its opposites to be a

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juxtaposition of God's purpose and Israelite opposition. This juxtaposition invariably results in a reversal of fortune, already indicated above. The Israelites, to whom the gospel is first preached, reject it. The Gentiles who subsequently hear the gospel, accept it. We made the point that this reversal is not absolute, in the sense that "the Israelites" are now permanently excluded from life within the Kingdom of God. Luke's narrative remains open-ended and challenging. The reversals, however, make the reader think. That is the intention of the author.

The reversal of fortune noted at a macro-level within Luke-Acts is frequently echoed at micro-level in different episodes. In our analysis we will confine ourselves to the Gospel of Luke, the more immediate co-text of the three parables which will be explicated in the following chapters. This analysis will not be conclusive. Our intention is, by way of example, to *raise awareness* of Luke's use of diaphoric language and to strengthen our argument that Luke's literary style reflects a juxtaposition of opposites, his intended purpose being to challenge his readers to see reality differently.

### 4.5.1 Reversals of fortune in the Gospel of Luke

In his book *In parables*, John Dominic Crossan (1973:53-78) devotes one chapter to "parables of reversal". Crossan's exposition of these parables is especially noteworthy for us because all but one of the parables discussed under the rubric "parables of reversal" are *unique* to the Gospel of Luke: The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-37), The Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:1-31), The Pharisee and the Toll-Collector (Lk 18:10-14), The Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32), and The Wedding Guests (Lk 14:7-24). Crossan's (1973:56-57) immediate interest lies not in Luke and his literary skills, but in the historical Jesus. He subsequently argues that Luke changed what originally were parables of reversal into example stories. But Luke's use of these parables as examples of good behaviour does not necessitate, as Crossan implies, a suspension of reversals. The reversals remain, even if Luke's purpose in narrating these parables within his own setting differs

from that of the historical Jesus. That these reversals are important to Luke is confirmed by the very choice of parables he makes. His choice suggests that the "reversals of fortune" do not fulfill an arbitrary role in Luke's narrative, but mirror Luke's literary style and are used by Luke with a particular purpose in mind. In order to understand Luke's purpose the reversals of fortune need to be understood within the larger composition of Luke's "narrative as one of opposites" (see 4.2 above). If the basic principle of the βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ is salvation for all, or mercy-as-impartiality, then it is also a characteristic of Lukan theology that God reverses the position of those who *oppose* such an impartiality and advocate distinctions and partiality (Neyrey 1991a:297). It is within these two poles of God's purpose and Israelite opposition that the reversals make sense.

The reversals are not confined to the parable corpus, but appear throughout Luke's narrative. A first indication of reversal is placed strategically at the beginning of Luke's Gospel and sets the tone for the rest of the narrative (cf Forbes 2000:246-247). In the Magnificat, Mary explains the basis of God's new action: "[God] has scattered the proud in the intelligence of their heart, he has put down the mighty from thrones and elevated the humble; the hungry he filled with good and the rich he sent away empty" (Lk 1:51-53). The proud, the mighty, and the rich are scattered and put down, while the humble and hungry are elevated and filled.

Scholars have noted the close resemblance between these words and those of Hannah after the birth of her son Samuel (1 Sa 2:1-10) (cf Neyrey 1991a:297). The resemblance between Luke 1:51-53 and 1 Samuel 2:4-5,7 is striking: "Bows of the mighty are broken, and those who stumble are girded with strength. Those satiated for bread hired themselves out, and the hungry hunger no more .... The Lord dispossesses and makes rich, he makes humbles and exalts." The use of Hannah's song in Luke's narrative, characterises and accentuates the uniqueness of Luke's literary style as one of juxtaposing opposites resulting in reversals of fortune.

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Reversal is again to be observed in Simeon's encounter with Jesus in Luke 2:29-35. In sharp contrast to the Benediction (Lk 2:29-31), a song of "praise" for God's offer of salvation to everyone, Simeon depicts Jesus as one who is "destined for fall and standing up for many in Israel", and as someone who will be "a sign spoken against" (Lk 2:34-35). "Praise" and "a sign spoken against", "falling" and "standing up" are diaphorically juxtaposed. These two passages in Luke 1:51-53 and 2:29-31 form a backdrop for the episode of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple (Lk 2:46-38). In an ironic reversal of roles, the narrator presents Jesus, the unschooled boy, teaching the teachers (διδάσκαλοι) of Israel. It is a preview of the reversals to follow, the humbling of those "proud in the intelligence of their heart", the "elevation of the humble" (Lk 1:51-552), and "a sign spoken against" (Lk 2:34).

Previews of Jesus as one who works reversals, as set out in the introductory chapters of Luke, become the trademark of his public ministry (cf Neyrey 1991a:298). He acclaims the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful and hated, as those to be blessed by God, while pronouncing damnation upon the rich, the well-fed, those who laugh, and those of whom men speak well (Lk 6:20-26). Wisdom hidden from the wise and learned is revealed to infants (νηπίοις) (Lk 10:21). Followers of Jesus who lose their lives save them, but those who save their lives lose them (Lk 9:24). The greatest among Jesus' followers must become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves (Lk 22:26). Those who are last will be first, and the first last (Lk 13:30). Some of these reversals also feature in Mark and Matthew. But far from being merely taken over arbitrarily by Luke from his sources, their placing within his narrative suggests that they form an important part in the development of Luke's plot.

Stories of reversal foreshadow the Israelite opposition to the βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ. This is especially apparent in the episodes narrating the conflict with the Israelite leaders (cf Tannehill 1986b:30). In a reminiscence of the "proud", the "mighty" and the "rich" in Luke 1:51-53, the scribes and Pharisees are described

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as people who seek status (11:43; 20:46-47) and money (16:14). Jesus responds to them with a number of aphorisms and parables. They all relate reversals of fortune: "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Lk 14:11; 18:14); "You are the ones that justify yourself in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is high among men is an abomination before God" (Lk 16:15). The parables here are most of those identified by Crossan as "parables of reversal". In these parables the cleric (priest and Levite) is portrayed as bad, while the socio-religious outcast (Samaritan) is depicted as good (Lk 10:30-37); the wealthy, perceived to be blessed by God, are declared fools (Lk 12:21); the invited and socially honoured are absent from the banquet; the uninvited and marginalised celebrate (Lk 14:15-23); the scoundrel is the "insider", the obedient the "outsider" (Lk 15:11-31); the poor enjoy heavenly peace; the rich suffer in Hades (Lk 16:19-31), the law-abiding citizen is damned; the "thief" is justified (Lk 18:14). Each of these parables is spoken in response to pharisaic, exultation-orientated behaviour and serve the purpose of exposing the "thoughts of many hearts" (Lk 2:35).

How the inner thoughts of Jesus adversaries are exposed, constitutes part of Luke's plot. Although the scribes and Pharisees are depicted as initially keeping their thoughts to themselves, or expressing them to Jesus' disciples but not to Jesus himself, the narrator portrays Jesus as the one who knows their thoughts (see Lk 5:21-22,30-31; 6:7-8; 7-39). Time and again he recognises the hidden and hostile feelings of his enemies and exposes them. The adversaries of Jesus are not confined to the Israelite leaders. The false thoughts and attitudes of Jesus' disciples too are revealed and challenged (Lk 9:24,44-47; 12:1-3 22:24-27). Invariably the challenge consists of a reversal of fortune, whereby those who exalt themselves and practise partiality towards others are humbled, and those who experience social and religious exclusion at the hands of others are exalted through the inclusiveness of God's salvation.

Jesus' ministry to the marginalised and oppressed gains special emphasis

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in Luke. Whereas human societies perpetuate structures of injustice and exclusion, Jesus is presented as the one who acts on behalf of the oppressed and excluded. The point of view developed by Luke in these stories is the obverse of those who exalt themselves and oppose Jesus. Apart from the aphorisms and parables, "quest stories" too feature prominently in Luke's narrative. The term "quest story" is used by Tannehill (1986b:111) and refers to those stories in which someone approaches Jesus with a certain request. The story itself shows whether the quest was successful or unsuccessful, tension within the story being heightened by the presence of some difficulty or conflict which blocks the fulfilment of the quest. Tannehill (1986b:112) notes that of the nine synoptic quest stories, seven are in Luke and four of these are unique to Luke (Lk 5:17-26; 7:2-10; 7:36-50; 17:12-19; 18:18-23; 19:1-10; 23:39-43). We will focus on those unique to Luke, of which the first will be explicated more thoroughly to reveal as a typical representation the thrust of these stories. The three stories are: a sinful woman (Lk 7:36-50), a Samaritan leper (Lk 17:12-19), and a crucified criminal (Lk 23:39-43).

The episode of the sinful women in the Pharisee's house is a lengthy episode (Lk 7:36-50). Only the final verses (Lk 7:48, 50) indicate that it is a quest story, with the women receiving what she was seeking, release from her sins. But this story is not merely about the quest of the sinful women seeking forgiveness. It is carefully staged in such a way that, as it progresses, the narrative, by a reversal of fortune, challenges conventional assumptions, especially those of the host, a Pharisee. The Pharisee represents those who are known through earlier episodes as guardians of the Law, who distance themselves from sinners. The woman is portrayed as a recognised sinner in town, a prostitute, who enters a place where she does not belong and exposes herself for what she is by improper behaviour in the presence of men (cf Tannehill 1986b:116; Green 1997:309).

Conflict appears when the Pharisee rejects the woman ("she is a sinner") and makes a derogatory remark to himself about Jesus, not being a prophet by

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allowing the woman to touch him (Lk 7:39). Jesus in turn, protects her. These comments by the narrator highlight two contrasting judgements concerning the woman, one inclusive of the sinful woman, the other exclusive. At the same time these comments also pave the way for the exposure of two contrasting attitudes to Jesus, that of the woman and that of the Pharisee. The latter's attitude is significantly withheld by the narrator until it can be used more effectively to contrast with that of the woman. At surface level, that of outward appearance, the Pharisee's behaviour to Jesus has been socially correct. Jesus' presence is the result of a formal invitation by the Pharisee. But in verses 44-46 we learn that the formal invitation contrasts stark with the Pharisee's true attitude. On Jesus' arrival at the house, the Pharisee did not supply water for Jesus' feet, nor offer a kiss in greeting, nor oil for anointing his head. In her own way, the sinful woman, marginalised by the guardians of divine Law, did all these things and much more. Jesus' response to the true thoughts of the Pharisee consists of a short parable by which the loveless, exclusive attitude of the Pharisee is exposed, resulting in a total reversal of fortunes. The Pharisee, a person of status and honour in the community, is placed in an unfavourable light. The woman however, despised in town, is portrayed as an example of true love and social correct behaviour. Critical for an understanding of this story are not merely the reversals of role per se, but the challenge they pose to the Pharisee and to those who fall in with his point of view. The cancellation of debt in Jesus' parable functions as an invitation to Simon, the Pharisee, "to reconsider the basis of his interaction with others, and thus the possibility not only of forgiving debts but also of having debts forgiven" (Green 1997:312). This is further emphasised by his dramatic "turning" to the woman while speaking to Simon, which is important for the rhetoric of the narrative (cf Green 1997:312). By this action, and especially by the words "Do you see this woman?" Jesus, as the authoritative voice in Luke's narrative, intends to persuade Simon to look at the woman in a different light and to reconsider his view of the world, which invariably leads to ostracism of socio-religious outcasts. Of

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similar importance are Jesus' closing words to the woman. The plot of the story suggests that the primary need of the woman is not forgiveness, to which her actions of love already witness, but the *assurance* of forgiveness. Being known in town as a sinner, people would now question her new state. The woman in fact needs recognition of her new life and forgiveness among God's people (cf Green 1997:314): the reality of being included in God's Kingdom is in need of legitimisation.

The same reversal of fortune noted in the story of the sinful woman, is evident in the other "quest stories". In Luke 17:12-19, the full identity of the leper is initially not disclosed - so as to intensify the shock: the grateful recipient of healing and salvation is a despised Samaritan ("this foreigner") (Lk 17:18). The primary distinction between the Samaritan and the other lepers is that the Samaritan *saw* that he was healed (Lk 17:15), which recalls the important theme in Luke's narrative of growth from blindness to sight and from minds without understanding to minds that have opened (cf Lk 4:18; 24:31, 45) .

The third "quest story", that of a crucified criminal (Lk 23:39-43), appears dramatically near the end of the Gospel. Two criminals are crucified with Jesus. They reveal contrasting attitudes to Jesus. One sides with the "rulers" who sneer at Jesus. The second criminal sides with Jesus, his quest being disclosed only in verse 42: "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Although Jesus informed his disciples about his death and resurrection, they did not understand (9:44-45; 18:31-34). Similarly Jesus had given several public indications in Jerusalem, both to the Israelite leaders and people, that he was to be exalted as the Messiah, though this would happen only through his rejection and death (Lk 20:13, 17, 41-44; 22:26). But the one who recognises Jesus as Lord is a criminal. The criminal is adjudicated to be a reliable interpreter of Jesus (cf Tannehill 1986b:127).

Jesus' death itself is presented as a reversal. It testifies to the success of Israelite opposition as a rejection of Jesus and of God's purpose (Jesus dying).

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However, God's purpose is fulfilled by the very *death* of Jesus. This ironic reversal is continued in Acts, where it is shown that continued opposition to God's purpose does not hinder the spreading of God's salvation but contributes to it (Lk 4:16-37; Ac 8:1-8; 11:19-21; 13:44-48; 18:6; 25:25-28).

Despite the harsh reality of the reversals noted above, there is a marked difference between the way Luke uses reversals and the way Crossan attributes their use to the historical Jesus. Crossan (1973:5) notes that most parables of Jesus constitute a "polar reversal". A polar reversal is more than merely a question of the first being last *or* the last being first; it constitutes a total switch of fortunes, in which those who were last become first *and* those who were first become last. Crossan's explication of these parables has a ring of "absoluteness", the order of things being changed around perpetually. This is not the case in Luke. The thematic disclosure in Luke 1:51-53 of "putting down the mighty from their thrones" and "sending the rich away" is never narrated thereafter by Luke as *excluding* them from God's purpose, which in essence would be a new form of celebrating exclusivity and partiality. The boundary lines that cause distinction and separation, are not "polarly" rearranged by Luke, but are expanded so as to *include* those formerly excluded. "Reversals" as explicated by Crossan may therefore be a too strong word to capture the intentions Luke pursues in his narrative. Reversals are rather to be understood in terms of "partiality" and "impartiality", "exclusivity" and "inclusivity" (cf Neyrey 1991a:297). Exclusion of any kind is not the end pursued by Luke. Exclusion is self-inflicted by an attitude that opposes the all-inclusive βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ.

Our analysis has highlighted the frequent use of fortunes being reversed by Luke. We have indicated that Luke uses the reversals of fortune intentionally, and that they mirror the conflict between God's purpose and Israelite opposition. We have also noted that, within the reversals of fortune, conflicting attitudes are advanced, each based on some particular understanding of reality. It is this understanding of reality in general, and a view of God in particular, that needs to

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be analysed further.

### 4.5.2 Contrasting realities in the process of creating a new vision of God

In our reflection of worldviews (2.2.2), we noted that the way people view and experience reality is not fixed. From one century to the next, and even over the lifespan of an individual human being, this view may change radically. Most people are not aware that the way they see reality is a *particular* view of reality into which they have been socialised; nor are they aware that others may perceive reality quite differently as a result of the world into which *they* have been socialised. Because worldviews are rarely constructed consciously, they are difficult to discern in their particularity. They are not obvious, but interwoven among the diverse strands that make up human life. But the way people behave, react, and the stories they tell each other all *reflect* their view of reality. Although these worldviews are largely confined to the subconscious, they do surface when contrasting worldviews are *juxtaposed*. This is what happens in Luke-Acts, where in situations of conflict opposites are juxtaposed and fortunes are reversed. These juxtapositions invariably cause deliberate disorder in an otherwise orderly world and reveal that different people may order their world quite differently. What may be "order" for one, may be "disorder" or "chaos" for another, depending on the symbolic view adopted concerning the way the universe should be ordered - that is, on the accepted symbolic universe. Worldview and symbolic universe are interrelated phenomena. Whereas the term "worldview" refers to the particular way a human being sees reality, the term "symbolic universe" stresses that this view is symbolic and in need of being ordered in a universal whole (cf Van Staden 1991:93-101).

Within Israelite society, as indeed in any religious society, the *view of God* is central to an understanding of reality and how that reality should be ordered. God is viewed as the supreme order. We noted above that although God does not feature explicitly as a character in Luke's narrative, God is the "unseen central

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character" around whom everything revolves. Neyrey (1991a:276) has shown that, within the house of Israel order is expressed in terms of God's "holiness". The phrase "I, the Lord your God, am holy ... therefore be holy, because I am holy" (Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:28), is the principle refrain that echoes throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and determines every aspect of Israelite life. God's holiness is understood as an act of ordering. For God to bless or to curse is to create order. For the Israelites, God's prime act of blessing was creation. In and through creation God ordered chaos. In creation everything is categorised and classified: day and night, sun, moon and stars, days of work and a day of rest, dry land and water, animals each according to "their kind", humans in the "image of God" (Gen 1:3-27). Because the God of Israel was holy, the Israelites believed that they, the "people of God" were set apart to be holy as well. The people's holiness found expression primarily in "worship", which in turn was defined by the Law, the Torah. A central part of Israel's Law therefore dealt with the concept of holiness. It contained regulations on the proper worship in the temple. It contained codes of holiness with regard to animals, rituals of cleansing, definitions of leprosy, and so on. The Law also prescribed rituals and sacrifices as means to eliminate defilement from the land, the temple, and the people.

As indicated above, Israelite holiness centred on two main issues (1) preserving God's holiness, and (2) the holiness of God's people (cf Roads 1992:147) God's holiness was preserved especially by keeping God's dwelling place, the temple, holy (cf Neyrey 1991a:277-278). This was done by protecting the temple from unclean people and anything defiled. Foreigners were excluded from the temple, and all Israelites who entered the temple had to be in a state of purity (Ac 21:28). Sacrificial animals had to be without blemish (Lv 22:21-25). The holiness of God's people was preserved by avoiding all contact with unclean people and things. Any such contact caused defilement, barring the Israelite from certain meals and temple functions. Inherently, "To be holy as God is holy" was understood as keeping categories of ordering distinct. This is demonstrated by

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what have come to be known as "cultural maps" of places, people, things, and times that serve to organise Israelite life. Our focus falls on the first two. Places are ordered by their proximity to the heart of the temple, the "Holy of Holies", where God dwells (*m. Kel.* 6.6-9: cf Neyrey 1991a:278-279):

> There are ten degrees of holiness:
> 1. The Land of Israel is holier than any other land ...
> 2. The walled cities (of the land of Israel) is still more holy...
> 3. Within the walls (of Jerusalem) is still more holy ...
> 4. The Temple Mount is still more holy ...
> 5. The Rampart is still more holy ...
> 6. The Court of the Women is still more holy ...
> 7. The Court of the Israelites is still more holy ...
> 8. The Court of the Priests is still more holy ...
> 9. Between the Porch and the Altar is still more holy ...
> 10. The Sanctuary is still more holy ...
>
> The Holy of Holies is still more holy ...

The Holy of Holies, where God lives on earth, is the holiest place. Noticeable is also how the degree of holiness outward from the inner sanctuary corresponds with the nearness to, or distance from, the sanctuary.

The map of people shows a similar hierarchal structure, which largely corresponds with the map of places (inferred from *m. Kidd.* 4.1; *m. Hor.* 3.8; *Rosh HS* 4.1; *t. Meg.* 2.7; cf Malina 1993: 159-160; cf Neyrey 1991a:279; Funk 1996:202; Van Aarde 2001:131):

1. Priests
2. Levites
3. Full-blooded Israelites ("laymen")

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4. Illegal children of priests
5. Proselytes or Gentile converts from heathendom
6. Proselytes who once were slaves, hence proselyte freedmen
7. Bastards (born from mixed marriages or through incest)
8. The "fatherless" (those without a father or substitute father and therefore not embedded within the honour structures)
9. Foundlings
10. Eunuchs (castrated men)
11. Eunuchs born that way
12. Those with sexual deformities
13. Hermaphrodites (bisexual people)
14. Gentiles (non-Israelites)

Although this particular list includes the Gentiles, this was not always so. Certain maps of people exclude the Gentiles. Gentiles were perceived to be unholy per se and were therefore disqualified from maps depicting degrees of Israelite holiness (Neyrey 1991a:279).

The categorisation of people inevitably leads not only to distinctions being made, but towards discrimination, partiality, separation, and exclusion. Organising society along "purity" lines calls for a sharp distinction between what is "in order", or "out of order", what is "clean" or "unclean", who is "included" or "excluded". Examples of such boundaries in Israelite society abound (cf Neyrey 1991a:282; see also Malina 1993:149-158).

The ordering of people along purity lines is most evident in Luke's narrative: In the realm of God's holy land belonged only consecrated people. Everybody else, Romans and Gentiles, are out of place in the land of Israel, especially in the sacred temple (Ac 21:28). In so far as holiness is related to wholeness, the sick and people with physical defects, such as eunuchs, lame, blind, deaf, and lepers are all excluded and may not enter the temple area to offer sacrifices (Ac 3:1-2).

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Similarly, sinners do not belong in the same space as observant Israelites. Table fellowship with sinners is to be avoided (Lk 5:27; 15:1; 19:5). The dead do not belong in the realm of the living. Living among graveyards or handling the dead causes impurity (Lk 8:27). For most Israelites at both the time of Jesus and the time of composition of Luke's narrative, this was "reality" - it was the reality into which they had been socialised.

The reality into which the Israelites had been socialised finds expression in the "conventional wisdom" which constitutes the dominant, enculturation-laden consciousness of a society (cf Borg 1994:75). Israelite conventional wisdom cannot of course simply be equated with the contents of the Hebrew Scriptures. Indeed the Hebrew Scriptures often present ambiguous and contrasting views on the expression of God's holiness (cf Forbes 2000:284). Conventional wisdom presents the "popular views", that is, those views which over a prolonged period of time have become dominant. The core aspects of conventional wisdom, as presented by Borg (1994:76-77), have been summarised above (see 2.3). What is notable, is how conventional wisdom in Israel is closely associated with the concept of God's holiness and the drawing of boundaries as described above. Borg (1994:76) noted that conventional wisdom provides guidance on how to live. In Israel, based on the concept of God's holiness, the guidance finds expression in a number of purity regulations. Those who adhere to the purity regulations are "in", those who transgress are "out", the former are blessed, the latter are cursed. Furthermore, as "blessing" and "curse" are directly related to the concept of God's holiness, it is naturally incurred that the rich are blessed, the poor are damned. These two principles in turn invariably create a world of hierarchies (Borg 1994:76-77). The rich are ranked above the poor, the clergy above the laity, urban dwellers above rural peasantry, men above women, married above unmarried, and so on. As such, the socially constructed reality of conventional Israelite wisdom is in essence one of partition, separateness, and exclusiveness.

Borg (1987:86) notes that whenever Israelite identity was threatened, the

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natural response was an intensified "politics of holiness". In Israel after the exile, it emerged in the reforms introduced by Ezra and Nehemiah (cf Ezr 9-19; Neh 8-13). In the century before and at the time of Roman occupation, the politics of holiness finds expression in the emergence of various different Israelite renewal movements in Palestine, like the Essenes, the Pharisees, and others (cf Van Aarde 1994b:88-163).

The Essenes (who are identified with the community at Qumran) believed that the Maccabean high priests of Jerusalem of the time were not legitimate and as such defiled the temple and the whole land (cf Roads 1992:148). Their response was to withdraw into the wilderness. Holiness was understood by them to be total separation from a society made impure by illegitimate priests and Roman (Gentile) rule. The Pharisees (known for their strict interpretation of the Law and the passing down of their traditions to preserve Israelite conservatism against Hellenistic influence - cf Van Aarde 1994b:105-117) did not withdraw from Israelite society, but radicalised the Torah in the direction of holiness. Whereas the Sadducees (who consisted mainly of the chief priests and other aristocrats) applied the purity regulations only to life at the temple (the priests and the Levites when performing their duties in the temple, and the ordinary Israelites when offering a sacrifice), the Pharisees applied them to all Israelites, at all times, and in all places (cf Roads 1992:147-148). Purity regulations thus formed a "hedge" to protect the Israelite from defilement through contact with Gentiles. This radicalisation of the purity regulations was intensified after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Throughout this period "holiness" was the paradigm by which the Torah was interpreted (cf Borg 1987:87). Those passages in the Torah were highlighted which emphasised the separateness of the people of Israel from other peoples.

"Holiness" as it finds expression in the dynamics of Israelite society inevitably reflects a vision of God whose holiness constitutes the source of its own holiness. If holiness means that fellowship is forbidden with people who do not

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adhere to the Law or are deemed to be socially unclean, then God is a God who separates from these categories of people. Inevitably, God is seen, not only as the source of "holiness", but as its enforcer and legitimator. His kingdom is one where by divine authority the "unholy" are punished and excluded from salvation. According to Luke, that is the view fostered by the Israelite leaders and their representative. It is the view of "conventional wisdom". As such, however, it opposes God's purpose of "salvation for all" as mapped out by Luke in his narrative.

Luke draws different maps and talks differently about God. By reversals of fortune he creates a contrasting reality which he juxtaposes with the conventional reality fostered by the Israelite leaders. In this new reality as presented by Jesus and his witnesses, clearly designated cultural and religious boundaries are crossed (cf Neyrey 1991a:285-288). Jesus crosses into Gentile territory (Lk 8:26-27). Samaritans become the object of Jesus' healing attention (Lk 10:29-37). Jesus' disciples are sent into foreign countries to proselytise among the unclean (Ac 1:8). An Ethiopian eunuch is baptised (Ac 8:26-40). Gentiles receive the holy Spirit and are baptised (Ac 10:44-48). The dead, who rank among the most unclean, are touched by Jesus and his disciples (Lk 7:11-17; 8:49-56; Ac 9:36-41; 20:9-10). The physically unclean, the lepers (Lk 5:12-16; 17:11-19), the cripples (Lk 5:17-26; Ac 3:1-10; 9:32-34), the blind and sick (Lk 4:38-40; 7:21; Ac 5:15-16), and the possessed (Lk 4:31-37; 8:26-39; Ac 16:16-18) experience healing. The morally unclean (sinners and toll-collectors) become Jesus' table companions (Lk 5:27-32; 7:29, 31-34; 15:1-2; 18:9-14; 19:1-10). In Jesus' instructions concerning whom to invite to one's banquet table, those people whom Leviticus 21:17-20 explicitly declares "unclean" are precisely the people to be invited: "the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind" (Lk 14:13).

Notably, Luke does not present Jesus as totally disregarding the system of Israelite order and holiness. Luke narrates that Jesus and his disciples respected and adhered to many of the guiding maps that defined Israel (cf Neyrey

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1991a:289-292). Jesus himself is circumcised on the eighth day (Lk 2:21) and dedicated to God according to Exodus 13:2, 12 (Lk 2:22-24). With his parents he travels annually ("every year") to Jerusalem for the Passover celebrations (Lk 2:41). On the Sabbath day he regularly enters the synagogue, "as was his custom" and reads from the Torah (Lk 4:16). Despite the crossing of boundaries Luke makes every effort to confirm the holiness of Jesus. God's angel announces his birth as "the Holy One, Son of God" (Lk 1:35). Twice he appears in theophanies, where he is acclaimed as a holy figure (Lk 3:22; 9:35). All charges against him prove unfounded. His judges acquit him (Lk 23:4, 14-15, 22). The "good" thief proclaims his innocence (Lk 23:41), as does his executioner (Lk 23:47). His resurrection is interpreted as God's vindication of his righteousness (Ac 3:15; 7:53; 22:14). Luke makes comparable observations with regard to Jesus' *disciples* in Acts. The apostles and early disciples regularly attend the temple (Ac 2:46; 3:1: 5:20; 21:26). They are filled with the "Holy Spirit" (2:1-4; 9:17; 8:14-18; 10:44-48; 11:15-18; 19:6). Luke makes special effort to present Paul as keeping to Israelite customs (Ac 16:3: 21:24-26; 22:3; 26:4-5). All these passages, juxtaposed with the "crossing of boundaries" suggest that "holiness" is a matter of perspective and that Luke was *redrawing* the conventional Israelite maps to correspond to the βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ. For the Israelites, the only people on the "map of people", were they themselves, "God's people", "the Israelites" who had been set apart. Luke redraws this map in ways that are radically inclusive. At the heart of this "new map" is the vision of God who does not promote separateness but inclusiveness, not partiality, but *im*partiality.

The fostering of a new vision of God is especially evident in Luke's presentation of the temple, which he juxtaposes with the private household (see Esler 1987:131-163; Elliott 1991b:211-240). That the temple features predominantly in Luke's narrative has been noted above (4.4.3). In the light of the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, this does seem surprising. By the time Luke composed his narrative, the temple had lost its civic and religious prominence.

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This is echoed in Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin: "God the Most High does not live in dwellings made by human hands" (Ac 7:48), and also in Paul's address to the Athenians: "God ... does not live in dwellings made by man" (Ac 17:24). The only plausible explanation for Luke's elevation of the temple in his narrative, is that the temple forms a central component of the author's erection of a new symbolic universe (cf Esler 1987:134). Having been the civic and religious centre of Israelite holiness with its clearly demarcated boundaries, the temple epitomises the conventional view of God represented in Luke's narrative by the Israelite leaders as one whose salvation is particularistic.

In an essay entitled *Temple versus household in Luke-Acts: A contrast in social institutions*, Elliott (1991b) provides an enlightening presentation of the juxtaposition of temple and house(hold) in Luke's narrative. The temple epitomises the conventional view of God, the house(hold) the alternative view of God as represented by Jesus and his witness. It is to be noticed that there is a progressive movement here in which temple scenes (conventional wisdom) are slowly but surely "replaced" with more and more household scenes (see also Matson 1996). Temple scenes frame the first half of Luke-Acts; household scenes frame the second half. Whereas the Gospel commences with a temple scene and the announcement of John's birth (Lk 1:5-25), Acts concludes with a household scene, in which Paul is portrayed as preaching the gospel freely and without hindrance (Ac 28:31).

At the beginning of Luke's narrative the temple is still portrayed in a favourable light. Apart from the announcement of John's birth (his father is a priest), Luke also narrates the presentation of Jesus in the temple according to the Law of Moses (Lk 2:21-24), followed by the twelve year old Jesus visiting the temple ("his Fathers house") together with his parents for the Passover feast as was the custom (Lk 2:41-42). But as the narrative unfolds the temple progressively becomes the scene and the subject of conflict, with a shift of Jesus activities to the household. The shift from temple to household is previewed in

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various episodes in the Gospel, where we learn that those excluded from the "temple", experience God's grace in the "house". The paralytic enters the "house" where Jesus is preaching and experiences forgiveness and healing (Lk 5:18). The demon-possessed, who lives amongst the graves of the Gerasenes, experiences healing and returns as a witness of God's grace to his "house" (Lk 8:39). The Seventy-Two are send out with the words: " Whatever *house* you enter" (Lk 10:5). Once the house is entered, they are to proclaim the peace of God to that "household" (cf Matson 1996:38-52). Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and toll-collector begins in the temple, but concludes in the "house" as the place of the justified (Lk 18:14). Jesus proclaims to Zacchaeus: "Today salvation has come to this *house*" (Lk 19:9).

For Luke, houses and homes provide the setting for a wide range of events in the life of Jesus and his disciples: Proclamation of the gospel, forgiveness, healing, teaching, prophecy, revelations, visions, recognition of Jesus as the Christ, redefining family, pouring-out of the Spirit, hospitality, table fellowship, worship, sharing property and the distribution of goods to the needy (see Elliott 1991b:225-226). In contrast, the temple progressively provides scenes of intensified opposition, culminating in the Gospel in the death of Jesus and in Acts in the dissociation of church and synagogue.

The juxtaposition of temple and house at macro-level also features at micro-level; being especially apparent in the central scenes of heightened tension, where there is a regular and repeated shift of scenes from temple to house and house to temple: Acts 1:13-2:45 (house); Acts 3:1-4:22 (temple); Acts 4:23-5:11 (house); Acts 5:12-40 (temple); Acts 6:1-7 (house); Acts 6:8-8:3 (temple); Acts 8:4 (house) (Elliott 1991b:215). This shift from "temple" and "house" is interpreted by Elliott (1991b:217) as follows:

> The temple, at first the locale of hoped for salvation and symbol of Israel's holy union with God, eventually is unmasked as the political

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> concentration of power opposed to God's people and the truly righteous. The household, on the other hand, once the gathering place of the powerless and the marginalized, eventually emerges as the institution where God's spirit is truly active and where familial relations shared resources, and communal values concretize the vision of a salvation available to all the families of earth.

Although Elliott aptly describes the symbolism of "temple" and "house" in Luke-Acts and has noted that this symbolism is connected with an exclusive (temple) and inclusive (house) concept of God, his interpretation invariably places temple and household in an irreconcilable opposition to one another, suggesting an interpretation for Luke-Acts in which "temple" as an institution is *replaced* by "house". For Luke, however, the shift from temple to household is not an either-or issue. In an essay entitled, *"The most high God does live in houses, but not houses built by men ...": The relativity of the metaphor 'Temple' in Luke-Acts*, Van Aarde (1991b:51-64), cautions against such an interpretation. Luke does not replace temple with household, but merely juxtaposes the two. His aim is not to create controversy around the temple as such, but to warn against trying to *limit* God's presence. Indeed, there is an ironic "reversal of roles", but its purpose is not a replacement, but a broadening or expanding of the temple symbolism. In responding to Elliott's work, Van Aarde (1991b:54) shows that "temple" and "household" do not belong to two perpetually opposed metaphors. Van Aarde explores the metaphor in Stephen's speech that God does live in houses, but not houses built by men (Ac 7:48), by studying it as a *root-metaphor*, which includes both the "temple" and the "house", as well as terms like "tabernacle" and "tent" (the diverse use of which he terms the "relativity" of metaphor). What is central then is not to *distinguish* between these various terms, but to note their juxtaposition, which is creative of a new vision and concept of God. Van Aarde finds this hypothesis substantiated by, among other passages, Acts 5:42, which makes

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plain that the apostles continued to preach and teach the good news about Jesus the Messiah every day τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ κατ' οἶκον. Indeed in Luke-Acts (and elsewhere) "temple" is often called the "house" of God (cf Lk 6:4; 11:51; Ac 7:47, 49).

What Luke's critique amounts to is that the Israelites regulated God's presence. They determined whether God was present or not. This was done primarily by the multitude of regulations on purification by the temple authorities. Luke advocates a notion of an *unlimited* God. In contrast to some other religious movements of the first century, such as the Essenes as noted above, Luke advocates this notion *without rejecting the temple as a valid institution*.

As the opposition in Luke-Acts is not primarily that of two groups of people, the Israelites and the followers of Jesus, but one of contrasting points of view (conventional and alternative wisdom respectively), so also the "temple" is used by Luke as a symbol of the *point of view* of God's adversaries who oppose the βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ, while the "house" is used as symbol of the *point of view* of Jesus and his witnesses. Temple and house thus impact on two alternate visions of God. The "temple" with its physical boundaries and the social restrictions of its purity system (vigorously endorsed by the Israelite religious leaders) promotes a vision of God that leads to separateness and partiality. God is seen as the guardian of boundaries, the lawgiver and the judge who knows no mercy. In short, it is an exclusive and particularistic vision of God. In contrast, the "house" becomes the symbol of God's *family*. The boundaries of this house are expanded to include all, the marginalised, the outcasts, Samaritans, and Gentiles. In this house God is experienced in a radically different way.

Elliott (1991b:228) gives a textually detailed survey of the wide-ranging household imagery in Luke-Acts: God is portrayed as the loving "Father" (Lk 2:49; 6:36; 9:26; 10:21-22; 11:1, 13; 12:30, 32: 22:29, 42; 23:34, 46; 24:49; Ac 1:4, 7; 2:33). Jesus is recognised as the "Son" of God (Lk 1:35; 3:22; 4:3, 9, 41; 8:28; 9:35; 10:22; 20:13; 22:70; Ac 8:37; 9:20; 13:53). The believers are called the

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"children" of the heavenly father (Lk 11:13; 24:49) They are "brothers" and "sisters" of one another (Lk 6:41-42; 8:19-21; 17:3-4; 22:32; Ac 1:15-16; 2:29, 37; 6:3; 9:17, 30; 10:23; 11:1, 12, 29: 12:17; 14:2; 15:1, 3 7, 12, 22-32, 36, 40; 16:2, 40; 17:6, 10, 14; 18:18, 27: 21:7, 17, 20, 22; 22:13: 28:14, 15). In this household Jesus is the generous Lord and "householder" (Lk 12:35-40; 13:22-30; 14:7-11, 12-14, 15-24; 19:11-27). Jesus speaks about "meals", presides over meals, and serves at meals (Lk 12:37; 14:7-24; 15:3-32; 22:7-38; 24:28-31, 36-49). Jesus' followers become "household stewards" and "servants" (Lk 12:43; 16:1-9, 13) Their master's humble service in the household is the model for their own (Lk 17:7-10; 22:24-27). The bond of kinship that unites them finds expression in generosity and friendship. It is a friendship that knows no social or ethnic limits (Lk 18:19-21; 11:5-13; 12:4; 14:7-11, 12-14; 16:9). Within this household there is no partiality and there are no exclusions. In short, it presents an inclusive and universalist vision of God.

Just as Luke does not reject the temple as an institution, he does not reject the notion of God's holiness. By the juxtaposition of his imagery, however, he does articulate a vision of God in *non-conventional* terms and values. God is portrayed as merciful and compassionate, a loving father (cf Neyrey 1991a:296; Van Staden 1991:4). The resemblance between Leviticus 11:14 and Luke 6:36 serve to a substantiate this new vision. The words in Leviticus: "I, the Lord your God, am holy ... therefore be holy, because I am holy," are echoed in Jesus words "Be compassionate (οἰκτίρμονες) just as your Father is compassionate (οἰκτίρμων)" (Lk 6:36). Luke's redefining of holiness in non-conventional terms is confirmed by comparing Luke's rendering of Leviticus 11:14 with that of Matthew's. Matthew uses the conventional more correct term τέλειος (perfect, complete): "Be therefore perfect (τέλειοι) just as your Father in heaven is perfect (τέλειος) (Mt 5:48). The use of the word τέλειος shows that Matthew interprets God's holiness in terms of *wholeness*. Luke's rendering of the verse, however, suggests that he consciously reinterpreted God's holiness in terms of the divine attribute of

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*compassion.*

Both in the Magnificat and the Benedictus God's compassion or mercy is characterised as God's central attribute (cf Lk 1;50, 54, 47, 72, 78). The social outcasts, toll-collectors (Lk 18:13-14) and the sick (Lk 18:38) experience mercy at the hands of Jesus. The Israelite leaders are admonished for their lack of love (Lk 10:42) and are called upon to show mercy (Lk 10:37-38). God's mercy and love and those of his followers are repeatedly characterised as an all-inclusive love, which knows no boundaries and extends even to enemies, and those who hate (Lk 6:27, 35). The impartiality of God's actions is affirmed in Peter's vision in Acts 10: "What God has cleansed, you must not call unclean." These words do not only apply to food, but especially to people. Peter says to Cornelius: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality" (Ac 10:34; see also Ac 15:8-9). Furthermore, God's mercy finds expression in unqualified forgiveness. It is a "household forgiveness" of a gracious father to his child, vividly portrayed in the parable of the "Prodigal Son" (Lk 15:11-31). God's forgiveness is announced as early as Luke 1:77, where understanding of God's salvation is conveyed "through the forgiveness of sins". John prepares the new way by preaching a baptism of repentance for "the forgiveness of sins" (Lk 3:3). Those excluded from the temple and barred from making sacrifices for sins, find forgiveness from Jesus (Lk 5:20; 7:46). Forgiveness of sins also forms the concluding chorus of the Gospel. The resurrected Jesus announces to his disciples that "forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations" (Lk 24:47). Luke's vision of God is one of a merciful, loving, and forgiving Father who shows no impartiality and knows no separateness. God's love is inclusive and impartial.

In sum, Luke in his narrative constructs a reality and a vision of God which is diametrically opposed to that of the Israelite opposition. He renders these two realities by the juxtaposition of opposites and reversals of fortune. In telling his story, Luke intends to draw the reader into the world of his narrative with the purpose of making him or her view their own reality in a different light. At micro-

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level, the challenge is sometimes explicit: "Go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37). At macro-level, the challenge is rather implicit. It evolves out of the juxtaposition of two opposing realities and two opposing views of God and appeals like any good metaphor to the imagination of the reader. The appeal is not "closed" but "open-ended". It does not involve direct *rejections*, thus advocating something new at the expense of the old. It is metaphoric. It works with the known to describe the unknown and always contains the whispered intonation "it is, yet it is not" (Van Aarde 1991b:57).

### 4.6 Luke as a reconciler of opposites

In our reading of Luke-Acts we have indicated repeatedly that Luke's narration of opposites does not involve rejection on the part of Luke. The juxtaposition of opposites and the diaphoric reversal of roles is a literary device to ignite change and reflects extratextually on the everyday reality of the Lukan community. This everyday reality is that the Gentile and Israelite followers of Jesus face opposition fuelled by religious leaders. We have maintained that Luke himself harbours no anti-Israelite resentment ("anti-Semitism"). On the contrary, it is our thesis that Luke's narrative is characterised by the degree to which it emphasises the reconciliatory and forgiving character of Jesus and his witnesses, thereby reflecting on Luke himself as being a "reconciler of opposites". This thesis now needs further testing. In what follows we will focus on the rejection of any acts of vengeance in Luke's narrative, acts countered by conciliation, reconciliation and forgiveness.

It has been noted before that the inauguration of Jesus ministry in his home town, Nazareth (Lk 4:16-30) is central to an understanding of both Jesus' ministry and the purpose pursued by Luke in writing his narrative. Being placed at the beginning of Jesus' ministry it serves to develop the plot of Luke's narrative. To grasp the uniqueness of Luke it is important to realise that the author radically revises his sources. Our focus falls on one particular aspect, "reconciliation", and

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the question of to what extent the Lukan text confirms our thesis that Luke himself pursues a policy of reconciliation.

In the Nazareth scene, neither Mark (6:1-6) nor Matthew (13:53-58), mention the reading of the Isaiah scroll. In Luke, however, Jesus presents himself as the anointed prophet predicted in Isaiah who announces the favourable year of the Lord (Lk 4:18-19). August Strobel (1972:44) advocates the view that Jesus' announcement of the "favourable year of the Lord" occurred in a Jubilee year, of which there is some evidence between 26 CE and 27 CE. Subsequently, the chronological data on which Strobel bases his thesis has been questioned (see Green 1997:212). But the expectations of political freedom among the Israelites, based on the apocalyptic announcement in Daniel of a Jubilee nevertheless existed (cf Dn 9:24-27). Israelites contemporary to Jesus (and Luke) expected a year of political favour and political freedom. These expectations, especially among those associated with the community at Khirbet Qumran, were often intermingled with feelings of vengeance, culminating in a defeat of all the community's political enemies. Massyngbaerde Ford (1982:81) shows that a day of vengeance is a prominent theme in the Qumran Scrolls (cf 1QS 9.21-23; 10.19-21), not least of all in their reflections on Isaiah 61, the text behind Luke 4:18-19.

The central figure in the reflections on Isaiah 61 is the personage of Melchizedek (cf 11QM). Melchizedek is presented as a supernatural figure who will come to inaugurate the Jubilee. The Jubilee is to be characterised by two central features: (1) it will be good news for the faithful Israelites, and (2) it will exact vengeance on God's enemies. What is striking in Luke 4:18-19 is the omission of any mention of the day of vengeance which is mentioned in all the manuscripts of Isaiah 61:2. It is assumed that Luke narrates Jesus as purposely omitting any passage expressing hostility to the Gentiles. Jesus' ministry is not to be understood as an act advocating vengeance. Green (1997:212) notes that the Jubilee, and (in particular) the legislation of Leviticus 25, play no key role in the remainder of Luke's narrative; nor is the protest that follows directly linked to

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the narrative's previous omission of any mention of messianic vengeance, as Jeremias (1958:44-45) suggests. At literary level, the protest is triggered by the reference to Elijah and Elisha and the inclusion of Gentiles in the salvation of God (Lk 4:24-27).

The omission of any mention of a day of vengeance can, as already indicated, scarcely be considered arbitrary. This is confirmed by Luke's reference to Jesus as Joseph's son, though without any reference to any of his brothers (Lk 4:22). Both Mark and Matthew refer to Jesus whose mother is Mary, and whose four brothers, "James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas", are known (Mk 6:3; Mt 13:55). Massyngbaerde Ford (1982:81) postulates that the omission of Jesus' brothers in Luke can be attributed to the association of at least three of their names (Simon, James, and Judas) with popular, revolutionary freedom fighters of the first century. Scholars attest that Simon bar Giora's religious activities, for example - attacking the rich, freeing the slaves, and offering rewards to the free - is based on Isaiah 61. By omitting the names of Jesus' brothers, Luke counters any suggestion of some link or other between Jesus and a revolutionary movement that would seek acts of vengeance. Jesus' Jubilee benefits both Israelites and Gentiles. Although the Lukan episode taken from Jesus' opening ministry exposes the *opposition* to this ministry, it suppresses any note of vengeance against the enemies of God, whether Gentiles, or, as the narrative unfolds, Israelites. The two may not be confused. There is a difference between "exposing" opposition and "rejecting" those who constitute that opposition. By his literary style of juxtaposing opposites, Luke exposes the attitude of those that oppose the purpose of God. But he never rejects them.

Exercising an act of vengeance is countered throughout the plot of Luke's narrative. Prominent in the central section of Luke is Jesus' rejection of a suggestion from the disciples to call down fire from heaven to destroy certain Samaritans. This passage is unique to Luke (Lk 9:51-56). The disciples repeat John's error, in thinking that the messianic mission is one of judgement (cf Lk

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3:17) and fail to recognise that a rejection of Jesus and the gospel does not call for vengeance. Jesus had instructed his disciples on the appropriate behaviour when facing an unpleasant reception (Lk 9:5), but they act as people intoxicated by their own sense of power (cf Lk 9:46-50). Their inner, socially ingrained feelings of hatred for the Samaritans may even have felt justified when they recalled the scene of Elijah who called down fire from heaven to consume the representatives of Ahaziah, king of Samaria, for his failure to acknowledge the God of Israel (2 Ki 1:1-16). But Luke, although frequently using Elijah-material to portray Jesus, makes it entirely clear that Jesus is not Elijah (cf 9:19-20; 33-36). In seeming contrast to what we have said, Jesus himself characterises his ministry as one of "fire" in Luke 12:49-53. This passage however reflects on the division which Jesus' ministry will bring about within families, evolving out of some members opposition to the purpose of God. It does not call for vengeance against God's enemies. Judgement ("fire") is confined to the eschatological day of judgement, when the Son of Man will be revealed (Lk 17:30). This eschatological judgement will replicate the division that runs through the families (of all nations). The reference to "division" itself reflects extratextually the tensions to which the Lukan community is exposed. Instead of exercising vengeance, faithfulness to God's purpose as the essence of discipleship is manifested in the bearing of the cross. Here is an important theme in Luke's narrative (cf Lk 9:23; 14:27).

In the scene that depicts Jesus' last journey, discipleship as "bearing the cross" is stressed in and through the character of Simon of Cyrene (Lk 23:26-32). In Mark 15:21 and Matthew 27:32 Simon is forced (ἀγγαρεύω) to carry the cross. Luke avoids any provocative reference to the exertion of outside pressure on Simon. He uses the terms ἐπιλαμβάνομαι (to take on) and ἐπιτίθημι (to place on). A true disciple willingly takes the cross that is placed on him or her. Luke's preclusion of "revolutionary" terminology is also to be noted in the crucifixion scene. In Luke 23:33, Luke reports that Jesus was crucified between two κακοῦργοι (evildoers). He avoids the word λησταί (robbers) employed by Mark

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(15:26) and Matthew (27:38), a term which Josephus frequently uses to refer to social bandits and/or revolutionaries (Massyngbaerde Ford 1982:95). Furthermore, unique to Luke, Jesus is portrayed as praying for the forgiveness of his enemies (Lk 23:34). It has been noted before that Luke is rather ambiguous in his description of those who carry out the crucifixion, using the vague term "they" (Lk 23:26). As a result Sanders (1987:36-27, 226; cf Green 1997:814) had argued that Luke is intimating to his readers that not the Romans but the Israelite people and their leaders are responsible for the actual act of crucifixion. But contrary to Sander's argument that the implicit reference to the Israelites confirms Luke's anti-Semitic attitude, the opposite is rather the case: it confirms Luke's effort for reconciliation. Sanders fails to interpret Israelite responsibility in the light of Jesus' words of forgiveness. For if indeed the crucifiers in Luke's narrative *are* "the Jews" (Israelites), then Jesus' forgiveness of his executioners sets the tone for discipleship in a context in which Jesus followers are opposed by the Israelites and their leaders.

Luke's efforts of reconciliation are also noted in Acts. Jesus' words of forgiveness in the crucifixion scene are paralleled by those of Stephen (Ac 7:60). More often than not those for whom forgiveness is requested are the Israelites, whose sin is traced back to "ignorance". Addressing the Israelites in the temple of Jerusalem, Peter states: "Now, brothers, I know that you acted *in ignorance*, as did your leaders" (Ac 3:17). Similarly, Paul preaches in the synagogue of Antioch saying: "Brothers, children of Abraham, and those of you fearing God, for to us the word of salvation has been sent. For those living in Jerusalem and their rulers (responsible for Jesus' death) *did not know* this (Ac 13:26-27). In both passages the ignorance of the Israelite leaders, of those who initiated the opposition to the Jesus movement, is accentuated.

"Ignorance" also characterises Luke's unique understanding of sin, which differs remarkably from that set out by Paul in his letters (cf Pokorný 1998:126). For his own audience, Paul presupposes a knowledge of God and Jesus, and

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emphasises that sin forms an integral part of human nature so that nobody can make excuses for his conduct (Rom 1:20-2:16). Man lives in the domain of his sinful flesh (σάρξ), as an evil power (Rom 7:5) which can only be conquered in and through Christ. For Luke, however, sin is not "nature orientated" (original sin), but is related to "ignorance". People sin, because they are ignorant. Needless to say, such ignorance does not apply only to the Israelite leaders (Ac 3:17; 13:27) but also to the disciples of Jesus (Lk 12:47). This, however, does not mean that Luke in any way condones sin (cf Lk 12:48). It is a matter of emphasis. Instead of focusing on the source of sin, he focuses on its result (Pokorný 1998:126). The result of sin is fatal. It leads to an (eternal) estrangement from God. Realising this, Luke presents Paul as tirelessly preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the synagogues, in particular to the Israelite leaders, calling upon all to repent (Ac 17:30), despite continued opposition often culminating in harsh discipline and other forms of harassment. This frame of reference excludes any thought of vengeance. Even when Paul is harshly rebuffed by the Israelites, there is no thought of vengeance, or of a rejection of the Israelites as a whole, but a continued effort of persuasion directed at those estranged from God by their lack of understanding.

Noteworthy in Luke's narrative is that "ignorance" is not merely overcome by knowledge (γνῶσις), but by penance (μετάνοια) and conversion (ἐπιστρέφω), both words featuring (in contrast to the other Gospels) repeatedly in Luke's narrative (μετάνοια - Lk 3:8; 5:32; 13:3, 15:7; 24:47; Ac 2:38: 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4) and conversion (ἐπιστρέφω - Lk 1:16; 22:32; Ac 3:19; 9:35: 11:21; 14:15; 15:19, 36: 26:18, 20) (see Ravens 1995:139-169; Forbes 2000:245). Penance and conversion are not the result of mere knowledge, but a message that "cuts through the heart" (cf Ac 3:37); the message of a world that is "turned upside down" and which culminates in a new vision of God. This is achieved by the juxtaposition of contrasting and opposing points of view. Through the juxtaposition of opposites the audience is challenged to "see" things differently

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("seeing" being a central metaphor in Luke's narrative; see Lk 23:40, 47; 24:31, 37-45). The restoration of sight (and ignorance that has been overcome) culminates in forgiveness of sin. This is the conciliatory message to be preached by the disciples to all nations (Lk 24:47-48)

A "conciliatory pattern" within Acts on the part of those involved in Gentile mission is also noted by Brawley (1987:151-152). The events surrounding the Jerusalem council (Ac 15:1-35) are central to an understanding of this conciliatory pattern. In order to improve Israelite-Gentile fellowship, the Jerusalem council requests Gentile believers to obey the minimal laws required to maintain table fellowship with Israelite believers (Ac 15:20, 29). Conversely, Israelite believers are requested not to demand circumcision from Gentile believers, that is, to make it extraordinarily difficult for Gentile believers by requiring them to keep the whole Law (Ac 15:19). This conciliatory attitude is also reflected in Paul's decision immediately after the council, as narrated by Luke, to circumcise Timothy (Ac 16:1-4). Timothy's circumcision has nothing to do with his status as a believer. Rather, he is circumcised for the "sake of the Israelites" in Lystra (Paul's next mission field), where it was generally know that Timothy, who was to partner Paul, had a Greek father (Brawley 1987:152). A similar event is recorded in Acts 21:20-25. In this context (Paul's return to Jerusalem), James implies that Paul should demonstrate his allegiance to the Law in order to counter accusations that he encourages Israelites in the Diaspora to turn away from Moses.

It should be noted, that despite a few harsh words about the Law, the Law being a yoke (ζυλόν) (Ac 15:10) and a burden (παρενοξλέω) (Ac 15:19) placed on the Gentile believers by the Israelite believers, Luke never rejects the Law per se (see Jervell 1973:136-137). Criticism levelled against the Law is confined to a particular understanding of the Mosaic Law (reflected primarily in Israel's purity regulations) that promotes Israelite exclusivity and invariably leads to particularity and division. This will become more apparent in the discussion of the three "Lukan metaphorical stories" in chapters 5-7 below.

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The above analysis shows that Luke in juxtaposing "opposites" neither promotes conflict, nor advocates vengeance. His juxtaposition of opposites is done in a conciliatory manner, through which he seeks to reconcile the opposites.

### 4.7 Concluding reflections on Luke's story

We began this chapter with an investigation into the narrative world of Luke. It revealed Luke's affinity for juxtaposing opposites - the two main "opposites" being (1) Jesus and his witnesses (as protagonists) and (2) the Israelite leaders and those who submit to their point of view (as antagonists). The juxtaposition of opposites was noted not only on the macro-level, but also on the micro-level where it invariably resulted in reversals of fortune. As the characters in Luke's narrative are in part fluid, it was noted that the juxtaposition does not involve primarily two distinctive groups of people, but rather involves two contrasting points of view. The one view, that of the protagonist, is seen to be inherently inclusive and universalistic; the other view, that of the antagonist, is exclusive and particularistic. By juxtaposing these two views, it was argued, Luke challenges for an inclusive worldview in which both Israelite and Gentile believers are included in God's salvation purpose. An investigation into the contextual world of Luke showed that Luke's community (consisting of Israelite and Gentile believers) indeed faced increasing opposition from the leaders of Israel. It was a community in need of legitimisation, that is, in need of "assurance" (Lk 1:4). In the light of this insight, it was put forward that the assurance was to be provided by the creation of a symbolic universe in which the diversity within Luke's community (Israelites and Gentiles) could make sense. This was confirmed by the way in which Luke counters acts of vengeance, advocates forgiveness, and promotes a conciliatory attitude between those involved in the mission to both Israelites and Gentiles.

The thesis is put forward that the parables in Luke, that is, Luke's metaphorical stories, are also characterised by the repeated juxtaposition of opposites (diaphors), reflecting contrasting worldviews, and play a critical role in

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Luke's challenge for an inclusive worldview. The detailed analysis of three of Luke's *Sondergut* parables will serve to confirm and illustrate his thesis.