

**METAPHORICAL STORIES IN LUKE'S NARRATIVE WORLD:
A CHALLENGE TO A CONVENTIONAL WORLDVIEW**

by

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SUMMARY

**METAPHORICAL STORIES IN LUKE'S NARRATIVE WORLD:
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The impetus of this study arose from the conviction that the unique features of Luke's narrative will most likely yield clues of how to handle conflict and to work for reconciliation. The study focuses on the parables in Luke's Gospel of which three parables peculiar to Luke (The Good Samaritan - Lk 10:25-37; A Man Had Two Sons - Lk 15:11-32; and The Rich Man and Lazarus - Lk 16:19-31) are understood within the narrative world of Luke-Acts.

The study reflects on the nature of metaphor and worldview. The point of departure is found in the recently gained insight that metaphors (especially diaphors in which contrasting entities are juxtaposed) are most apt in challenging a dominant view of reality. In the study this concept of metaphor is applied as a model to read the parables unique to Luke, and not as if they are primarily sayings of the historical Jesus.

These Lukan "metaphorical stories" are interpreted within the narrative world of Luke-Acts. The study demonstrates that these stories form part of Luke's literary technique to juxtapose contrasting and dissimilar entities. Luke's narrative world consists of both the conventional Israelite worldview and the "Christian" worldview of Luke. It is argued that the former is inherently exclusive promoting

group-differentiation and particularity. The latter, which constitutes the Lukan challenge, is inclusive and universalistic. In Luke's narrative world these two worldviews are juxtaposed with the aim to create a symbolic universe in which both Israelites and Gentiles are welcomed into the "Kingdom of God". Luke resolves tension and conflict and works for reconciliation in a community where the conventional worldview is characterised by tension and conflict between opposing factions. An exegesis of the above mentioned parables illustrates Luke's challenge to the conventional worldview. In Luke's narrative world, the clearly marked worldview of "insiders" and "outsiders", of those who are "included" and those who are "excluded", is turned upside down and replaced by a worldview in which *all* are welcome.

This study aims to promote the work for reconciliation in South Africa and in our world.

Keywords

- Lukan parables
- Metaphor
- Diaphor
- Subversiveness
- Conventional worldview
- Inclusivity
- Exclusivity
- Narrative world
- Literary criticism
- Purity regulations
- Conflict
- Reconciliation

OPSOMMING

**METAFORIESE VERTELLINGS IN LUKAS SE NARRATIEWE WÊRELD:
'N BEVRAAGTEKENING VAN 'N KONVENSONELE WÊRELDBESKOUIING**

deur

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Hierdie studie het ontstaan op grond van die oortuiging dat die unieke kenmerke van Lukas se narratiewe wêreld aanduidings verskaf hoe om konflik te hanteer en om versoening te bewerkstellig. Die studie fokus op die gelykenisse in die Evangelie van Lukas, waarvan drie gelykenisse eie aan Lukas is (Die Barmhartige Samaritaan, Lk 10:25-37, Die Verlore Seun, Lk 15:11-32 en Die Ryk Man en Lasarus, Lk 16:19-31). Die interpretasie van hierdie gelykenisse geskied in terme van die konteks van Lukas se narratiewe wêreld.

Die studie ondersoek die aard van metafore en wêreldbeskouings. Dit word gedoen vanuit die vertrekpunt dat metafore (in die besonder diaforas waarin kontrasterende elemente teenoor mekaar gestel word) hulle by uitstek daartoe leen om 'n heersende wêreldbeskouing te bevraagteken. In hierdie studie word hierdie bepaalde konsep van metafore as model gebruik om die gelykenisse as tipies metaforiese vertellings eie aan Lukas te lees, en nie as primêre mededelings van die historiese Jesus nie. Hierdie "metaforiese vertellings" van Lukas word binne die narratiewe wêreld van Lukas-Handelinge geïnterpreteer. Daar word aangetoon dat die jukstaposisie van kontrasterende en ongelyke elemente kenmerkend is van Lukas se literêre styl.

Die narratiewe wêreld van Lukas sluit beide die konvensionele Israelitiese wêreldbeskouing en Lukas se "Christelike" wêreldbeskouing in. Daar word aangevoer dat eersgenoemde inherent eksklusief is en dat dit veral

groepsdifferensiasie teweegbring. Laasgenoemde beskouing, wat as Lukas se bevraagtekening van die konvensionele beskouing beskou kan word, word daarenteen as inklusief en universalisties gesien. In Lukas se narratiewe wêreld word hierdie twee wêreldbeskouings teenoor mekaar gestel om 'n simboliese universum, waarin beide Israeliete en Nie-Israeliete in die "Koninkryk van God" welkom is, te skep. Lukas ontlont spanning en konflik en beywer hom vir versoening in 'n samelewing wat deur spanning en konflik tussen opponerende faksies gekenmerk word. 'n Eksegese van die reeds genoemde gelykenisse illustreer Lukas se bevraagtekening van die konvensionele wêreldbeskouing. In Lukas se narratiewe wêreld word die wêreldbeskouing wat duidelik onderskeid tref tussen diegene wat daarby ingesluit is, (die sogenaamde "insiders") en diegene wat daarvan uitgesluit word, (die "outsiders"), omvergewerp en met 'n wêreldbeskouing, waarin almal welkom is, vervang.

Die studie het ten doel om versoening in Suid Afrika en in die wêreld van vandag te bevorder.

Sleutelwoorde

- Gelykenisse van Lukas
- Metafoor
- Diafora
- Ondermyning
- Konvensionele wêreldbeskouing
- Inklusiwiteit
- Eksklusiwiteit
- Narratiewe wêreld
- Literêre kritiek
- Reinheidsvoorskrifte
- Konflik
- Versoening

ABBREVIATIONS OF EXTRA-CANONICAL LITERATURE

Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Tob	Tobit
Jdt	Judith
Sir	Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach
1 Macc	First Book of Maccabees
3 Mac	Third Book of Maccabees
1 En	1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch

Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumran)

CD	The Damascus Rule
1QH	The Hymns (The Thanksgiving Psalms)
1QS	The Community Rule (Manuel of Discipline)
11QM	The War Rule (The War Scroll)
1QpHab	Commentary on Habakkuk

Rabbinic Sources

Mishnah

<i>m. Ab.</i>	Aboth
<i>m. B. Bat.</i>	Baba Batra
<i>m. B. Qam.</i>	Baba Qamma
<i>m. Hor.</i>	Horayoth
<i>m. Kel.</i>	Kelim
<i>m. Kidd.</i>	Kiddushin
<i>m. Naz.</i>	Nazir
<i>m. Nid.</i>	Niddah
<i>m. Pirke Ab.</i>	Pirke Aboth
<i>m. Sheb.</i>	Shebuoth

Babylonian Talmud

- b. B. Qam.* Baba Qamma
- b. Ber.* Berakot
- b. Erub.* Erubin
- b. Ket.* Ketuboth
- b. Ned.* Nedarim
- b. San.* Sanhedrin

Jerusalem (or Palestinian) Talmud

- y. Pe'ah* Yerushalmi Pe'ah

Tosefta

- t. Meg.* Megillah

Medrashim

- Cant. R.* Canticum Rabba
- Deut. R.* Deuteroneum Rabba
- Elijah R.* Eliyah Rabba
- Exod. R.* Exodus Rabba
- Gen. R.* Genesis Rabba
- Mak.* Makkot
- Mek. Exod.* Mekilta Exodus
- Midr. Ps.* Midrash Psalms
- Nez.* Nezikin (from the Mekilta)
- Ruth R.* Ruth Rabba

Other Jewish Writings

- Rosh HS* Rosh hash-Shana

Flavius Josephus

- Ant.* Antiquitates Judaicae
- Bell. Jud.* Bellum Judaicum
- Ap.* Contra Apionem

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 General orientation

This study focuses on metaphor, particularly on the extent, nature and the importance of metaphor in some of the parables recorded in Luke's Gospel. It is only recently, since the rise of the *New Hermeneutics*, a post-Bultmanian movement, that scholars have applied the post-Aristotelian concept of metaphor to parables (cf Kissinger 1970:xiii-xiv; Perrin 1976:107-127). The *New Hermeneutics* created a new awareness of the performative aspect of language. Language, as indeed text, is alive. It evokes emotions and feelings. It affects us and communicates in different ways in different contexts. It has the power to draw the listeners or readers into its world, challenging and confronting them with the need to make a decision of some sort. This has led to the exegete asking a number of new questions. The *Who*, *Where* and *What* questions that characterised the analytical approach of the historical-critical period of scientific research, have been supplemented by the *Why* question: Why did or does someone behave or react in a certain way? This new approach to the interpretation and analysis of texts has brought about a shift in emphasis from the individual elements that lie *within and behind* a text to the *story* set out in the text and indeed to the whole process of communication of the text. This area of research is primarily literary, with an emphasis on the art and practise of narration. Such research does not necessarily exclude historical analysis, but the focus is now more on the *total* society within which the text is set.

Since Adolf Jülicher's ([1960] 1976) important book, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (first published in 1886), scholars have invariably searched for one single meaning within a parable: the *tertium comparationis* between the object (*Sache*) and the picture (*Bild*). But with the rise of the *New Hermeneutics* and its emphasis on the performative aspect of language, parables can now be viewed as language *events* where there is interaction or dialogue between text and reader. As events,

parables are no longer reducible to a single fixed set of meanings, but are, in essence, dynamic and polyvalent.

Early in the twentieth century a revision of the traditional view of the *metaphor* took place among philosophers. Etymologically the word *metaphor* implies motion (*phora*) that leads to change (*meta*). Liddell and Scott (1977:440) define metaphor as “a carrying from one place to another” or “a transferring to one word the sense of another.” This definition is based on the traditional Aristotelian understanding of metaphor: an unfamiliar word being used in the place of a familiar word, for example, John is a lion. The well-known characteristics of a lion (for example, fierce) are transferred to John. As such, the function and value of the metaphor were seen to be purely decorative. As a non-literal, figurative way of speaking the metaphor contributed to nothing more than vividness and style. This perception of the metaphor has undergone a vast transition (see chapter 2 below). The metaphor is now hailed as having the ability to re-describe reality with immense ontological value. From the juxtaposition of two often paradoxical entities or thoughts, not only single words, the metaphor pricks the mind of the listeners or readers to see and experience things in a different light. As such, the metaphor is not merely *descriptive*, but becomes an *instrument* of knowledge. It not only *has* meaning, but is *creative* of meaning. It leads to *new* visions of reality. This is one of the challenging claims inherent in the new concept of metaphor.

It is this convergence of parable and metaphor that has led to a revival in parable research. In the past three to four decades such a vast number of studies in this area have been published, that this present work can by no means claim to be exhaustive or even to have taken close cognisance of the contemporary material available. What is exciting is the dynamic and highly relevant nature of this research. As instruments that lead to new visions of reality, parables invariably challenge conventional worldviews. Their challenge is not confined to their original listeners, but to all subsequent listeners who engage with the world of the parable. In the case of Jesus’ parables, it is the world of *God’s Kingdom*.

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1.2 Aims and focus of study

Since the beginning of human history, men and women have clashed over a wide range of issues - gender, race, appearance, property, wealth, power, privilege, status and prestige, to name just a few. These clashes have led to conflicts ranging from relatively harmless differences of opinion and disagreement to bloody revolutions and wars. The canonical books of the Bible witness to these conflicts. Older brothers are in conflict with younger brothers. Cain kills Abel (Gn 4), Jacob flees from his enraged brother Esau (Gn 27). There is contradiction and tension between apostles. Paul and Barnabas part their ways (Ac 15). Paul reprimands Peter (Gl 2). Nations are at war. People are forced into exile or reduced to a life of slavery.

The "new" South Africa, the country and the community in which I am living has not escaped conflict. The political dispensation has changed, the country having been freed from Apartheid in 1994. Apartheid has been replaced by a democracy. But conflict between one political party and the next, between different races and cultures, within churches and families and among individual citizens has remained, sometimes with a detrimental effect on those not directly involved.

This confirms that the world and its many different societies are prone to conflict. Wherever people are, there is conflict. The causes of such strife are wide-ranging. It goes beyond the scope of this study to delve into the most probable causes of human conflict, which by nature will vary from one situation to the other. But generally speaking the narrow pursuit of one's *own interests* is the basic cause of all conflict (cf Vledder 1997:70). This applies both to individual persons and to groups. Individual interests, when shared with others, often form common interests. These common group interests are sustained and asserted in many ways, inevitably leading to the marginalisation and/or the overt oppression of others.

That society is conflict-prone should, however, not be seen only in a

negative light - in the sense that harmony is being disturbed by some *outside* source. This is largely the view advocated by *structural functionalism* (cf Malina 1993:21; Vledder 1997:58-59). Structural functionalism pictures society as a relatively persistent, stable structure of well-integrated elements. Each element has a function and contributes to the maintenance of society as a whole, providing harmony and a peaceful coexistence of its institutions. Such a social system is the result of the consensus of values among all its members. On such a view, conflict within society will invariably be regarded as deviant or abnormal, causing disruption and harm. The structural functionalist perspective on society is challenged by the conflict model of society, known as *conflict theory* (Malina 1993:22). According to conflict theory, conflict forms an integral part of every society. The essence of society is that it is not a *fixed organic* structure, but is a *dynamic social* structure open to adaption and change. Within an ever-changing world, societies need to adapt to change; and the creative force for this change is conflict. Without conflict there will not be change (cf Vledder 1997:61). Thus it is not the presence of conflict but its absence that is abnormal. Conflict is an essential feature of any society. Needless to say, conflict as such is hardly pleasant. It creates tension and saps energy. But insofar as conflict helps society to abandon old systems and contributes to the creation of new ones, it is exciting. It heralds the dawn of something new.

Change can be brought about in various ways. People who do not wish change can be *forced* to change - by decree, revolution, or war. Change can however also be prompted by interaction. By this we mean the juxtaposition of contrasting worldviews with the distinct aim of reshaping the participants' understanding of reality. The aim here will not be dominance, but conversion and reconciliation.

Worldviews are grounded in and find expression in the stories that we humans tell one another (Wright 1992:38; see also chapter 2 below). Such worldviews are best challenged by the telling of *alternative* stories. To use the

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terminology coined by Jean-François Lyotard (1984) the first can be called “master narratives” or “grand narratives” (*métarécits*), and the latter “little narratives” or “small narratives” (*petits récits*) (see also Van Heerden 1997:44). Instead of referring to “small narratives” Breytenbach (1997:1166) uses the very appropriate term “contra narratives” (“*kontranarratiewe*”). It will be argued in this study that efficient contra narratives are *metaphorical* stories. Through the vividness of their images they evoke thought. They are excellent tools with which to kindle new considerations and attitudes.

There is little doubt that Jesus challenged the prevailing worldview. He did so primarily, according to the gospel writers, by means of the parables he told. Reading and interpreting these Jesus parables as *metaphorical* stories (cf, inter alia, Scott 1990; Herzog 1994) has confirmed the effectiveness of these stories in challenging or subverting the prevailing worldview and realizing Jesus' vision of the *Kingdom of God*. By telling stories, Jesus made his audience see things in a different light, thus opening up a new world for them, the reality of God's kingship as a phenomenon of the here and now.

Much work has been done on the parables of Jesus. Our interest lies specifically in the Lukan metaphorical stories. Although much has also been published specifically on the parables unique to Luke (see Forbes 2000:16-23), thoughts on the concept and theory of *metaphor* have largely been restricted to the reconstructed parables of the historical Jesus. Applying the notion of metaphor to the Lukan parables (those metaphorical stories of Jesus retold only by Luke) fills, what we believe to be a much needed research gap. Our interests lie further in looking at the challenge such parables (as metaphorical stories) potentially posed to the Lukan audience. There is large scholarly consensus that the gospel writers did not only retell the stories of Jesus, but applied, reinterpreted, and even “re-created” them for their own social setting (*Sitz im Leben*). Luke is of special interest to us because amongst the gospel writers, he is known as the *reconciler*. He endeavours to resolve tensions and reconcile

people in conflict with one another (see chapter 4 below). Luke brings opposing factions together. And does so, inter alia, by telling the story of Jesus in parables.

The Lukan prologue confirms that this is *Luke's* story. Before him many had undertaken to draw up an account (διήγησις) of the things that had been fulfilled among them, but now Luke tells *his* story, based on *his* model - how *he* sees reality. Because I am specifically interested in Luke, I have chosen to study three well-known stories in the Gospel which are not found in Luke's sources (Q, Mark) and form part of the Lukan *Sondergut*. These parables are to be studied in the narrative world of Luke-Acts. Importantly, the parables form part of Luke's narrative world, and in order to understand the parts, it is imperative to have knowledge of the whole. The process to be followed involves a continuing back-and-forth movement of corrective analysis between the whole and its parts, and the parts and the whole.

An intricate part of the study will be the challenge that Luke's metaphorical stories pose to a conventional worldview. Such a worldview within Israel was closely interrelated with Israel's perceptions of God. These perceptions included answers to questions such as: What is God like? On whose side is God? Whom does God include in God's kingdom? As worldviews are articulated in the stories that we humans tell each other, Luke's narrative as a whole, as well as the individual parables, reflect on the conventional Israelite worldview. Interpreting the Lukan metaphorical stories from this perspective, helps us to identify the challenge to the conventional worldview posed by Luke. It is presupposed that the way Luke challenged the conventional worldview of his time and tried to work reconciliation is relevant also for our time.

1.3 Theoretical perspectives

Scientific research needs to be based on a sound theoretical footing. Imperative in achieving this goal is both the clarification of semantically related terms, and the spelling out of assumptions and presuppositions on which the research is based.

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The former avoids terminological confusion. The latter contributes to evaluation of the research.

1.3.1 Terminological clarifications: paradigms, metaphors, and models

There is a clear relation between metaphors (our research topic), paradigms and models. In relationship to metaphor, the movement is from the more general (paradigm), to the more specific (model).

The metaphor has been described above (1.1) as the juxtaposition of two often paradoxical thoughts or entities, which as a result of their juxtaposition prick the mind to see and experience something in a different light. This leads to a new vision of reality. A paradigm represents a particular vision of reality. The term *paradigm* is found in Thomas S Kuhn's 1962 book, *The structure of scientific revolution*. It can be described as a conceptual framework, a worldview, common to a particular scientific community at a stated time (Mouton & Marais 1996:145).

Kuhn developed his paradigm theory in direct response to the *growth theory* of knowledge, which advocates the view that knowledge grows in a linear way through the gradual *accumulation of facts* that are accepted as true, meaning that in the long run, scientific knowledge will converge towards absolute truth (Mouton 1996:16). This "model" is based on the assumption that our sensory experiences are fixed and neutral, and that a rational, objective observation of data is indeed possible. Kuhn found this theory to be seriously inadequate and proposed a theory of *scientific revolution*. He observed that the history of the sciences is one of successive phases (paradigms), as a result of which one phase is discontinued altogether and replaced by another. Each phase is characterised by a dominant theory which shaped the thought processes of a particular scientific community in that stated period. The theory of Copernicus is replaced by that of Newton. Newton's theory is replaced by that of Einstein. Then we also have Lamarck and then Darwin ... and so forth (cf Mouton 1996:16). These successive phases of scientific thought follow each other according to clearly discernable patterns: a

period of *normal science* is followed by a period of *scientific revolution*, which in turn is followed by another period of normal science (cf Mouton & Marais 1996:145-147). During the period of normal science, one research tradition or theory dominates and is accepted by the scientific community. Scientific thought within such a period of normal science is directed towards solving puzzles by the basic “paradigm”, and a further refinement and improved articulation of already existing theories. The paradigm itself provides clues and determines what data is appropriate and relevant. But history shows that within a changing world, questions or new puzzles inevitably arise - questions and puzzles to which an existing paradigm seems no longer able to yield adequate answer. The scientist in fact is here confronted by an anomaly not predicted by his or her paradigm. This anomaly is not overcome by the accumulation of more data (positivist model), but by a *new approach* which then leads to a new vision of reality. This new approach emerges from scientific activities taking place during a period of *scientific revolution*. This phase is characterised by tensions evoked in the struggle and challenge to find new answers. In many ways it is a time of conflict caused by the tension created between the emergence of something new and the clinging to old theories. The breakthrough is like a conversion (*Gestalt-switch*) or an “aha!” experience (Van Huyssteen 1989:53). Significantly, the emergence of a new paradigm is not based on disproving accepted data, but very often on “unscientific” issues, such as vague ideas, gut feelings and imagination. Frequently new visions have emerged, when scientists have followed their intuitions and dared to look at something from a radically different angle. Howard Kee (1989:9) points out, that as a result, “debates over competing paradigms turn not on logical process but on premises.” The bottom line is this: one paradigm replaces another because it offers a promising alternative which has a greater ability to solve puzzles (Barbour 1976:9-10).

Metaphor is *one* tool in realizing the new vision of such an alternative paradigm. By juxtaposing previously unrelated thoughts and entities, it reveals a

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new view of reality, which otherwise, using only the positivist approach (see 1.3.3) of accumulating more and more logically based data, would have remained unseen. The metaphor then is an instrument for shaping our understanding and knowledge of the world around us.

Models make it possible for us to speak about reality. They are theories in practice, or “tools for transforming theories into research operations” (Elliott 1986:7). In contrast to metaphors and paradigms, models are consciously structured and systematically arranged (Elliott 1993:41). They help us to filter and to organise the raw mass of material available to us. Malina (1993:231) defines a model as “an abstract simplified representation of some real world object, event, or interaction constructed for the purpose of understanding, control, or prediction.” A model is clearly not a literal or complete picture of the world around us. It is a simulation of reality from a certain point of view. As such, it isolates certain domains to be investigated and also provides the means of making predictions. A model can be compared with a lens that focuses on a specific area, or a map that enlarges one area of an otherwise complex system. The model is also not to be confused with a *description* of the world; it is an imaginative, conceptual tool for ordering experience and interpreting that world. The model identifies problems and questions that are to be investigated. On the whole, we may say that models serve two main types of research objective, one that is exploratory in nature and one that aims at testing a certain hypothesis (Elliott 1993:42).

Depending on the field of research, there are of course different kinds of model. Generally a distinction is made between three kinds of model: scale models, analogue models, and theoretical models (Ricoeur 1975:85; 1981:240-241). Scale models are replicas of the original, for example, of a ship. Analogue models are only partially similar, showing analogy, for example the use of electrical circuits in computers. Within the social sciences use is made of theoretical models. They are abstract, conceptual models and are not “things” at all.

Models are indispensable. As Thomas Carney (1975:5) notes: "... we do not have the choice of whether we will use models or not. Our choice, rather, lies in deciding whether to use them consciously or unconsciously." We need to free ourselves from the positivist delusion that our visions of reality can ever be perfect. The conscious, stipulated use of models has the advantage that research can be subjected to the "falsification" criterion. They aid scientists in determining the merit of the research done. And because models are used consciously and constructed systematically, they can be adapted and subjected to a process of fine-tuning.

There are various points at which models and metaphors overlap. The use of the model as such within the social sciences presupposes that maybe the unknown phenomenon to be researched is similar to the known one on certain points. This has led to models being called *scientific metaphors* (cf Mouton & Marais 1996:139). By investigating a specific phenomenon in this manner, the researcher reveals certain similarities and relationships which he or she then systematises as a model of that phenomenon. Important for us is the fact that in using one phenomenon to investigate another, the model provides a *new language* within which the unknown phenomenon may be discussed. Here in essence lies the value of the metaphor. According to Mary Hesse (cf Ricoeur 1975:85), both the model and the metaphor have the power of revelation and "re-description".

We should note that in contrast to a model that is used over a sustained period of time, the metaphor is always used momentarily. The metaphor is inherently characterised by the elements of novelty and surprise in the new thought-combinations and images that it evokes. That is why the metaphor is not only a tool for re-description, but a creative tool for new visions. The model explores, re-describes, and systematises the "given". The metaphor opens up a "new world".

When a metaphor becomes conventional and established, and when it

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loses its novelty, like the well-known metaphor "God is father", it begins to function strictly as a model and so becomes a "lens" through which we view other passages of the Bible. Sally McFague (see Macky 1990:56) refers to models as "relatively permanent metaphors". For example, from the metaphor "God is father" a "father-child" model is developed to look at and to describe, for example, the relationship between God and humanity. Accordingly, in an ever-changing world in need of constant adaption, the rise of new metaphors play an important role. They are excellent tools in creating alternative and new visions of reality.

In this study the "theory of metaphors" will be used as a model to look at the parables of Luke. This will occur within the wider framework of a postmodern, holistic paradigm in which neither knowledge nor reality are viewed as fixed, objective entities, but as being part and parcel of the sociology of life. More elaborate consideration therefore needs now to be given to the *sociology of knowledge and scientific epistemology*.

1.3.2 Sociology of knowledge and the construction of reality

The philosopher who has most influenced our way of modern thinking in the West, is without doubt the French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650), who is sometimes thought of as the founder of modern philosophy. A legacy attributed to Descartes is the split between subject and object, which Ted Peters (1992:9) calls the "principle of distancing". According to this principle everything is observed from a distance, with the observer, that is the human being, being clearly separated from the object it observes. Being separated from the object, it was believed that the observer finds himself or herself in relation to the object in a *neutral* position and can therefore come to *objective* conclusions. Under the influence of Descartes it was assumed that everything, even truth, could be objectified. Peters (1992:9-10) writes: "Descartes formulated the question of truth as if the truth had nothing to do with himself He implicitly cedes the content of truth to the objective world and not to himself as a subject."

From this matrix of thinking emerges traditional science's view on facts. A fact is traditionally distinguished from transient and adaptable theories as something definite, permanent, and independent of any subjective interpretation. A historical review will however show that what was regarded as a certain "scientifically proven" fact by a past generation is today often rejected as such, or what among contemporaries might be viewed as "fact" to a certain group of people, is repudiated by another.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Ludwig Fleck (see Kee 1989:9), a Polish historian of medicine, observed that the "facts" that emerged from scientific investigations varied with the social theory of the investigators. He concluded that "facts" are always the result of a definite "thought style" and are shared by a "thought collective" (see Kee 1989:10). Being a "thought collective", "facts" invariably undergo social reinforcement, with the result that a conventionalised solution to a problem is perceived as "truth". The process is one of subjective knowledge becoming objectified and socialised in signs, which in turn come to be expressed in general terms that are assumed to be universally recognised as valid by all members of the society in question. This leads to expressions such as, "Everyone knows that ...", "That is a fact ..." Should an alternative "thought style" be active in that community to propose "new" solutions to a given problem, it is inevitably rejected as "untrue", merely being the subjective thought of the individual.

"Truth" is seriously challenged when traditionally perceived facts no longer provide solutions to new puzzles experienced within a community. A new "thought style" may then emerge with greater puzzle-solving capability, which may in the traditional sense lead to new "facts", often drastically different to previous ones. The basic compatibility between this approach to knowledge and truth and Thomas Kuhn's paradigm theory is very apparent.

It must be noted that a rejection of the traditional view concerning facts in no way reduces the scientist's endeavour to secure relative objectivity, or his or

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her efforts to restrain freewheeling subjectivity (cf Elliott 1993:37), but it does reject the idea that total objectivity is attainable. Nobody has an "immaculate perception" (Carney 1975:1) or a "god's-eye view" (Wright 1992:33). Every investigation, as every interpretation of text, is socially conditioned and takes place from a certain position.

This realisation of the social conditioning of knowledge has led to the scientific discipline known as the "sociology of knowledge" (*Wissenssoziologie*). It began as a kind of byproduct of the philosophical work of Max Scheler, but received its classical formulation by Karl Mannheim, and was then refined by Alfred Schütz, a German philosopher who emigrated to the United States of America in 1939 (cf Berger & Luckmann 1967:4-10; Kee 1989:10-11). The most basic premises here are that the consciousness of the human being is determined by his or her social being, and that no human thought is immune to the ideologising influences of its social context. It is the task of the sociology of knowledge to analyse the process by which knowledge is thus socialised.

From knowledge being socialised, it follows naturally that *reality* itself is a social construction and not, as Descartes advocated, a fixed, unchangeable object, outside the subjectivity of the individual. The sociology of knowledge accordingly postulates that man creates social reality, and man is in turn shaped by that reality. This world-building process is described in Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger's joint and independent writings, particular in Berger and Luckmann's, *The social construction of reality* (1967), and in Berger's, *The sacred canopy* (1969). The process develops along the lines of externalisation, objectification, and internalisation. Howard Kee (1989:11-12) gives a helpful overview of this complex issue. First, reality is observed as something separated from the human being, an *external* entity with which the human being enters into an ongoing relationship. This relationship is reflected by the language we speak, the culture we adhere to, and the symbols of our everyday praxis. These in turn do not only accept the reality, but form and shape it. Secondly, once reality has

been structured by and in the society and culture of a particular community, it is *objectified* and becomes something “out there”. Reality becomes an *object* outside the subjectivity of the individual, a collective item. This is, thirdly, followed by the act of *internalisation*, by virtue of which reality becomes something invisibly situated *inside* a given community. By means of socialisation reality is transmitted from one generation to the next, each individual needing to learn how to identify with this reality and live within its structures, thus allowing it to shape his or her life. For our purpose it is important to note that reality in general, and our perception of God in particular, are not “objects” removed from ourselves of which we have a clear, untainted view as “subject”. Humankind is part and parcel of this reality, and reality in turn is intrinsically linked to humankind within his or her social context, hence *social* reality.

When discussing social reality a distinction is made between the *social* and *symbolic universe* (see Berger & Luckmann 1967:19-46; Petersen 1985:x; 93-104; Kee 1989:12; Van Staden 1991:61). For the sake of clarity and in view of the literary nature of this study, reference should also be made to the *narrative world* of text. All are conceptual constructions of reality. The narrative world is defined by Norman Petersen (1985:7) as follows: “The narrative world is that reality which a narrator bestows upon his actors and upon their actions ...” This “world” is not to be confused with the “real” world, but it is a literary construction of the world outside of the text to which the text refers, hence also called “referential” world (Petersen 1985:8). This world is analysed in terms of two socio-scientific categories, *social arrangement* and *symbolic forms*, constituting the social and symbolic universe respectively. The social universe is the reality of everyday life as it presents itself to humankind through a number of social relations. Underlying this reality are the social institutions one encounters in everyday life: economics, politics, kinship and cult (religion) (cf Van Staden 1991:91). The symbolic universe comprises an overarching, cognitive system of knowledge, belief, and values that provide meaning to society. As such, it helps to “make sense” of often

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diverse subjective experiences. In essence it is a system of meaning. It explains why things are the way they are, while at the same time legitimising social institutions as the appropriate way of being and behaving. For analytical purposes it is divided into mythology (including cosmology), theology, philosophy, and science (cf Kee 1989:12; Van Staden 1991:91). A view on reality is not confined to social experiences, but is the resultant vision that emerges from the interaction between the social und symbolic universes. Kinship (like father) may interact in a dialectical sense with a reflection on God (theology), which in turn determines the way we not only see, but also experience reality. Although two people may share the same social universe, reality may be quite different for them, depending upon the differing meanings they have attached to it - meanings based upon their differing universes.

“Worldview” is the view of reality which emerges as a result of the interaction between the social und symbolic universes. As such, it is and always will also be “metaphorical”. Just as in metaphor two thoughts or identities are juxtaposed, “worldview” is the result of the juxtaposition of a social und a symbolic universe.

1.3.3 Epistemological considerations

In discussing Thomas Kuhn's paradigm theory above (1.3.1), mention was made of the “theory of knowledge”. The technical term is *epistemology*. Epistemology has its etymological root in the Greek word ἐπιστήμη (knowledge, understanding). Generally it has to do with how people *know* things. Since the rise of the “sociology of knowledge” it has become imperative for any scientist or researcher to give some account of his or her “understanding of knowledge”. This in turn is closely related to our understanding of how human beings view reality, described above (1.3.2). The concept of reality as a social construction inevitably leads to a revision of traditional epistemological views.

As the “theory of knowledge” is a very complex und widely discussed

matter, we will confine ourselves to a general account and focus on the main premises and assumptions. The epistemology which has dominated human thought in past centuries is that of the positivists (see Mouton 1987:1-24; Van Huyssteen 1989:3-10; Wright 1992:32-35). The roots of positivism can be traced to the subject-object split of René Descartes (1596-1650), the development of the inductive model for scientific research by Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and the work of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century British empiricists.

Spurred on by the critical questioning of traditional ideas during the period of the Enlightenment, the positivists sought to devise a method for reaching absolute truth. Absolute truth can by definition only be based on undisputable knowledge. The positivists believe that at least for some things this goal is attainable, that some things are simply “objectively” true. The latter is deeply entrenched in the assumption that the subject (observer) can distance him- or herself from the object (the item under investigation), in order to make a neutral and objective observation free from any subjective interpretation. The scientific point of departure of the positivist, both for the natural and the social sciences, is the accumulation of *empirical* data - that is all data based on observation through the human senses. This data is arranged *logically* in a unitary system. The methodological model used is that of induction. Whereas deduction embarks on a research project with a clear conceptual framework in mind (a model, a theory, a set of hypotheses), induction starts with empirical “facts” from which general theories are developed, these theories being in turn verified by new empirical facts drawn from real life experiences (cf Mouton & Marais 1996:103). It is assumed that, by applying this method of repeated empirical verification, a point can eventually be reached at which knowledge of such things becomes irrefutable. All other things which can *not* be tested “empirically” are rejected as being unscientific knowledge, exposed to human subjectivity. That the positivist epistemology has its immense restrictions, is clear enough. Not only do many questions remain unanswered, especially those exposed by the “revolution” which Thomas Kuhn

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brought about with his paradigm theory, but the metaphysical is downgraded to a sphere in which no "real" (scientific) knowledge is possible.

Although the positivist view of knowledge has largely been rejected by philosophers, it remains entrenched in the minds of many people that science does simply look *objectively* at things as they are. A totally different view is that of the phenomenologists (cf Wright 1992:34), although both start from within the same "subject-object paradigm". The phenomenologists profess that what they observe is only a phenomenon - not the real thing, not the thing itself. The only knowledge we have is *subjective* and *relative* knowledge: the individual human being can determine with certainty only what he or she perceives, feels, or touches. Instead of proclaiming in a positivistic sense, "this is the way it is", the phenomenologists would state, "this is the way I see it", or "this is the way it is to me". Applied to text, we can say: the former (positivist) believes that the text is a direct window on reality - he or she reads it as it is, potentially free from any presuppositions, theories, or models; the latter (phenomenologist) on the other hand, has no access to reality - when reading text he or she has access only to the author's view of events, or maybe access only to his or her own *thoughts* in the presence of the text. Peters (1992:11) observes: "Critical distance through objectification has made us forget that there is only one reality that includes both external objects and human subjects in relation to one another."

A paradigm-shift is called on to challenge the dichotomous thinking of both objectivity (absoluteness) versus subjectivity (relativeness), as well as the implicit claim that knowledge (in order to be true scientific knowledge) always requires empirical verification.

Kuhn's paradigm theory has paved the way to radically new insights (see Van Huyssteen 1989:55-57). Kuhn argued that acceptance or rejection of theories is never settled by logic and empirical verification alone, but rather by their puzzle-solving capabilities. Seeing research items as puzzles, which appeal to the scientist's intellectual capacity and involve him or her in the scientific process, has

highlighted the dialectical relationship between the scientist (subject) and the research item (object). This has led to a revised definition of the meaning of scientific objectivity. Objectivity is not an enterprise free from all subjectivity, but rather “critical engagement and participation” (Mouton 1996:31). “Critical” refers to the heightened awareness of the role the observer plays in the scientific process, based on the realisation that there is no such thing as an “objective”, or “neutral” or “detached” observer; the observer always forms part of the whole; and his or her personal background, feelings, inclinations, and biases are just as real as the object being studied. “Engagement” highlights the continual dialectical relationship between subject and object - the subject being not only the individual scientist but the scientific community of which he or she forms part (paradigm).

The above insights are reflected in the more recently developed epistemological theory of “critical realism”. Critical realism itself is a wide-ranging subject (see Van Huyssteen 1989:125-197; Meyer 1989). Our discussion will focus on critical realism as proposed by Thomas Wright (1992:35-37). Wright (1992:35) suggests the following definition:

This is a way of describing the process of “knowing” that acknowledges the *reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower* (hence “realism”), while also fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of *appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known* (hence “critical”).

This definition highlights the radical difference between itself on the one hand, and positivism and phenomenism on the other hand. For the positivist the process of knowing follows a simple, one-directional line from the observer to the object. The observer, from a neutral and detached stance, looks “objectively” at the object and views reality. This reality is tested by empirical observation. If empirical

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testing (verification) is not possible, one cannot speak of truth. The phenomenalist looks at the object, but discovers that the result of his or her observation reflects back on to the observer. The observer can only be sure of his or her own sense-data. Truth then is relative. For the critical realist, however, there is a continuous to and fro between the observer and the object being observed - similar to the two entities juxtaposed in a metaphor. The observer observes something, which in turn is challenged by critical reflection. Out of the "juxtaposition" and the "interrelation" of observer and object, knowledge concerning reality emerges - not complete, or absolute, but *true*.

Critical awareness of this process reveals three important things (cf Wright 1992:36). First, the observer may be considering an object from *one point of view* only. Realising this creates an awareness of the non-existence of any absolute or "god's-eye view", and the limitations under which an individual person views an object. But the *critical realist* will remain open to (true) knowledge gained by looking at an object from a different stance. Second, every observer, inevitably and without exception, interprets the information received from his or her senses through a grid of expectations, previous experiences, psychological state, and so on. The observed "point of view" is therefore not merely a matter of location, the position from which I look at an object, but also a matter of the "lens" through which that object is being observed (= worldview). Thirdly, the lens in turn is "tinted" by the community to which I belong, ranging from a network of close family and friends, cultural groups, to whole towns, provinces or even country. The sociology of knowledge discussed above (1.3.2) has created awareness of the influence that a particular community has on the way we see reality. Every observer is socialised into the traditions, expectations, anxieties, and other elements of the community to which he or she belongs, which in turn makes him or her see the object being observed in a particular way.

An elephant may serve as an illustration of the critical awareness called for by critical realism. An object like an elephant can be viewed from different angles.

Depending upon where you are, you will see the same elephant, but different parts of it. Some parts will be clearly visible, others will be obscured. Furthermore, depending on the “lens” you are looking through, and the community to which you belong - artist, hunter, conservationist, or tourist, you will see different elephant “realities”, ranging from the beautiful lines and the calming sight of a majestic slow-moving mammal bordering on the brink of extinction, to a beast which evokes the most terrible feelings of fear. Although the different observers may see different things, and although critical self-reflection and interaction with other observers may lead to changes in conclusion - one can nevertheless speak “truly” of reality. But for any “realism” to survive, cognisance needs to be taken of the many factors involved in the process by which that knowledge is attained. So a revision of the traditional terminology is called for. Instead of speaking of *truth*, one should rather speak of what is *real*. Instead of speaking of *objective* or *subjective* knowledge, one should rather speak of *public* or *individual* knowledge.

From a methodological perspective, critical realism advocates a scientific approach which is neither exclusively deductive (from model to material) nor inductive (from material to hypothesis) but *abductive* (Elliott 1993:48-49). Abduction is a kind of to-and-fro between deductive and inductive methods. The movement is from data to hypothesis which in turn however involves a continuing back-and-forth movement of suggestion checking. Only by this method can we gain knowledge of things that is not derived from experience alone and that are not explicit in the material under analysis.

When critical realism is applied specifically to literature, the different presuppositions of the epistemologies discussed above are very apparent (cf Wright 1992:65-66). The positivist regards literature as a *neutral* description of the world. The phenomenalist regards literature as a collection of *subjective* feelings. The positivist says the purpose of criticism is to establish the *right* or *true* meaning of the text, and assumes that there is such a truth and that it can be found. The phenomenalist says that there are only *my* reading and an infinite

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number of other possible readings. The critical realist conceives literature as the articulation of worldviews, or better still, the telling of stories that bring worldviews into articulation. In the process of reading, the reader enters into conversation with the text. Knowledge takes place within the larger framework of both the worldview that is articulated by the text *and* the worldview of the reader engaged in dialogue with the text. When pieces of this puzzle fall together for the reader, that is, when things start to fit within the framework of the readers own story or the stories they are accustomed to, there is knowledge. Knowledge as viewed by a critical-realist epistemology is never absolute, but by definition open to the possibility of challenge, modification, and subversion. It features on the linear scale of "possible" to "highly probable". It is never fixed. Its major contribution lies in its puzzle solving ability.

This study presupposes a critical-realist approach to the texts to be investigated. It is seen as a puzzle-solving contribution to the parables in Luke. No-one is claiming that the result of the study is in any sense absolute or final, or objectively accurate. But it is seen as an alternative approach to the Lukan parables in the hope that it will provoke thought and new insight.

1.4 Methodological remarks and investigative programme

The basic differences between induction, deduction, and abduction have been noted above (1.3). Although, depending on the aspect of research under consideration, all three of these methodological approaches may feature in this study, it will largely be governed by an abductive approach. As such, it follows a line in the logic of the procedure of discovery, involving a continual back-and-forth movement of checking between hypothesis and evidence and vice versa. Similarly the research is not confined to a single goal. Large parts will be exploratory, but then again at times it will be descriptive and/or explanatory (see Mouton & Marais 1996:42-46).

The study is based on the conviction of the researcher that (1) the parables

in Luke's Gospel can and should be read within Luke's narrative world; (2) my interpretation of Luke's narrative as a whole and the individual parables will help me to identify Luke's worldview; (3) Luke's fondness of juxtaposing opposites forms part of Luke's literary style; (4) the parables, when read as metaphors (diaphoric in nature), challenge a conventional worldview which does not adhere to the Lukan worldview; and (5) in juxtaposing opposites Luke creates an alternative worldview which contributes to Luke's intention to resolve conflict between groups in tension and to work for reconciliation.

In this study no new methodological and/or interpretative methods of investigation as such are tested or developed. The world of the parables and that of Luke's narrative is investigated using known methods of interpretation. Notably the methods will not be confined to one particular discipline; they will be interdisciplinary. In the past, prior to 1970, data in the Bible was seen either to be "historical" or "theological", which in turn determined the two main interpretative methods, that of theological exegesis and historical criticism. This period of biblical interpretation was governed by the paradigm of the "purists", who believed that a "mixing" of approaches, practices or methods would create "impurities" (Robbins 1995:276). The primary way to prevent the infiltration of such impurities was to determine an encompassing method of analysing biblical texts into which all other methods are incorporated in some subordinate position. This positivist view has largely been abandoned today in favour of the interdisciplinary analysis and interpretation of texts. This method assumes that there is no single, perfect method of text analysis, but, depending on the phenomena within the text that is being investigated, various disciplines can and should be used - not in opposition to one another but in dialogue. Two of the most prominent new approaches to text analysis are that of literary criticism and socio-scientific criticism, both of which are used in this study (see, inter alia, Van Staden 1991; Elliott 1993; Horrell 1999). Robbins (1995:277-280) provides a helpful model for the interrelated use of these methods of interpretation. As these methods have already been developed, the

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methods of interpretation used will be indicated and motivated within the relevant parts of this study as we arrive at them.

After this introductory chapter the study proceeds in chapter 2 with a reflection on metaphor and on worldview. In this chapter the notion of metaphor is presented from a "philosophical" perspective, indicating new perceptions concerning the meaning and the purpose of the metaphor and clarifying traditional misconceptions. These new insights are applied to the concept of stories, that is, narratives, and to the value of stories in articulating worldviews, in particular our perceptions of God. Chapter 3 consists of a "theological" view of metaphors. The chapter is descriptive and explanatory and shows how biblical scholars (especially historical Jesus scholars) have applied the newly gained insights on metaphors to the parables of Jesus. The polyvalence of metaphors allows the metaphor to be introduced into different contexts. This leads to chapter 4 in which Luke's story is investigated. The study of Luke's story is foremost an investigation of Luke's narrative world (that is the world of the text). As this world, however, does not exist in isolation, Luke's narrative world is also investigated against the backdrop of Luke's contextual world (that is the world of Luke's community). The two are invariably juxtaposed to create a (new) symbolic universe. The purpose of reading Luke's story is to gain understanding of the underlying goal pursued by Luke when writing his narratives. The chapter therefore concludes with a paragraph on Luke as a reconciler of opposites. In chapters 5-7 three unique parables of Luke are analysed: "The Good Samaritan", Luke 10:25-37 (chapter 5); "A Man Had Two Sons", Luke 15:11-32 (chapter 6); "The Rich Man and Lazarus", Luke 16:19-31 (chapter 7). Metaphor is used as a model to interpret these parables. In each instance both the background of tension (providing the backdrop of Luke's metaphors) as well as the challenge to conventional wisdom are investigated. Chapter 8 provides a summary of conclusions drawn.

CHAPTER 2: METAPHORICAL STORIES AND WORLDVIEWS

2.1 Metaphor

It has become striking how often in everyday language, on television, in newspapers, or in casual conversation, the word *metaphor* or the phrase *metaphorically speaking* is used. Everything seems metaphorical. Mark Johnson (1981:ix) observes: "We are in the midst of a metaphormania." Three to four decades ago it was a term hardly used, confined to the realm of aesthetics and largely disregarded in serious scientific study. Today, however, it is regarded as central to any account of language and raises deep epistemological issues. Human thought and knowledge are not conceived without the use of metaphor.

The conscious use of metaphor is not a new phenomenon. Pre-Socratic philosophers made extensive use of metaphors to express their insights. In order to understand them, one had to unravel their metaphors. The first extended systematic and philosophical treatment of the metaphor can be traced back to Aristotle (384-322 BCE). But this is also where the troubled life of the metaphor and its devaluation begins. That the sleeping giant called "metaphor" was laid to rest for so many centuries and only rose again a few decades ago, can be largely attributed to what it was traditionally believed to stand for.

In an essay entitled *Introduction: Metaphor in the philosophical tradition*, Mark Johnson (1981:4) defines the traditional view as follows: "A metaphor is an elliptical simile useful for stylistic, rhetorical, and didactic purposes, but which can be translated into a literal paraphrase without any loss of cognitive content." This definition, which for over twenty-three centuries determined the meaning and usage of the metaphor, highlights various striking features and raises two significant questions: (1) What is a metaphor and how does it work? and (2) What is the purpose of a metaphor? These questions are in some or other way naturally interrelated. A systematic treatment will therefore, invariably lead to some overlapping.

*Metaphorical stories in Luke's narrative world***2.1.1 What is metaphor and how does it work?**

The traditional view proposed is that a metaphor is “an elliptical simile”. Elliptical is used here in the sense of a reduced or a shortened version of the simile. Peter Macky (1990:40) defines an ellipsis as a literary device that “leaves out some words that are necessary for an exact expression.” These words are to be understood in the context in which they are used. The word *simile* originates from the Latin word *simile* (likeness) and refers to a comparison which is being made between two entities. John is *like* a lion, is a simile, John being compared to a lion. This comparison highlights similarities between the two words, John and lion, which are in a one-to-one relationship with one another. An attribute assigned to “John” relates to a similar attribute regarding “lion”. From a literary standpoint the metaphor was distinguished from the simile by the omission of the word *like* - hence “elliptical simile”. John is *like* a lion, is a simile. Whereas John *is* a lion (the word *like* being omitted), is a metaphor. But understanding the metaphor in terms of the simile has with other factors led to its century-long captivity.

Traditionally the metaphor has been prefigured in terms of two basic components: (1) Its focus on the single word, and (2) the notion of a similarity-based comparison. For centuries it was believed that the metaphorical transfer - “giving a thing a name that belongs to something else” (Aristotle’s definition of a metaphor; cf Johnson 1981:5) was located at the level of *words*. Either there is a substitution or a comparison of words. Individual words themselves were seen to have meaning(s). Accordingly a metaphor was primarily seen as the substitution of one word (used literally) with another word (used figuratively). The metaphor itself was understood as a *deviant* from the literal or proper meaning of the word.

This analysis of metaphor, restricted to the study of words, was only broken in the twentieth century, when the realisation dawned that the basic semantic unit is larger than the word. The semantic breakthrough is reflected in Richards’ (1981) description of a metaphor in *The philosophy of rhetoric* (first published in 1936).

Richards (1981:51) writes: "... when we use a metaphor we have two *thoughts* of different things active together and supported by a single word, or *phrase*, whose meaning is a resultant of their *interaction*" (italics mine; see also Macky 1990:44). This description articulates the view that metaphor is not restricted to single words (nor for that matter confined to language), but is an ever-present principle of thought. Human thought is metaphoric. We see and think of things in terms of others. Metaphoric thought then finds expression in the metaphors of language, and as such permeates all discourse. Thinking of metaphors only in terms of single words, which can or could be substituted by other words, is a too narrow outlook. Metaphor does not only feature at the level of words, but at the level of *utterance in its total context* (Johnson 1981:22). From this semantic point of view it is incorrect even to speak of *words* being used metaphorically. Only statements or whole stories can be metaphoric.

Richards' description of the metaphor given above also reflects critically on the notion of a similarity-based comparison. He makes the quite revolutionary statement that the meaning of metaphor is not the result of any substitution, but that of *interaction*. Max Black, in particular, built on this theory of Richards. In *Models and metaphors*, Black (1962:30-46) distinguishes between the substitution, comparison, and interaction views of metaphor. The substitution view advocates the concept that in a metaphor of the "A is B" form (John is a lion), "B" can simply be substituted by "C", which represents the literal equivalent of "B" (John is fierce). The comparison view reflects what above has been described as the elliptical simile. When somebody says "John is a lion" ("A" is "B"), that person is saying, although not explicitly: John is *like* a lion (= simile) *in being* fierce, aggressive, strong, etc. There is a comparison between "A" and "B", with the metaphorical statement being interpreted as being about both "A" and "B". This in itself is a great step forward, but is still flawed in many areas. As with the substitution view, the comparison view still thinks in terms of the metaphorical statement being replaced by literal equivalents. But more important still, it fails to

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observe the crucial role of *differences*. When two entities are juxtaposed, insight is often gained not by their perceived similarities but by dissimilarities which impact on our imagination and lead to new meaning.

This has led to the interaction view of metaphors. Black (1962:38) describes this view as follows: "In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction." In other words, the meaning of the metaphor lies neither in "A" (the principal subject) nor in "B" (the subsidiary subject) but it is created by the juxtaposition of "A" and "B". Black's provocative statement that a metaphor not only asserts similarities, but more often *creates* similarities between things, is well known.

Contrary to the traditional view of a literal substitution, or a comparison theory based on actual properties of the principal and subsidiary subjects, Black (1962:40) emphasises that the interaction between "A" and "B" occurs on the basis of what he calls a *system of associated commonplaces*. The "associated commonplaces" are those properties that are commonly *believed* of an object, a person, or an event. In a metaphor like "John is a lion", what the characteristics and traits of a lion are believed to be within a specific community, might be quite different from its actual characteristics and traits. This highlights the very important fact that metaphors are community- or society-bound. A metaphor that works in one society might be preposterous in another, depending on the system of associated commonplaces. If, for example, certain people perceive a lion (especially the male lion) as a cuddly animal, as portrayed in some movies, their system of associations will be vastly different to that of the African hunter, who may have narrowly escaped an almost fatal mauling by that same predator.

The interaction view leads to a revision of how a metaphor works. Instead of determining what properties or relations from one subject apply or can be compared to those of the other in the same or in some similar sense, the whole *system* of commonplaces is now used interactively to "filter" or organise our

understanding of the other system. In this sense the metaphor is a model that screens and systematises our understanding of the principal subject; it is tool for re-description and makes us “see” aspects which before had gone unnoticed.

That this metaphorical process is not restricted to similarities, but also to dissimilarities and disanalogies, is quite clear. In *Metaphor and reality* Peter Wheelwright ([1962] 1973) makes a very helpful distinction between *epiphor* and *diaphor*. The word *epiphor* is taken from Aristotle (cf Wheelwright [1962] 1973:72). He said that the metaphor involves a “transference” (*epiphora*) of a name to some other object. The semantic movement (*phora*) is then from a known or graspable image (the principal subject) “over on to” (*epi*) a vaguer or strange image (the subsidiary subject). The essential mark of the epiphor is to express a similarity. In the diaphor the movement is “through” (*dia*). There is no marked similarity or resemblance between the principal and the subsidiary subject. It is a paradox - the meaning of the metaphor being produced by the juxtaposition of the principal and subsidiary subject alone. The following well-known statement of Martin Luther serves as an illustration: “When God seems the furthest away, he is the closest.” There is no similarity between *furthest* and *closest*. Semantically they have opposite referential meanings (*Bedeutungen*), though understanding (*Sinn*) is created by their juxtaposition. In the decades after Black’s essay upon the *interaction* on which metaphors are based, much has been written in attempt to explain exactly *how* this interaction works.

That Black himself does not explain the metaphorical process sufficiently has been criticised by a number of scholars. Janet Soskice (1985:38-43) in discussing Black’s *interactive theory* argues that it is not interactive at all but invariably lapses into a comparison. This is partly due to the terminology used by Black in speaking of two subjects, a principal and a subsidiary subject, and of “words”, of which some are used metaphorically and others not in the same metaphorical statement. Soskice (1985:43) argues that the interaction theory is applicable only to metaphors of the A = B type and laments Black’s dismissal of

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Richards' suggestion that in the metaphor two *thoughts* are active together. Like others, she emphasises that metaphor is not simply a function of formal language expression, but of cognition. But at the same time, she fails to see that interaction is not confined to words, but applies equally to thoughts.

Mark Johnson (1981:28-33) gives an overview of various attempts to explain the metaphorical process and the peculiar power that lies behind metaphor to induce insight. That it is extremely difficult to pinpoint exactly what happens and what exactly is being "filtered" and in what way, is confirmed by Johnson's (1981:34) own concluding remark: "To sum up, the only consensus that seems to emerge from all of this argument how metaphors work is not agreement on any one theory, but rather on the kind of work now called for." A more recent attempt to explain the metaphorical process has been made by Jacobus Liebenberg (2001:94-121). With reference to Lakoff and Turner, Liebenberg (2001:99) calls the process one of "cross-conceptual mapping". Slots, relations, properties and knowledge in the source domains are mapped in a one-to-one relationship with the same entities of the target domain (Liebenberg 2001:117). Although mention is made of "target violation", the process of "cross-conceptual mapping", true in many respects, fails to give an adequate account of the process involved within a *diaphor*, where there are no conceived similarities between the source and the target domain.

Helpful (and inclusive of the diaphoric process of the metaphor) is Paul Ricoeur's (1981:228-247) account of the role of "imagination" and "feeling" in the whole metaphorical process. Most probably in reaction to the traditional view, where the metaphor was confined to the realms of poetry and rhetoric, these roles have been largely ignored. But just because metaphors, as has been stated above, permeate *all* discourse and are pervasive in *all* language, does not mean that they no longer stimulate our imagination and evoke feelings. According to Ricoeur (1981:233) the metaphor is in essence pictorial, and the imagination takes the lead in the work of synthesis, important in the act of understanding by virtue

of which previously unassociated systems of implications, which on the surface might seem quite incompatible, are fitted together to reveal an underlying unity. Ricoeur (1981:234) writes: "Imagination ... is the *ability* to produce new kinds by assimilation and to produce them not *above* the differences, as in the concept, but in spite of and through the differences." The word "ability" reminds us of Aristotle's conviction that to produce and to understand metaphors is not something that can be learned, but is a sign of natural talent - you must be born to it (cf Jünger 1974:92). The other important component in understanding the process of metaphorical interaction, is feeling. In grasping the new congruence, we do not only "see" but also "feel" something (Ricoeur 1981:243). Feeling is not to be confused with emotion, but is a term used there to describe relatedness and involvement. In feeling something, we are drawn in and included in the process of what is being created. Ricoeur (1981:243) calls it "self-assimilation", which in turn testifies to the illocutionary force of the metaphor as speech act.

Not to be ignored or overlooked in the discussion of the metaphorical process is the question of "metaphorical context". Referring to what Black (1962:40) had called a *system of associated commonplaces*, it has already been noted that metaphors are community-bound, and only make sense when a listener can associate or identify with the properties of the objects, people, or events used to constitute the metaphor. This fact accentuates the importance of context. A metaphor "on its own", taken out of the context in which it is used, is prone to misinterpretation. Although a metaphor like "John is a lion" might evoke a number of interpretations, the meaning and purpose of the metaphor as intended by the author will only come to the fore once the metaphor is studied within its context. It has been argued sufficiently above that no adequate account of metaphor can be given at the word level where one word is either substituted by or compared with another word. Nor is the creativeness of metaphor the result of a tension between the *literal* and *figurative* use of a word. Traditionally, a metaphor was identified by its literal falsity (see 2.1.2 below). "John is a lion" is literally false.

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But scholars have shown that not all metaphorical expressions are literally false. Ted Cohen (cited by Johnson 1981:22) refers to "twice-true metaphors", of which "She lives in a glass-house" is an example of a metaphor that can be both literally and figuratively true. This observation has led to the realisation that identifying and understanding a metaphor are not merely the result of a perceived tension between figurative and literal *words*, but of a tension between literal reading and its *context*, and indeed its total context: literary, social, cultural, political, and religious. These sentiments are also echoed by Jan van der Watt (2000:12) who notes that especially in reading ancient texts it is essential to assimilate all the relevant socio-historical data. Failure to do so will inevitably lead to the metaphorical thrust of a story being over-looked. The events described in a story might seem like quite normal everyday events, with no apparent tension between their literal and figurative interpretation. The tension, however, is realised when the story is read within the socio-historical framework in which it originated. More often than not this information cannot be secured from the text itself, but lies outside the text.

In discussing the tension of metaphor, Ricoeur (1975:95-96) concurs that the tension is "entirely on the side of the vision of reality between the insight displayed by the fiction and our ordinary way of looking at things. This observation raises awareness of "worldview", when interpreting metaphors. Part of the metaphorical context to be analysed when studying metaphors, is the view of reality as articulated by the metaphorical story or narrative (see 2.2. below). This view of reality might confirm the conventional view of reality (epiphor), or it may challenge or subvert it (diaphor). Focusing exclusively on the literary structure, or on syntactical or semantical deviance when interpreting metaphor, is too restrictive. Attention must be given to the *total* context within which a metaphor features.

To sum up, an elliptical simile (John *is* a lion) is metaphorical, but not all metaphors are elliptical similes. In a metaphor certain entities, either similar

(*epiphor*) or dissimilar (*diaphor*), are juxtaposed in an interactive process creative of new meaning. The metaphor functions not at word level - where some words are used metaphorically and others not, and where one term can be substituted by another - but at the level of discourse within its total context.

2.1.2 What is the purpose of metaphor?

Although the question of the purpose of the metaphor has in part already been answered above (2.1.1) a more detailed analysis of some of the assumptions of the traditional view will lead to greater clarification on two related issues, the cognitive status of the metaphor and its perceived capability to reshape reality.

The traditional view of the purpose of a metaphor is defined by Johnson (1981:4) as follows: "A metaphor is ... useful for stylistic, rhetorical, and didactic purposes, but which can be translated into a literal paraphrase without any loss of cognitive content." The two parts of this description go hand in hand. If a metaphor can be "translated into a literal paraphrase" without any loss of cognitive content, its usage will indeed be restricted to that of linguistic ornamentation. But this very assumption, which in turn is based on an understanding of metaphor as a *deviance* from literal use, is being questioned on various accounts.

Deviance refers to a deviation from the normal. As such the metaphorical process was traditionally seen - a name is transferred to some object to which that name does not properly belong. For many medieval and post-medieval philosophers this understanding of the metaphor led to a total distrust of its use. "Deviating from the normal", a metaphor was seen as a tool to misguide and to clothe falsehoods in stylistically pleasing and eloquent language. The thought-process of these philosophers (empiricists) was governed by a paradigm which Johnson (1981:12) calls the "literal-truth paradigm":

- (1) The human conceptual system is essentially literal - literal language ("words proper") is the *only* adequate vehicle for (a)

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expressing one's meaning precisely, and (b) making truth claims, which together make possible correct reasoning by the philosopher.

(2) Metaphor is a deviant use of words in other than their proper senses, which accounts for its tendency to confuse and to deceive.

(3) The meaning and truth claims of a metaphor (if there are any) are just those of its literal paraphrase.

The attack on the metaphor by the logical positivists of the twentieth century is very similar to that of the empiricists. They maintained the either-or distinction between the alleged cognitive (literal) and emotive (figurative) functions of language, paralleled by the attendant belief that all scientific knowledge can be reduced to a system of literal and verifiable sentences (cf Johnson 1981:17). As metaphors can hardly be broken up into smaller, logical and verifiable parts, they are to be ignored by all serious scientists and philosophers.

The literal-verses-figurative debate has largely become superfluous with the emerging realisation that metaphor is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a fundamental principle of thought. In contrast to the "literal-truth paradigm" of the empiricists, Lakoff and Johnson (see Johnson 1981:38-39; cf Liebenberg 2001:94-95) postulate that "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature." What we know, we know metaphorically. Accordingly many so-called "literal" statements and "literal" truths of our society are founded and grounded on metaphors which have become conventionalised to the point that the original character as metaphor has been forgotten. This view was already expressed by Nietzsche (1844-1900) who credits all truth with a metaphorical structure. Nietzsche was, of course, not concerned in saving the metaphor, but in discrediting the positivist conception of "the truth". Nietzsche (cited by Johnson 1981:16) writes:

What therefore is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphism: in short a sum of human relations which become poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned, and after long usage seem to a nation fixed, canonic and binding; truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions, worn-out-metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses

Although this “thesis” was used adversely by Nietzsche, it confirms the inseparable relationship between metaphor and truth. Once our prejudice against metaphors as bearers of truth values is lost, the traditional dichotomy between literal and figurative breaks down.

But even if metaphors can have truth values, the question remains whether metaphors can be reduced to literal paraphrases without loss of cognitive content. This debate surfaced primarily as result of Black’s interaction theory on metaphor. If metaphors simply register resemblance (substitution and comparison views), and if they are just one way of viewing things, then a translation into literal language is feasible. But what if, as Black and others have claimed, the metaphor through a process of interaction *institutes* resemblance?

On the basis of the tension caused within the metaphorical process, Ricoeur (1975:80) argues that all true metaphors - that is “tension metaphors” - are untranslatable. Substitution and comparison metaphors with the focus on similarities between “A” and “B”, are generally understood in a rule-governed and systematic way. But the same cannot be said of the “Aha!” experience of tension metaphors, which involves stimulation and play of the imagination. Also arguing for the irreducibility of metaphorical insight, Johnson (1981:39-40) calls a metaphor an “act of originality” similar to what Immanuel Kant called an act of “genius”, being here described as the “creative capacity to produce ‘aesthetical ideas’”, an aesthetical idea being an imaginative representation that “occasions

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much thought, without however any definite thought, i.e., any *concepts*, being capable of being adequate to it” (Johnson 1981:40). A metaphor can also be likened to a painting, which when looked at stimulates the imagination, evokes feelings, organises reality, and leads to new insight, none of which can be adequately expressed in literal language. This does not mean that a metaphor cannot be paraphrased at all, but that the paraphrase will never exhaust the meaning of the metaphor *completely*.

The irreducibility of the metaphor also goes hand in hand with our understanding of the semantically related term, *symbol*. Wheelwright ([1962] 1973:92) gives the following definition of a symbol: “A symbol ... is a relatively stable and repeatable element of perceptual experience, standing for some larger meaning or set of meanings which cannot be given, or not fully given, in perceptual experience itself.” In discussing this definition, Wheelwright then makes the important distinction between a *steno* and a *tensive* symbol, which for Ricoeur (cf Perrin 1976:30) is a distinction between *sign* and *symbol*. A steno-symbol or sign has a one-to-one relationship to that which it represents. The sign or symbol refers to one, and only one thing. A tensive symbol can have an entire set of meanings and cannot be expressed adequately by any one referent. The interaction theory of metaphor presupposes that the metaphor is such a tensive symbol, one that reveals new aspects and can never be “pinned down” completely.

Metaphor as symbol raises the question of reference (or denotation) and the relationship of metaphor to reality, which is a more general question of the truth claim of metaphor. Reference (*Bedeutung*) needs to be distinguished from meaning or sense (*Sinn*), a distinction we owe to Gottfried Frege (cf Ricoeur 1975:81). Whereas meaning is *what* a statement says, reference is *that about which* a statement says. The *what* belongs to the statement itself. The *that* points beyond it, to a “world” outside of the statement. It is extra-linguistic. The question is whether the metaphor as a form of figurative or poetic language indeed refers to something beyond itself, or whether its function is purely internal, restricted to

the accentuation and ornamentation of the message for its own sake, as traditionally viewed. The reasoning behind the traditional view is that the very function of poetic language is the *suspension* of the referential function of ordinary language. For an obviously ambiguous statement like “John is a lion” to make any sense at all, we must break with the ordinary descriptive reference. “John” is not a “lion”, but a human being. Similarly a “lion” is not “John”, but an animal.

Ricoeur (1975:83-84), however, postulates that the suspension of the ordinary descriptive reference, does not mean the abolition of all reference. On the contrary, the suspension of the ordinary reference is “the negative condition for the liberation of another referential dimension of language and another dimension of reality itself ...” The paradox of metaphorical reference leaves us with an “ambiguous” or “split reference”, a “first-order reference” and a “second-order reference” (Ricoeur 1981:239-40). Strictly speaking therefore, the metaphor does not abolish, but in its own peculiar way preserves the literal sense, while it at the same entertains another sense. Two different points of view are harboured simultaneously, mediated by the role played by the imagination.

It is this ambiguous nature of the metaphor that allows it, like the model, to function as a filter. By a transference of labels to new objects, which first might resist it, but then surrender to it, it reorganises, re-describes, and even reshapes the world as we see and experience it around us. In contrast to traditional views, metaphor does speak about reality, but does so at a level other than that of “literal” language.

To sum up, metaphor is clearly more than just “useful for stylistic, rhetorical, and didactic purposes”. By its dual reference it harbours the ability, like a model, to re-describe the world around us and in so doing to create a world previously not known. This new vision of the world will invariably confirm, challenge, modify, or subvert the world as it is presently seen.

*Metaphorical stories in Luke's narrative world***2.2 Stories and worldviews**

Our analysis of the metaphor has opened the door for us to apply the notion of the metaphor to stories. Our thinking on metaphors is not to be restricted to the juxtaposition of individual words or parts of a statement, but is to embody entire discourses which then can be termed "metaphorical stories". A particular mode of discourse, a parable, which applies to a narrative a metaphorical process, will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3 below. At this point our focus falls on stories in general. Stories are carriers of worldviews (2.2.1). Each story articulates a particular view of reality. Worldview in turn finds expression in most dimensions of human life (2.2.2). Its key elements, however, are the stories we humans tell each other. Stories do not only confirm a worldview, but their inherent subversive nature makes them most apt to challenge a dominant view of reality (2.2.3).

2.2.1 Understanding "story"

In our discussion on metaphors above (2.1), the conclusion was drawn that metaphors are not only a useful addition to the human thought process, but one of its fundamental characteristics: we know things by juxtaposing the unknown with the known. As metaphors are an essential element in the process of knowledge, it seems that stories are essential to the way humans relate to one another and the world. In *The New Testament and the people of God*, Thomas Wright (1992:38) points out that "stories are one of the most basic modes of human life." Wherever humans are, stories are told.

Being a father who needs to answer the many inquisitive and sometimes critical questions of my children, I know the value of telling them stories. These stories fulfill the function of making them understand certain things, or of making them see certain things in a different light. But story-telling is not confined to children at home or in the *Kindergarten*. Being also a minister tasked with preaching each Sunday, hardly a sermon is given without telling a story.

Sometimes they are old (known) stories, stories of the Bible re-told. Often they are new (unknown) stories of what others or I myself have experienced in this world. These stories, especially those with an unexpected twist, serve not only an illustrative purpose, but are intended to influence and (re-)shape the way that listeners, in this instance primarily adults, see and experience their world. No story is just randomly told. Each story is trying to say something about us and the world in which we live.

The notion of a story is not restricted to a narrative, of course. Letters are stories as well. This is aptly attested by Norman Petersen (1985) in his book, *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the sociology of Paul's narrative world*. Substantiating his initial hypothesis, Petersen (1985:2) argues that every commentator on a Pauline letter (as any other letter) at some point tells a *story* about the letter. The people and the events referred to in the letter provide a narrative context to help the reader understand the letter. This is also the reason why, when the reader of a letter is asked to tell someone else what a certain letter is about, the reader will invariably respond by telling a story. The letter to Philemon is an excellent example to demonstrate and substantiate this point. Explaining what this letter is about, one would start with a story-like line, for example: "There was a man called Philemon, who had a slave called Onesimus who ran away from him ..." This applies to any other letter. Telling the story of Paul's letters to the Corinthians, one would most probably also start with a story-like line such as: "There was this congregation in Asia Minor, which ..." Whereas the original reader of or listener to such a letter would in most cases have understood the *story* as it was read, modern readers of an ancient letter first have to reconstruct the world of the letter (the referential world), which is either done subconsciously by the casual reader, or consciously by the literary critic. In order to reconstruct this referential world close scrutiny needs to be given to the social arrangements of the people referred to in the letter, as well as the symbolic forms (beliefs and values) that prevail in that particular social environment. The

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narrative aspect of a letter is situated within, and is part and parcel of the referential world of the letter.

Petersen (1985:10) also makes the case for history (in the strict sense) being "story". A historical account is not a representation of the events themselves, or even a verbal representation of them, but a "story" *about* the events. Historical stories, like any stories, are necessarily selective. As a result, historical stories construct through a story a history that does not exist apart from the story (Petersen 1985:10).

Petersen's arguments substantiate and confirm the view of Thomas Wright (1992) that stories form part and parcel of human life and existence. Humans tell them to each other, and in the company of others, "act-out" their stories. Needless to say, the notion of story is not confined to verbal communication, but applies to non-verbal communication as well. A symbolic gesture, or people seated together in silence, "tell" a story. In this study our focus falls on *written* literature. Apart from being one of the most basic modes of human life, Wright (1992:38) also advocates the view that stories are the fundamental vehicle by which worldviews are articulated. This forms a direct contrast to the positivist and phenomenalist view of literature and reading (cf Wright 1992:50-69). For the positivist, the process of reading is very simple: you just read what is written and thereby gain direct (objective) access to the event being described. That this view has its pitfalls is realised as soon as an event being described (in a newspaper for example) is known not only to the author, but to the reader as well. What appears to be straightforward fact to a reader *not* present at the event, might seem preposterous reporting to another reader who had been present or involved in the event described. Reality, and the author's point of view articulated in his or her story, might well be vastly different. Wright remarks (1992:51): "When you agree with the point of view, you tend to watch as a realist (this is how things actually are); when you disagree, you quickly become a phenomenalist at the author/event stage (it was just her point of view) or even a subjectivist (she simply made it all

up)."

As a result, the phenomenon of reading within the historical-critical paradigm has become very confusing. From a naive positivist view, the pendulum has swung to a more phenomenalist view on literature and reading: we have no access to the real event whatsoever. The only thing we can be sure of is the author's point of view. But the search for the author's point of view is not without obstacles. Enormous debates have raged on whether we do actually have access to the mind, and especially to the intentions of the original author (see Meyer 1989:17-56). Failing to reach conclusive results, the emphasis within many modern studies has again swung away from authors and *their* world, to the world of *texts*, as independent entities with a world of their own.

In an essay entitled *Skrifgebruik: Hermeneutiese riglyne*, Andries van Aarde (1985:547-578) raises awareness of the hermeneutical fallacies that occur whenever the swinging pendulum lingers too long at one position, either at the author or at the text. Of those fallacies discussed, the "intentional" and "referential" fallacies need special mentioning. In general, the word "intentional" refers to the *intentions* of the author of a particular text. The fallacy is the false belief that understanding of text is made possible only via the intentions of the author and that an interpreter has direct access from the text to the intentions of the author behind the text. Any text is, of course, the product of an author who in writing has particular intentions. But these intentions of the author cannot be the sole *norm* of interpretation. It is a fact, in much literature the author is not known to the interpreter, and his or her intentions can only be deduced in part from the text. In such cases insight and meaning are not excluded, but the text has a life of its own from which at least some meaning can be gained. The referential fallacy refers to the false belief that an interpreter can move *directly* from the text to the world to which the text *refers*. Every interpreter must realise that language consists of "verbal symbols" and that these symbols are not the same as the reality to which they refer (Van Aarde 1985:562). Between the verbal symbol and the

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object being described exists a *referential* relationship: over and beyond the text (as symbol) everything else needed for a better understanding of the text, and not given by the text itself (as the authors intentions), needs to be *constructed*. A construction is not the "real" thing, but it can and does convey real insight.

Van Aarde's (1985:551) apprehension with regard to the absolutisation of the one approach of interpreting literature in favour of the other, is echoed by Thomas Wright. Within the framework of critical-realist epistemology, Wright (1992:64) counters the contrasting and polarised views (either-or statements) of the positivists and phenomenologists, with a number of affirmations (both-and statements):

First, we [can] affirm *both* that the text does have a particular viewpoint from which everything is seen, *and* at the same time that the reader's reading is not mere "neutral observation". Second, we [can] affirm *both* that the text has a certain life of its own, *and* that the author had intentions of which we can in principle gain at least some knowledge. Third, we [can] affirm *both* that the actions or objects described may well be, in principle, actions and objects in the public world, *and* that the author was looking at them from a particular, and perhaps distorted, point of view.

For the critical-realist each stage in the process of reading (reader/text, text/author, author/event) becomes a "conversation" (Wright 1992:64). During these conversations, misunderstandings are not only likely but inevitable. Nevertheless through careful listening, reality can be accessed and real understanding can be secured. But, most important, text is not a "window" on reality, nor a "mirror" of one's own feelings, but an *articulation of a worldview*. Each text reflects in a lesser or a larger degree the way the author views reality, a reality that can - at least in part - be reconstructed; and which in the process of

reading engages in conversation with the reader and his or her worldview.

What applies to text in general, is particularly relevant to a narrative text (story). Narratology has raised awareness of story technique, and of the fact that the way a story is told reflects the particular ideological perspective of the storyteller. At least part of the task of the literary critic will then be to explicate this perspective and engage in the challenge it poses to the worldview of the real, implied, or contemporary reader. Confirmation, modification, or subversion is inevitable.

2.2.2 Reflections on “worldview”

In general terms, a worldview can be defined as “the grid through which humans perceive reality” (Wright 1992:38). It is not reality itself, but rather the way a certain group of people view reality. Normally we are not conscious of the presence or function of our worldview, the reason for this being, that worldview is something into which every single person has been socialised, more or less imperceptibly, from birth.

Being a social phenomenon a worldview is not absolute. It will vary. That of the first-century Mediterranean world, is for example, quite different of that of most modern people in the Western world today. The former which has its roots in primordial times and extends even into our modern period (for example within the Mediterranean world and most third world cultures) is that of a dual-dimensional reality: reality is not merely confined to what we see, the visible and material world; just as real as this world is the non-material world, the invisible world, often referred to as the “world of Spirit” (Borg 1987:26). The biblical tradition is rooted within such a dual-dimensional reality. This basic division of reality is spoken of in many ways - as the sacred and the profane, the world of God and angels (both the good, and the evil angels) and the world of humankind. Between these two there is constant interaction. People and countries are protected by angels; or contrariwise people are possessed by demons and evil

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spirits that control their lives and cause both spiritual and physical harm (cf Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:182-183).

In contrast to this dual-dimensional reality, most modern people of the Western world have been socialised into a largely secularised and one-dimensional understanding of reality. This is the result of a worldview which has its root in the technological revolution of the last few centuries and the scientific and historical revolution of the Age of Enlightenment. Seeing the world from within such a framework as this, only that is perceived to be real which is essentially the material, the visible world of time and space, and that which can be scientifically "proven". Reality is ultimately made of tiny bits and pieces of "stuff" which all operate according to the fixed laws of nature (Borg 1987:32). It is a worldview that leaves no room for another, a non-visible, transcendental dimension of reality.

It is not our task at this point to analyse the two worldviews in order to determine which one approaches closer to "reality". This in itself would be a fallacy. What is important is the realisation that a worldview is *learned*. The process of *learning* is largely subconscious. Only a few may be formally instructed. Worldview is, however, as noted by Borg (1987:32), the "presupposition of all subjects". It determines what is real, or unreal, what is right or wrong. It is like a transparent map laid over reality, conditioning not only our understanding of reality and the way we see it, but also our experience of it and the way we speak of it.

Wright (1992:123-124) shows that a worldview includes most dimensions of our human existence, including "questions", "symbols", "praxis", and "story". It provides answers to the *questions* we have on human existence: Who are we, Where do we come from, Why are we here? All cultures have deep-rooted beliefs which can be called up to answer these questions. Cultures embedded in Christian belief will, for example, provide an answer, in which God is, in some or other way, portrayed both as the source and the binding force of life, who determines our being in this world and gives it sense. An atheist's worldview

would provide radically different answers. Worldviews often find expression in *symbols*. These can be artefacts, or certain events, such as family gatherings or cultural and religious festivals. The way we dress at such a festival can be such a symbol. These symbols can be identified by the reactions of anger or fear when they are challenged. They determine the boundaries between “insiders” and “outsiders”. A worldview will also always include a *praxis*, that is a particular way of living in the world. This praxis may be reflected in the choice of a life aim - to pursue a certain profession, to raise a family, to be loyal to received traditions, to work towards peace and harmony within some or other community. But the key element in worldview, which permeates all other elements, is *story*. Stories are the “carriers” of worldview. They provide the questions we ask, and they provide the answers. They either affirm and reassert, or challenge and subvert the symbols and praxis of our everyday life. Contrary to popular, positivist belief, worldviews are exposed not only once the story has been peeled off and the true facts (behind the story) have been laid bare. The story itself is the *vehicle* of the worldview. Without the *vehicle* a worldview is not communicated.

That the influence of worldview on our way of being cannot be ignored, is stressed by Wright’s (1992:124) words: “Worldviews are ... the basic stuff of human existence, the lens through which the world is seen, the blueprint for how one should live in it, and above all the sense of identity and place which enables human beings to be what they are.” Ignoring worldviews in the study of literature will inevitably lead to an inadequate understanding of reality and human existence.

The task at hand is, however, complicated. Worldviews do not simply appear boldly before us and pause for our inspection. Nor are they something one looks at from a distance, an object separated from the observer. They are the lenses *through* which one looks at reality. Being predominately confined to the subconsciousness, an awareness of a worldview usually only surfaces when more than one are juxtaposed and one is challenged by others. This invariably happens in a multicultural society in which a variety of faiths are professed. The study of

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worldviews focuses, therefore, on those dimensions of life (discussed above), which *reflect* them. These are all interlinked. To give an example pertaining to the topic of this research, worldview will determine what we believe about God - whether God is distant or close, whether God is strict or compassionate. These beliefs will in turn determine our way of living in this world, our patterns of behaviour; as well as the way we speak about God whether as a judge, a ruler, a lawgiver, or as an intimate father, a reconciler, a saviour (see Borg 1998). But most important, each set of beliefs are carried along and affirmed by the stories their adherents tell each other. Similarly, alternative stories are the vehicle by which a particular belief is challenged, modified, or subverted.

2.2.3 The subversive function of story

Stories often fulfill an affirmative function. Affirmation takes place when the story being told illustrates or amplifies a point which within the community exists as the norm. When a story fulfills this function, the point made can often be made without the story, although not as artfully or as entertainingly (cf Borg 1987:98). Subversion takes place by the telling of alternative stories which have an unexpected, often paradoxical twist in the tail. In such a case the story cannot simply be discarded, or reduced to a list of direct statements, without a distinct loss in value at all levels - from those of entertainment to persuasion.

Story has the unique ability to draw listeners or readers into its world, thereby enabling them to see something which they would otherwise *not* have seen; or - in the case of subversion - would have resisted seeing if a point had been made directly. Instead of translating a story into something else, literary critics therefore urge us to read the story as it is and to understand it on its own terms. The emphasis shifts from the *What* of the story (What is written?) to the *How* and the *Why* (How is the story written und Why?). This means that the *effect* created by the story and the means by which that effect is achieved need to be studied.

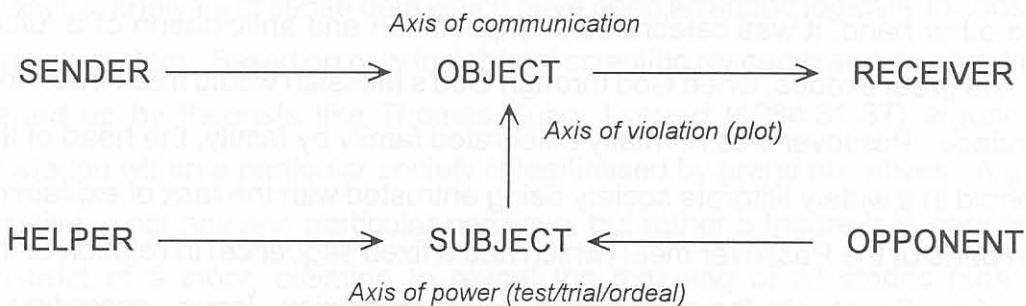
The classical biblical example of a subversive story is that told by the prophet Nathan to David after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sm 12:1-10). David is drawn into Nathan's story of a rich man, a poor man, and a little lamb. He is angered by the atrocious, egocentric actions of the rich man and passes harsh judgement (death). Then Nathan springs the trap: "You are the man!" Telling a story can open up a radically new view on reality and can change the life of someone.

In recent years there have been in depth analysis of the nature or the poetics of story, that is, the way a story possesses the power to do what it does. Among the many features that have been studied are: real author, implied author, narrator, focaliser (point of view and standards of judgement), real reader, ideal reader, implied or explicit reader, style, rhetorical techniques, the narrative sequences, plot(s), and so on (see, inter alia, Funk 1988:1-74; Bal 1991:73-146). For the purpose of this study attention needs to be drawn to the *narrative point of view*. In some respects the narrative "point of view" can be paralleled by the more general concept of "worldview". Both reflect a view of reality. "Point of view" refers in particular to the "ideological" perceptions of the *narrator*. The term "ideology" is used here in a non-pejorative way. It refers to the network of themes and ideas that occur in a narrative as an "imagined" version of a specific reality (Van Aarde 1988:236). Each text presupposes such a network of themes and ideas (ideology or ideologies) which are intended to have meaning within a particular social context (for the two opposing ideological perspectives in Luke-Acts, see chapter 4 below). The act of communication is effected in narrative form in such a manner as to manipulate the reader in such a way that he or she agrees with or rejects the ideological perspective of the narrator. In general terms, "point of view" is used to describe the interaction between the situation of the narrator and the narrative discourse (Van Aarde 1988:238-239). Each character in the narrative features as an interpreter of the prevailing view of reality as it is set out by the narrator. What is available to the exegete in determining the narrative point

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of view, is the narrative discourse as it features within the social context of the intended readers or listeners.

Although the narrative point of view can be discerned by means of various features of the narrative, what is often most valuable is the “unexpected twist” within a story. This twist is best highlighted by focusing on the narrative *structure* of story. Helpful here is the model proposed by Greimas, to which both Wright (1992:70-73), with regard to story in general, and Bernard Scott (1981:99) with regard to parabolic narratives in particular, refer. The model shows the six actants that normally feature within a narrative:



A typical story follows a basic pattern of three sequences (initial, topical, and final sequence), in which, for example, an agent (subject) is entrusted (by the sender) with a task (object) to solve (for the benefit of the receiver). This he or she eventually manages to do, often with the support of others (helpers), in spite of opposition (opponents). In certain stories not all the actants need be present. The model, being a model, represents “the potentiality of performance” (Scott 1981:99) and depicts the probable. Depicting the probable, the listener or reader of a story either consciously or subconsciously “knows” what syntax a story should follow and what each actant is *expected* to do. If, however, the syntax is unexpectedly altered, so that whoever or whatever is in some *expected* position in the model is moved to an *unexpected* position (the opponent, for example, becomes the helper), a powerfully subversive movement of thought is suddenly

brought about - a switch that reveals something of the narrator's point of view and challenges a prevailing or conventional worldview.

The subversiveness of story is most effective when a known story (either a known narrative, or a common real life experience) is re-told along expected lines, but is then "disrupted" by the unexpected. Although not a story in the strict sense of the word (such stories will be analysed in chapters 5-7), the "Lord's Supper", intertwined with the Passover celebrations during the night before Jesus was crucified, serves as an illustration (see Wright 1996:555-562). Passover tells the story of Israelite history as deliverance from the slavery of Egypt. On the one hand it was a reflection on, or a re-living of, a past event, the Exodus from Egypt. On the other hand, it was celebrated in expectation and anticipation of a future event, the great exodus, when God through God's Messiah would free Israel from all bondage. Passover was normally celebrated family by family, the head of the household in a widely illiterate society being entrusted with the task of explaining certain parts of the Passover meal (which had a fixed sequence) in relation to the Exodus from Egypt. On the night before Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus - according to Pauline and Synoptic tradition - changed crucial parts of the story and applied them to himself. Instead of referring to and explicating the Passover bread, he broke it and said: "This is *my* body ...". And instead of explaining the meaning of the Passover cup with reference to the lamb that was slaughtered, he gave it to them and said: "This cup is the new covenant in *my* blood" (1 Cor 11:24-25). Jesus' *strange* and *unexpected* words within the setting of the Passover meal will have jolted and stimulated the mind of his disciples. Most probably later, in hindsight, after the resurrection of Jesus, the spark caused by these unexpected twists will have ignited the insight that Jesus was reinterpreting the meal in relation to himself. Wright (1996:557) in summarising this acted-out, subversive story, writes: "... the meal brought Jesus' own kingdom-movement to its climax. It indicated that the new Exodus, and all that it meant, was happening *in and through Jesus himself*." It is very unlikely that a direct statement about Jesus being the

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fulfilment of their hopes would have sufficed to change the way the disciples were viewing reality at that particular point in time.

The subversive nature of story is further underlined by Jean-François Lyotard's (1984) insights on "grand narratives" (*métarécits*) and "small narratives" (*petits récits*). His book, *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*, centres on the legitimising process of knowledge and is written in reaction to the dominant "scientific" paradigm of the modern period. Lyotard (1984:xi) stresses narrative not merely as a significant new field of study but as central to the human mind. It is a mode of thinking as legitimate as that of abstract logic. Within an empirical or a positivist paradigm, knowledge is legitimised by the careful "scientific" analysis of sense data which have been arranged logically to construct a unitary system. Based on new insights of scientific research and its paradigms, opened up by theorists like Thomas Kuhn, Lyotard (1984:31-37) argues that knowledge within a particular society is legitimised by grand narratives. A grand narrative is not any one particular narrative, but rather a theoretical, conceptual construct of a story, claiming to reveal the meaning of all stories (see also Readings 1991: 63). It is like a "red line" leading through all stories. In this sense it is an "interpretive tool", revealing the singular truth inherent in the many narratives to be found within a culture. Grand narratives have normative functions and are controlled by the élite and other leading groups of society (cf Breytenbach 1997:1169). They affirm and legitimise the norms of society and determine the way a particular group of people see reality. Grand narratives are often used by the élite as instruments of control and marginalisation. However, just as society is never constant, but a fluid and dynamic phenomenon, grand narratives do not remain unchanged, but are prone to challenge. Challenge, or to use the terminology of Lyotard (1984:37), the "delegitimation of knowledge", occurs by the spread of small narratives written against the dominating and controlling influence of grand narratives. A grand narrative is, therefore, undermined and subverted by the telling of "small" or "contra narratives". A number of small narratives may then combine to form a new grand narrative. Breytenbach

(1997:1169-1180) provides a helpful exposition of the subversion of grand narratives within Israel. By way of example the "Zionist theology" (see, inter alia, 2 Sm 7:8-29; 2 Ki 18:13-19; 37; Is 36:1-33:28; Ps 46; 48; 76) as the grand narrative of Israel is discussed. In the prophetic writings this grand narrative is, however, subverted by a number of contra narratives (see, inter alia, Jr 5:1-17, 20-30; 6:1-7; Mi 2:11-13; 4:1-9, 11-13; 5:4-5, 7-14). The claim that Jerusalem will never be conquered is rejected and subsequently realised by the events of the Babylonian exile.

Fundamental to this study is the *awareness* of the subversive function of narrative or story. The best way to challenge a view of reality which is being carried along and legitimised by a grand narrative, is the telling of an alternative story.

2.3 Indications of an alternative wisdom teacher

There exists little doubt that Jesus of Nazareth was a wisdom teacher. The term "wisdom" is used here in a broad sense, referring to the nature of reality and how we human beings are to live our life in accord with that reality. In part wisdom corresponds with "worldview". It is the teaching creative of the way we view reality.

In his book, *Meeting Jesus again for the first time*, Marcus Borg (1994:69-95) raises the question whether Jesus is to be seen as a conventional wisdom teacher, or as teacher of an alternative or subversive wisdom. Conventional wisdom is defined as "the dominant consciousness of any culture" (Borg 1994:75). It is the path travelled by most. Alternative wisdom on the other hand is the wisdom that shatters or subverts conventional wisdom. The core aspects of conventional wisdom are described by Borg (1994:76-77) as follows:

- *Conventional wisdom provides guidance on how to live.* Within Israel such guidance was primarily provided by the Torah and its interpretation by religious leaders. It covers practical matters, such as proper or wrong

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- behaviour, and also provides the central values and images of the good life to be found in a culture.
- *Conventional wisdom is based upon the dynamic of rewards and punishment.* Whoever adheres to the guidelines given is rewarded; the perpetrators of evil deeds reap the punishment. Life is matter of requirements and rewards, failure and punishment.
 - *Conventional wisdom creates a world of hierarchies and becomes the basis of identity and self-esteem.* Those who measure up to the standards of conventional wisdom are portrayed as better than others.

Referring primarily to the aphorisms and parables of Jesus, Borg (1994:80-88) shows that Jesus could hardly be regarded as a conventional wisdom teacher. The "stories" he told invariably challenged and subverted conventional perceptions of life in general and the view of God in particular. Whereas conventional wisdom portrayed God primarily as a "lawgiver" and "judge" whose requirements must be met (he is the enforcer and legitimator of conventional wisdom), Jesus called God "father" and portrayed God as a provider for those in need (cf Lk 12:24-28) (see also Borg 1998:57-79). Whereas conventional wisdom portrayed God as one who blesses those obedient to God, Jesus portrayed God as one who makes "the sun rise on the evil and the good" and as one who "sends rain upon the just and the unjust" (Mt 5:45) irrespective of their piety or lack of it. Whereas conventional wisdom highlighted family unity, Jesus spoke of leaving and even "hating" one's family (Lk 14:26). Whereas conventional wisdom saw wealth as a blessing from God, Jesus regularly criticised wealth and called upon some to sell everything they had (Mk 10:25; Lk 18:22). Whereas conventional wisdom advocated the importance of honour, Jesus ridiculed those who sought it (Lk 14:7-10). Examples abound.

It is not our intention at this point to provide a detailed overview and analysis of the challenge posed by Jesus' teaching. What is important for us at

this point is the argument that Jesus was not a conventional wisdom teacher but, as indicated above, a teacher of an *alternative* wisdom through which he was inviting his listeners to perceive God and reality *differently*. If this argument carries, the traditional perceptions of the parables of Jesus as allegories and/or illustrations of a certain truth need to be revised. That Jesus was a teacher of an alternative wisdom in itself does of course not disqualify an understanding of Jesus' parables as illustrations. In telling his parables, Jesus could have illustrated or confirmed part of the teaching he conveyed in normal discursive and literal language. But the aptness of metaphors, in particular diaphors, to challenge fixed perceptions and ignite new thought at least warrants a revised approach to Jesus' parables as *metaphorical* stories.

CHAPTER 3: JESUS' PARABLES AS METAPHORICAL STORIES

3.1 What is a parable?

That there has been a great shift in parable research, has already been indicated in the introductory chapter (chapter 1). As within any paradigm shift, once the transition has been made from “scientific revolution” to “normal science”, there is such an explosion of research material that it becomes almost impossible to note, even briefly, the vast amount of material available. It is, however, not our endeavour to develop new theories, but to refine those already existing - accentuating certain aspects, and applying them to our specific field of research, the Lukan parables.

There are different ways to approach the study of Jesus' parables today. Different modern scholars have made an elaborate study of parables, including a detailed historical overview of parable interpretation (see, inter alia, Perrin 1976:89-193; Weder 1978:11-57; Kissinger 1979; Scott 1990:7-62; Jones 1995:7-172; Blomberg 1990:13-170; Snodgrass 2000:3-29; Forbes 2000:16-51). Our focus here falls on one particular approach to parables, by which the parables are interpreted as *metaphors*. Based on the recently revised theories of metaphor in general (see chapter 2 above), biblical scholars have applied this revised concept of metaphor to Jesus' parables, using metaphor as a *model* for their interpretation. The word “model” is emphasised, as parable and metaphor should not simply be equated as if metaphor *represents* parable. Metaphor is used as the “lens” through which we intend to look at the parables of Jesus in general, and those in Luke's Gospel in particular.

There seems no better way to introduce the metaphorical view of Jesus' parables than with the well-known and eloquent definition provided by Dodd (1935) in *The parables of the kingdom*. Dodd, it seems, was one of the first modern biblical scholars to define a parable as, specifically, a metaphor. Initially, his definition did not make the headlines it deserved. Its rise to prominence can

be attributed to Robert Funk, who almost three decades later systematically explored the most important elements of this definition in an essay that since has become a classic in parable interpretation (Funk 1966:133-162; see also Patterson 1998:120-162). Dodd ([1935] 1961:5) defines the parable as follows: "At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought." Serving as a springboard for our analysis of parables, Dodd's definition is to form the structural basis of our discussion, opening the way to new insights that have since seen the light and ignited vivid discussion among contemporary scholars.

3.2 Parables as metaphors

The insight that Jesus' parables are metaphors has not always been the accepted position. The reasons for this are numerous, not least the use of parables within the synoptic Gospels themselves (cf Patterson 1998:121-123). One strategy employed by the gospel writers for interpreting the parables of Jesus was to see them as *allegories*. The classical example is the parable of "The Sower" in Mark 4:3-8, which is interpreted allegorically in Mark 4:14-20. The Gospel of Mark also provides the underlying theory: in order to understand the parable one needs a special key to unlock the code which provides the referent of each element hidden within the parable. This key is available only to those to whom the "secret of the reign of God" (Mk 4:11) is revealed. It was only natural to assume that other parables should be interpreted similarly. Accordingly, most of the Church Fathers, including Irenaeus, Tertullian of Alexandria, Origen, and Augustine understood the parables as detailed allegories. Augustine's interpretation of the parable of "The Good Samaritan" (Lk 10:30-37) provides the classical example: The man is Adam; Jerusalem is the heavenly city; Jericho is the moon, which stands for our mortality; the robbers are the devil and his angels; the priest and the Levite represent the Old Testament Law which can save no one; the good Samaritan who binds the

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man's wounds is Christ, who forgives sin; the inn is the church; and the innkeeper is the apostle Paul (*Quaestiones Evangeliorum* 2.19; cf Snodgrass 2000:4).

The allegorical approach continued through the medieval period up to the Reformation, when it was, at least to some degree, denounced by Luther and Calvin (cf Kissinger 1979:41-46). The main problems with this kind of approach soon became apparent: (1) Two expositors rarely agreed on what the individual elements in the parables refer to. Furthermore, no expositor explained what "key" was used to unearth the hidden meanings and how access to that key was gained: the results were beyond verification. (2) Some of the meanings attributed to details in the parable were clearly anachronisms, that is, they reflected on a doctrine emanating from a later period. To name but one example of Augustine's exposition above, no one in Luke's original audience would have associated the innkeeper with the apostle Paul. (3) It seems highly improbable that Jesus would tell his parables with the intention that they should not be understood by all his listeners.

This view we owe primarily to Adolf Jülicher, who in his two-volume analysis of Jesus' parables, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, first published at the end of the nineteenth century, argued that the allegorisation of parables was a *secondary* procedure. Jülicher ([1960] 1976:61) concludes: "Trotz der Autorität so viele Jahrhunderte, trotz der grösseren Autorität der Evangelisten, kann ich die Parabeln Jesu für Allegorien nicht halten. Es spricht nämlich nicht weniger als alles dagegen." The main premiss for Jülicher's argument is that parables do not disguise meaning, but by their simple and vivid pictures render the meaning self-evident to their listeners (Jülicher [1960] 1976:61-62). With the discovery of the *Gospel of Thomas*, Jülicher's rejection of Jesus' parables as allegories gained more support. Various parables in the synoptic Gospels with explicit allegorical interpretation occur in *Thomas* without it, confirming that the allegory is independent of the parable illustrating the ideology of the evangelists (see Scott 1990:44). In the light of the arguments above, even those scholars who do accept

that the allegorical interpretations of Jesus' parables form part of Jesus own words, insist that this type of interpretation is not the norm but the exception (Purdy 1985:93).

Another function attributed to the parables is that of exemplifying or illustrating moral behaviour. This is the main track followed by Jülicher. Jülicher ([1960] 1976:71) argued that instead of concealing "mysteries", the parable seeks to illustrate (*veranschaulichen*) a certain point in Jesus' teaching. Jülicher ([1960] 1976:71) understands a parable as an instrument of proof (*Beweismittel*) with the task of supporting and reinforcing previous knowledge. Parables are regarded primarily as *Vergleichung* or as *similes* (cf Ricoeur 1975:91). Two sentences, or two streams of thought, are compared with one another (evidenced by the word "like") by placing them side by side. The first part is literal (*die Sachhälfte*) and the second part is figurative (*die Bildhälfte*). The comparison calls up a "third" element (the *tertium comparationis*), which is the common factor between the subject matter (*Sache*) and the figure (*Bild*). This results in the *single* meaning of the parable, which inherently illustrates moral behaviour.

Again the parable of "The Good Samaritan" (Lk 10:30-37) is the classical example. The parable is interpreted as an example of impartial love culminating in the command: "Go and do likewise" (Lk. 10:37). That the parable serves as an illustration of neighbourly love, is however called into question by what seem to be a number of inconsistencies (cf Funk 1966:199-222; Patterson 1998:122-123). Luke, it seems, uses the parable to complete a story originally found in Mark, which does *not* include the parable (see Mk 12:28-31). In Mark, Jesus and the lawyer agree that the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength;" and that the second greatest commandment is to "love your neighbour as yourself" (Mk 12:30-31). In Luke, however, the line of questioning is continued. The lawyer asks: "And who is my neighbour?" He wants to know to whom he should show love. Then follows the parable. The single point (the *tertium*

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comparationis) made by the parable seems quite clear: Love should be shown to everybody who needs it, and you (the listener) should go out and love the way the Samaritan loved. But a closer reading of the parable reveals that Jesus' answer does not correspond exactly to the lawyer's question. The lawyer asked about someone to whom he should show love. But the Samaritan is not an example of such a person. He is the subject and not the object of love in the parable! As a result Jesus rephrases the lawyer's original question from "Who is my neighbour?" to "How shall I be a neighbour?" These "inconsistencies" disqualify any reading of the parable as a mere illustration. Historical Jesus scholars attribute these inconsistencies to Luke's efforts to grapple with the problem of giving meaning to a parable of Jesus in Luke's Gospel - originally told in a totally different context (see, inter alia, Patterson 1998:123). They maintain that *Luke* turns a "parable" of Jesus into an "example story". This view concerning Luke's use of the parable will be tested below and an alternative understanding will be presented (see chapter 5). At this point it suffices to note that Jülicher's "single point" methodology is a powerful tool to combat an allegorical interpretation of Jesus' parables, but it is based on the false assumption that a parable has per se only *one proper (correct) meaning* which by definition is *illustrative* of moral behaviour.

The rejection of Jesus' parables as allegories and example stories of moral behaviour, has paved the way for a new and a fresh approach. It has become the accepted position of most modern scholars that "parable" uses the language and the strategy of *metaphor* (see chapter 2). With the rejection of allegory as a notion for parable, one would have expected Jülicher himself to explore the avenue of the metaphor, but instead it is explicitly discarded by him. For Jülicher, ([1960] 1976:52-57) metaphor is purely the rhetorical device of allegory: They are akin. Metaphor is *die Vorstufe* of allegory, both of these figures of speech being *uneigentliche Rede* (cf Weder 1978:12). Metaphor as *uneigentliche Rede* (speaking of something in terms of another) burdens and obscures the task of interpretation and is, like the allegory, itself in need of interpretation (Jülicher

[1960] 1976:57). Jülicher therefore opts to construe the concept of *Vergleichung* in a non-metaphorical way. Ricoeur (1975:90) observes that Jülicher, instead of looking for a solution in Aristotle's *Poetics*, used Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, in particular Book II, concerning the "common means of conviction". Jülicher is clearly guided by the traditional view that poetic (figurative) language is not suitable for conveying matters of truth, and this complicated by his traditional, Aristotelean understanding of how a metaphor functions. The theory of metaphor implicitly assumed by him is a *substitution* theory. The close kinship established by Jülicher between metaphor and allegory, however, disappears if metaphor is not a substitutive process, but one of interaction (Ricoeur 1975:92).

Besides his misunderstanding as to what a metaphor is, Jülicher is further mistaken in his understanding of what a parable does. Ricoeur (1975:91) advocates that the initial mistake made by Jülicher ([1960] 1976:68) was to identify the *maschal* of Hebrew literature with the *parabole* of Greek rhetoric. The two may not be equated (cf Scott 1990:8-35). *Parabole* means literally to "set aside", "to throw beside" and as result functions "as a comparative term, indicating similarity or parallelism" (Scott 1990:19). *Parabole* is an *illustrative* parallel, which under the influence of Aristotle and the Greek rhetoric gained the subsidiary meaning of being a "sort of argument" (Scott 1990:20). The Hebraic *maschal*, on the other hand, is quite different. It "links directly the meaning of the saying and a corresponding disposition in the sphere of human existence, without the detour through a general ethical statement which the parable would illustrate" (Ricoeur 1975:91). The parable (*maschal*) in contrast to the *parabole* is therefore not an instrument of proof in need of persuasion, achieved by the use of figurative language. Although there might be something "figurative" in the parable, it is not figurative in the *rhetorical* sense, whereby one thing (a word or a thought) stands for something else (substitution and/or comparison theory) and in doing so acts as an auxiliary means of persuasion. Ricoeur (1975:92) maintains further that

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if the parable is figurative (*bildlich*), it is not as the rhetorical "figure" of a subject matter (*Sache*), but as a "figure" for a mode of being which can be displayed in human experience. The *Sache* – the issue – is not a "thought", not a "proposition", which could be written down in "juxtaposition" to the narrative. The "*Sache*" is the *referent* in human existence.

This insight has been overlooked by many scholars. Eckhard Rau (1990:11-26), for example, continues to make a case for a rhetorical approach to parable interpretation and advocates (in support of Jülicher) that the *Sachhälfte* forms just as much part of the parable as the *Bildhälfte*. Although the parable does reference an "issue", this issue does not form an inherent part of the parable itself, but is something, as Ricoeur pointed out, *beyond* the parable, in our human existence. The parable juxtaposes the figure (*Bild*) with this referent, which in turn leads to something new that was not there before. This in turn correlates with the *interaction* theory of metaphors and what a metaphor does (see Black 1981:72-77).

The seeds that opened the gateway to an understanding of Jesus' parables as metaphors were sown by the *New Hermeneutics* (cf Perrin 1976:110-126). The *New Hermeneutics* created awareness of the *performative* aspect of language. Language has the power to bring into being something that was not there before the words were spoken. Although the practitioners of the *New Hermeneutics* were not literary scholars and as a result gave little attention to *metaphor*, it was their insight that encouraged scholars to explore not only *what* is written, but also *why* something is written and the *affect* it has on its listeners. By juxtaposing not only similar (*epiphors*), but contrasting entities (*diaphors*) (Wheelwright [1962] 1973:72), both the metaphor and the parable have the power to create something new. The influence of the *New Hermeneutics* is clearly visible in Wolfgang Harnisch's (1984:109) analysis of the distinction between *Bildwort* (figurative

language) and *Metapher* (metaphor). Applying these two notions to Jesus' parables, he writes:

Entweder setzt die Parabel den Referenten, also das, wovon die Rede sein soll, bereits voraus. In diesem Fall steht die Erzählung (Bildhälfte) im Dienst einer ihr vorausliegenden Behauptung (Sachhälfte), deren Geltung strittig oder problematisch ist. Sie übernimmt dann rhetorische Funktion. Was erzählt wird, hat den Charakter eines Arguments, das eine bestimmte Position illustriert und derart einleuchtend macht. Oder aber die Parabel setzt das, wovon die Rede sein soll, allererst in Kraft. In diesem Fall hat die Erzählung performativen Sinn. Sie besitzt kreative Potenz. Dann vermittelt sie dem Adressaten im Medium des Erzählten selbst den Referent, und zwar als eine unerhörte Botschaft.

These two functions, to illustrate and to create something new, may not be confused, as may be the case in Dodd's definition, in which a parable is defined as being a metaphor *or* simile. Metaphor and simile are not the same. Funk (1966:136) makes the following literary distinction: "A is B" is a metaphor, whereas "A is *like* B" is a simile. But essential to an understanding of both the metaphor and the simile is not the literary difference (inclusion or omission of the word "like"), but the distinctive *function* of both literary forms, that is the *nature* of the metaphor and the simile (cf Funk 1966:136). The word "like" implies that a simile functions to *illustrate* an entity. A metaphor, however, does not illustrate but *represents* that entity. In a simile, a point already made is illustrated with the purpose of clarification. In a metaphor, a point is discovered.

The word "like" ("The kingdom of heaven is *like* ...") in many parables in the synoptic Gospels has misled scholars in continuing to interpret them solely as some kind of *Vergleichung*, that is, as a simile (see, inter alia, Blomberg 1990:279-

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1821). But it has been argued convincingly that the introductory phrase in at least some cases is secondary (see Harnisch 1984:174). Confined to the parable corpus, Matthew, for example, repeatedly uses the phrase “the kingdom of heaven is like [ὡσπερ] ...”, even in passages which could have Q as their source (cf Mt 18:23; 20:1; 22:2; 25:14). Luke however omits the phrase, indeed even in certain other parables whose literary context clearly has the kingdom of God as subject (eg Lk 14:15; 19:11). The literary phrase per se should therefore not determine the interpretational approach. Amos Wilder ([1964] 1971:xxi-xxv), a New Testament scholar as well as a poet and authority on general literary criticism, accentuated the value of interpreting a particular work (especially one of a narrative nature) as a self-sufficient aesthetic whole. As a poet Wilder knew that with all creative, poem-like texts, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Before analysing the formal elements of a story, the readers or interpreters should allow the story to speak to them as a whole. This “holistic” approach to the parables of Jesus supports the general hypothesis that Jesus’ parables function like metaphors. They have a life-challenging and life-changing *affect* on listeners. Jesus, like any gifted storyteller, had the ability not only to illustrate the material in hand, but to create worlds in which human events unfold and in which insight is gained about life which, without the stories’ assistance, would have remained uncovered.

The view that parables are metaphors has not been without critique. More recently, scholars have again argued for the validity of Jesus’ parables as allegories. This is reflected in Klyne Snodgrass’s (2000:3-29) overview of the history of the interpretation of the parables of Jesus, entitled *From allegorizing to allegorizing*. One of the main proponents of the revised view on parables as allegories is Craig Blomberg (1990). A general survey of his views, which includes a sharp criticism of the parables of Jesus as metaphors, is presented in *Interpreting the parables* (Blomberg 1990:29-170). Blomberg’s view of parables as allegories is based primarily on two arguments. First, he refutes an

understanding of metaphor which rejects the notion of allegory per se. Central to his understanding of allegory are the distinctions made by Hans-Josef Klauck (1978:91) between *Allegorie* (allegory), *Allegorese* (allegorising), and *Allegorisierung* (allegorisation). Allegory is defined as a rhetorical device applicable to many literary genres which gives a symbolic dimension to a text. Allegorising refers to the process of ascribing hidden, often anachronistic meanings, to a text never intended by the author. Allegorisation is the expansion of a text which originally was an allegory in some simpler form. Blomberg (1990:44) attests that the real problem is not allegory or allegorisation, but allegorising. Allegorising, equated with an anachronistic interpretation, is rejected; but not allegory.

Blomberg's view of allegory is of course largely a debate on semantics, that is, one of concerning the *meaning* of "allegory". If allegory is understood as figurative language through which one entity can stand for something other than itself, Blomberg's argument is legitimate. In such a case allegory and metaphor are not opposites but synonyms (semantically related). For Blomberg (1990:43) a parable is allegorical as long as the overall point it makes "transcends its literal meaning". This view however differs from the understanding attached to allegory by Jülicher, who perceived allegory primarily as a literary genre - a view that is rightly to be rejected. Indeed the whole scholarly debate to distinguish between an allegory and a metaphor is less critical if the view of Madeleine Boucher and John Sider (cited by Snodgrass 2000:16; cf Forbes 2000:27-28) is held that allegory is not a literary genre at all, but a "way of thinking", it is a "device" or "mode" of meaning, which applies equally to metaphor.

Blomberg's second rejection of the parables of Jesus as metaphors is largely directed against what seems to be a devaluation of propositional language. The *New Hermeneutics* argued that because parables (as metaphors) are in essence language events *impacting* on the listener (that is conveying *actions*), they in essence do not convey truth in *propositional* form (see Forbes 2000:35).

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Blomberg (1990:143) however insists that every attempt to consistently apply a nonpropositional approach to the parables fails. Invariably, the meaning of the parable, or the impact it causes on the listener, can be summarised in discursive speech. Similar sentiments are echoed by Robert Stein (2000:34-38). He fervently rejects any understanding of metaphor as an instrument creative of meaning which cannot be reduced to some form of propositional interpretation. For Stein (2000:36) the confusion rests on the failure to distinguish between the "referential" and the "commissive" dimensions of communication, which he defines as follows: "Whereas the former is primarily informative in nature, the latter is primarily affective. And whereas the former seeks mainly to convey information, the latter seeks to convey emotion and bring about decision." The parables as metaphors convey emotion in so far as they impact on the listener. This commissive dimension however does not exclude its referential dimension. Stein (2000:36) therefore argues for a balance between the informative and affective dimensions of language.

The positions of Blomberg and Stein are clearly reactions to an understanding of metaphor in which reference is totally suspended. This however does not coincide with our understanding of metaphor presented in chapter 2 above. It was argued there that the suspension of the "ordinary descriptive reference" does not lead to the abolition of reference altogether. Rejected is a reference that is fixed and one-dimensional (one which is in a one-to-one relationship between *Bild* and *Sache*). The paradox of metaphorical reference provides a multi-dimensional or ambiguous reference. The prodigal in the parable of "A Man Had Two Sons" (Lk 15:11-32), for example, refers intratextually both to the toll-collectors and sinners (cf Lk 15:1-2) as well to Jesus himself (cf Lk 7:34), and extratextually to all those "outsiders" who per se are excluded from the "people of God".

Vital for our understanding of metaphor, is not *what* it refers to, but *how* it refers (see 3.5 below). This *how* highlights the performative power of the

metaphor to *create* new meanings, foremost through the juxtaposition of dissimilar entities (cf Van der Watt 2000:23). Although the meaning(s) of a metaphor (and its referential meaning) can be summarised in propositional language, such a summary will inevitably be restrictive and fail to capture the impact of the metaphor. This metaphorical impact, and the power to make the audience see reality differently, constitute the very essence of Jesus' parables and confirms the first element of Dodd's definition: Jesus' parables are metaphors.

3.3 The everydayness of a parable

The everydayness of a parable reflects on the second element of Dodd's definition "... drawn from nature or common life ...". Jesus made extensive use of the "everyday" in his listeners life. His parables were drawn from the common experience of those he spoke to. They came from the world of a first-century agrarian society, a world of villages and small urban towns, of aristocrats and peasants, of agriculture, of landlords and tenants, of sowing and harvesting, of fishers, shepherds, and labourers (see Lenski, Lenski & Nolan 1991:169-201). The fictive events that Jesus created were typical of that world. They involved disputes on rent, family and social frictions, surprising discoveries, and dangerous journeys. In the history of parable research much indispensable work has been done to fill in the cultural and social world in which the parables of Jesus originally made sense. One of the most helpful historical studies is that of Joachim Jeremias ([1963] 1984), *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*. More recent works which take full cognisance of the social and anthropological insights of the first-century Mediterranean world, are those of Bernard B Scott (1990), *Hear, then the parable*, and William R Herzog II (1994), *Parables as subversive speech*. Events and scenes which might seem foreign to the modern reader were very familiar, everyday scenes for the original audience. Wilder ([1964] 1971:73) speaks of the "secularity of the parables". The parables hardly take up "religious" themes, but visualise a world known to the "human beings on the street".

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This very important aspect of Jesus' parables has however also resulted in a most common fallacy in parable interpretation. Based on the everydayness of Jesus' parables, especially those scholars within the historical-critical paradigm, like Jeremias ([1963]1984:23) and others, have argued that Jesus' parables resemble the historical context of first-century Palestine. Scott (1990:41) however points out that whether a parable represents a historical event or not is beside the point and "mistakes verisimilitude for reality". In spite of the commonness of Jesus' parables, the parables are and remain stories in which "everyday events and people" are *fictionalised*. Failure to take cognisance of the fictional character of parables has led to further problems in parable interpretation. Hyperbole, for example, has often been seen as the one point at which the parables of Jesus diverge from realism: a camel simply cannot go through the eye of a needle (Lk 18:25), try as it may. In interpreting this aphorism, some scholars have made an attempt to find an actual event to which the aphorism could allude. It has been maintained that there indeed existed a small entry in the wall of Jerusalem through which a fully-laden camel could only squeeze with difficulty (eg Rienecker 1982:432). But hyperbole is not an actual event, nor is it the opposite of realism. Funk (1966:161) in studying the metaphorical nature of Jesus' parables, argues that hyperbole is "stepped-up" realism: it belongs to the nature of metaphorical language in general, and to Jesus' parables in particular, that everydayness is at certain points "intensified", or "dramatised" with the clear intention of heightening the *effect* of the story (see also Scott 1990:41).

Awareness of the fictional character of Jesus' parables also lays low the search for the one *Sitz im Leben* of a particular parable. Parables have freedom of context. Although initially being told to a particular audience at a fixed time in history, parables as "fictional stories" or as "aesthetic objects" can be used in different situations and fulfil a multi-functional purpose. This does not make them ahistorical. On the contrary. Juxtaposed within the parables of Jesus as metaphors are still two entities of which one is embedded within the everyday

context of first-century Palestinian society. Awareness of this context is imperative for the interpreter, not only to guard against another fallacy, that of “misdirected concreteness” (failure to bridge the gap between the world of the interpreter and that of an ancient text), but more importantly to understand the thrust of the metaphorical language (cf Van Aarde 1985:568).

Everydayness is clearly not an arbitrary ingredient in the parables of Jesus: it forms the locus of the parable’s intentionality. By using common scenes, known to the listeners, and with which the listeners can immediately identify, Jesus was drawing his listeners into the world of the parable he was constructing. He was not merely telling them *about* a new world, but through the everydayness of his parables he was getting them “caught up” *in* this world. A parable cannot fulfil its function if it is being read or studied from a detached, uninvolved position. The parable is only completed when the listeners or readers enter the world of the parable and become part of the events and reality described. The everydayness of Jesus’ parables *creates* this possibility. The world of the parable becomes their world.

Sharing the world of the parable has raised awareness of a listener’s identification with characters. Whenever a story is told, a listener identifies with a particular character. Character identification may change as the story unfolds. The parable of “The Good Samaritan” (Lk 10:30-35) serves as an illustration. In listening to the story, a listener may initially identify with the priest or the Levite. When the expected help does not materialise, identification with the *good* Samaritan follows. It should be noted, however, how identification with the Samaritan depends on the audience’s willingness to do so. Identification with the Samaritan seems plausible to Luke’s Gentile audience, but not to an Israelite audience (probably the initial audience of the parable). The animosity between Israelites (especially, the Judeans) and Samaritans would disqualify such an identification (cf Funk 1996:176-178). For an Israelite audience, identification with the victim, the one person left without any description in the parable, seems the

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more likely proposition. But identification with the victim changes the thrust of the story. The listener is now faced with an unexpected challenge - a challenge which he or she might never have faced up to if they had not been drawn into the story by its everydayness. Funk (1966:155) notes that the listener does not initially say, "Yes", to the reality portrayed in and through the parable, but to the commonness and realism of the events described. It is this very procedure which makes the metaphorical story so effective in changing the audience's views and creating a new vision of reality. The audience is confronted with something new, without having expected it. Harnisch (1984:144) writes: "Das Vertraute [the everydayness] wird von Nicht-Vertrauten *hintergangen*", this occurring indeed at a stage when the listener has already been drawn into the story.

The effect caused by the story on the listener accentuates the importance of "story". The story of a parable cannot simply be done away with, to be replaced by a set of ethical or moral statements; nor can individual words or phrases be substituted with literal equivalents (allegory) without cognitive loss. The temptation to do this is always there. But to accede to this temptation is to overlook an essential characteristic of metaphorical language. Funk (1966:158) likens the parable to a "picture puzzle" which prompts the question, What is wrong with the picture? The picture itself displays a familiar, everyday world. But the *everydayness* is distorted. The tension evoked by the parable relies on the "literal" within it (the everyday event or person) remaining "literal", and not being substituted with another meaning, or being converted into something else. Taking the pieces of the puzzle away, or by substituting the pieces with an already completed picture, destroys the puzzle and fails to recognise how a metaphor works. In telling his parables, Jesus was suggesting that God encounters his people in the concrete everydayness of their lives. But by making extensive use of metaphorical language, Jesus was challenging them to see that familiar world in a new way (cf Patterson 1998:127). For this to happen, the familiar has to remain familiar. At the same time everydayness cannot simply be equated to the

parables' functionality. A parable is not about "everydayness", everydayness is the means to an end. Funk (1966:158) postulates that metaphorical language, does not look *at* a phenomenon, but *through* it. It functions like a model. It filters the information, and by doing so it unfolds into a new world. This new world which opens up is both extraordinarily similar and strangely different to the everyday world of the parable's audience.

We come now to the third element of Dodd's definition.

3.4 The paradoxical nature of a parable

The third element of Dodd's definition is: "... arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness ...". Our focus falls primarily on the words "vividness" and "strangeness". A story depicting the everyday can at times be arresting, especially if vividly narrated. But why should a story told by Jesus in which common situations and characters are used, be regarded as strange? Dodd had observed what since then has become a central issue in parable interpretation. Even though Jesus used common situations and characters in his stories with the aim of drawing his audience into the world of the parable, the way he used them was far from common. Once the world of the parable is entered, the parable makes unexpected twists and turns by which the familiar world of everyday experiences and expectations is replaced by a challenging and at times most distorting picture. In his structural analysis of narrative parables Scott (1981:98-103) shows that at least one actant in Jesus' parables is moved from an *expected* position to an *unexpected* position. Again this is most clearly illustrated by the parable of "The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-35). The original Israelite audience would have expected the introduction of an Israelite layman after the priest and the Levite failed to help the man fallen among robbers. But a despised Samaritan enters the story, and instead of adopting the role of an opponent, is assigned the position of a helper. This and other unexpected twists and turns follow at various levels, and are not confined to the broad strokes of the narrative's structure. In the parable

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of "A Man Had Two Sons" (Lk 15:11-32) the familiar is consistently distorted by socially strange and unfamiliar behaviour. The younger son, who in Hebrew literature is often portrayed as the favourite son, becomes the scoundrel who brings endless shame on his family: Even before his father's death, he claims his inheritance, thereby declaring his father to be dead. He departs to a *foreign* country and feeds *pigs*, thereby breaking with both his family and religion. On his return, the father does *not* do the expected. He indulges in what is for an aged orient socially unacceptable behaviour. He rushes to his son, embraces and kisses him - even before the son can utter an apology and repent of his sins. The strangeness of the parable lies in the *distortion* of the everydayness. What seems to be an everyday event or action suddenly changes into something quite extraordinary. The everydayness of the parable is undermined.

From the above it is clear that it makes no sense to regard certain words in a parable as literal and others as metaphorical. The entire narrative is told at the level of ordinary (literal) life events and actions. The bearers of the metaphor are therefore not the individual words or sentences of the narrative, but the entire structure, the story as a whole. Accordingly, the "tension" is not one between words but between the everyday *reality* of the listener and that of the story. Ricoeur (1975:95-96) writes that the kinds of tension that can be found in the parables

offer no inner tension between tenor and vehicle because of the "normalcy" of the narrative, and little tension between literal and metaphorical interpretation of the message itself. The "tension" is entirely on the side of the vision of reality between the insight displayed by the fiction and our ordinary way of looking at things.

The question remains, of course, how the listeners or readers will know that a particular narrative conveying an everyday event is the bearer of a metaphorical

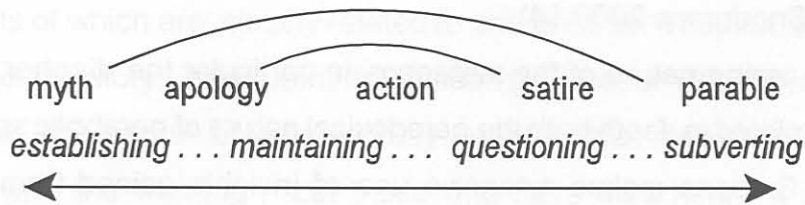
process? What clues are available? Ricoeur (1975:98-99) gives a dual answer, the elements of which are closely related to one another: The first answer is the “normalcy” of the story. John Dominic Crossan (cf Ricoeur 1975:98) noted that if, for example, the recital of an everyday event, which seems quite normal, concludes with the warning : “Let those who have ears hear!” it is not to be regarded as pointless, we have to look for another kind of interpretation. The parable should be interpreted metaphorically, *because* of its normalcy. The second answer is the “element of extravagance” (Ricoeur 1975:99). The term “extravagance” refers to the presence of the “extraordinary” within the “ordinary”. An everyday, ordinary event is narrated, with *extraordinary* behaviour on the part of certain characters or with an unexpected turn of events. Examples of such language in Jesus’ parables are: a Samaritan not only helping a man (an Israelite) lying half dead next to the road, but also taking him to the inn and paying all the expenses; or an oriental father running down the road to welcome home a prodigal son; or a landlord whose servants have been killed by his tenants sending his only son to risk a similar fate. These apparent “inconsistencies” make the structure of the narrative unstable, and create awareness that this “normal” story, is not “normal” at all. Again, this is not a device simply to catch the attention or the imagination of the audience: it forms the essence of metaphorical (diaphorical) language to challenge and subvert a contemporary view on reality. By the distortion of the ordinary, it opens a gap in our thinking; and this in turn makes room for a new, alternative vision.

The use of extravagance (or hyperbole) within the everydayness of Jesus’ parables has often been misunderstood. For Blomberg everydayness and extravagance are mutually exclusive. Blomberg (1990:139) writes: “... it is better to see the unusual features in Jesus’ parables as more straightforward pointers to their allegorical nature.” However, the way Blomberg uses the term “allegory” does not disqualify the metaphorical function of extravagant language. Everydayness points to the way in which parables address human existence.

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Extravagance in turn points to the way in which this familiar human existence is shattered (cf Snodgrass 2000:14).

Based on the nature of the metaphor, in particular the diaphor, Crossan (1975) has explored in depth both the paradoxical nature of parabolic speech and its function. Crossan makes extensive use of insights gained from the *New Hermeneutics* that language has the ability to “create” world. Crossan (1975:56-26) draws on the study of Sheldon Sacks who argued that all literary forms serve a particular function within their social setting, three of the most important forms being: satire, apologue, and action. Apologue defends world, action investigates world, and satire attacks world. Crossan (1975:47-57) then expands Sack's typology by adding two other literary forms, myth and parable. “Myth” is not used in the popular sense of a “made-up story” or of a story of “gods and goddesses”. Myth is investigated at its deepest level of *structure*. Drawing on the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Crossan advocates that the basic function of myth is *reconciliation*. Myth establishes and enforces what for a particular community has been accepted as real. In many respects myth coheres with the *métarécits* (grand narratives) of Jean-François Lyotard (see chapter 2 above). Myth has normative function. When within a particular social world doubt and uncertainty arise, myth restores the balance. In contrast the basic function of parable is *contradiction* (Crossan 1975:54-57). Whereas myth constitutes and legitimises a social world, parable undermines and shatters the world into which it is delivered. Making reference to a statement of the literary critic Frank Kermode that “Myths are the agents of stability, fictions the agents of change”, Crossan (1975:56) argues that “Parables are fictions, not myths; they are meant to change, not reassure us.” The fictional forms and the functions of the above mentioned literary forms can be arranged as follows, drawing on figures 2 and 3 in Crossan's (1975:59,62; see also Herzog 1994:47) work:



Reading a parable of Jesus is always a somewhat unnerving experience. It redirects attention by means of “imaginative shock” (Funk 1966:138). No listener who gets caught up in the story, with its unexpected twists and turns, remains completely untouched. There is always the challenge of seeing the reality of this world and human existence differently.

Not all scholars agree with Crossan that parables are always and solely world “shattering”. John B Cobb, jr (1980:158), for example, makes the case that we “cannot live by subversion alone”. Cobb (1980:159) argues that by placing all stories on a single line, from world-establishing to world-subversion, Crossan fails to give enough attention to a parable’s ability to “transform” the world of its listeners. Cobb (980:159) writes: “... to transform is neither to establish alone nor to subvert alone. It includes both. A world cannot be transformed without being shaken and disrupted, without losing its character of world. But this subversion in itself is not transformation, it is simply destruction.” Cobb’s statement is true, of course, and creates a valuable balance between destruction and transformation. The strength of Crossan’s work, however, remains by its creating awareness of the subversive nature of Jesus’ parables.

For a twenty-first century reader, the paradoxical and world-shattering nature of Jesus’ parables may not always be self evident. The main reason here is that the twenty-first century reader (especially in the West) lives in a socially vastly different world. What for us might be socially acceptable behaviour, a father rushing towards his home-coming son; or a man (an Israelite) being helped by a “good” Samaritan, could be (and is) socially dishonourable behaviour and a

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violation of human dignity. What seems to be an ordinary, epiphoric (illustrative) juxtaposition of entities, is discovered to be extraordinary and diaphoric (paradoxical), and as a result puzzling, demanding our attention.

Failure to register the social and cultural setting of the parables of Jesus will not only contribute to the failure of the interpreter to note their often paradoxical nature, but will also inevitably lead to a falling into anachronism. In this regard Herzog (1994:38) makes a helpful distinction between “anachronising” and “modernising”. Modernising is advocated as being an inevitable condition of historical inquiry. Historians who read and interpret a text cannot detach themselves totally from their own world. To some extent, it is the very world of the historian that makes perception possible, whether it is done consciously or unconsciously. Anachronising is described by Herzog (1994:38) as “unconscious modernising”. Failing to register the social and cultural world of the text, the modern interpreter unconsciously reads the world of the text as if it was his or her own. It is such “unconscious modernising” that often blurs the paradoxical and subversive nature of Jesus’ parables. When however the paradox and the subversiveness of the parables are noticed, they pose an unsettling and highly absorbing challenge. This leads us to the last element in Dodd’s definition.

3.5 The challenge of a parable

Dodd’s definition on a parable concludes with the line: “... and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.” The word “doubt” implies that the application of the parable is not specified; it remains open-ended, until the listeners are drawn into the parable and specify it for themselves (cf Funk 1966:133). The application does not form part of the parable itself. The parable “teases” and “ignites” thought. It challenges the listener to see the world differently. The application is concluded by the listeners in their own particular situation.

Within the Synoptic tradition, many parables *do* have an application. They

don't end with the "story"; the story concludes with an interpretation and application of sorts. But the application may destroy the metaphor as an instrument *creative* of meaning. The moment such an application has been made, the "meaning" of the parable tends to become fixed, and over a period of time crystallises into a general conclusion (cf Funk 1966:134). The metaphorical challenge of the parable is thus radically reduced. According to Borg (1997:12-14) this is a natural process when a novel metaphor (heard for the first time) is conventionalised (becomes part and parcel of everyday language use).

Borg's understanding of this process is closely associated with Ricoeur's understanding of religious language. Because of the metaphor's aptness to speak of the unknown (the transcendental world) in terms of the known (the empirical world), Ricoeur (cf Borg 1997:12-13; see also Du Toit 1984) has argued that religious experience invariably finds expression in metaphors. However over a period of time these metaphors become conventionalised to a point at which the metaphor has (in part) been forgotten. By way of example Borg (1997:13) refers to a number of metaphors which seek to express the relationship between Jesus and God, and/or Jesus and ourselves: Jesus as the servant of God, lamb of God, light of the world, bread of life, door, vine, shepherd, great high priest, son of God, wisdom of God. Once these metaphors have become common, they are systematised into a conceptual framework which culminates in the formulation of a fixed doctrine. The metaphor "son of God" serves as an example (cf Borg 1997:13-14). Originally a metaphor of intimate family *relationship*, it has through conceptual reflection developed into an ontological statement about the ultimate *status* of Jesus, climaxing in the doctrinal statements of the Nicene Creed: "only begotten Son of God", "true God of true God", and "of one substance as the Father". The initial "imaginative shock" (God actually being a "father" to us) has been replaced by a doctrinal statement to be believed and confessed.

When metaphors have undergone the process of "crystallisation" and "conceptual development" they cease to *function* as true metaphors. A true

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metaphor continues to open out on a vibrant nexus of meaning. The interpreter therefore needs to resist the temptation to reduce a metaphor to a single clip (a “slide” or “photograph”), but should rather allow the movement of the imagery ignited by the metaphor to flow (a “video” or “film”). Funk’s (1966:152) insistence that a metaphor is not to *be* interpreted, but that it *interprets*, has merit. By leaving a metaphor intact, it can live on indefinitely and can open out on a plurality of situations and a diversity of audiences.

The essence of a metaphor, and indeed of the parables of Jesus, is the element of surprise. When Jesus’ parables are read as metaphors within the social setting of the first-century Mediterranean world, they reveal unexpected twists and turns, that are highly troublesome and intensely thought-provoking. Basic assumptions concerning human life and human perceptions of God are called into question. Questions are raised; but the parables themselves seldom resolve in a way designed to give an answer to the questions raised. They “tease into active thought”. They challenge.

That a parable “challenges” is decisive to our understanding of *how* a metaphor, and hence the parables of Jesus as metaphorical stories function. Funk (1966:144) quotes Cadoux who advocates that “almost all the parables ... were spoken in attack or defence.” Cadoux accordingly concludes that the parables of Jesus are “argumentative” in character; that is, points (set of ideas) are presented to persuade the listener into seeing something differently. But clearly Jesus’ parables were not argumentative in the sense that valid premises for and against an argument were put forward which could either be verified or falsified. Instead, a world (a new vision of reality) was drawn which was juxtaposed with the conventional world of the audience. That being the case, the parables of Jesus are not “ideational” at all, with a set of ideas being “weighed-up” against one other (Funk 1966:149). *Worlds* are contrasted, revealing something new that was not there before. Literary critics describe parables as “aesthetic objects” and highlight their poetical quality. They are “works of art”. As works of

art, the parables do not make one single point, but *impact* on the listeners' imagination as a whole. The *New Hermeneutics* has created awareness of the *performative* aspect of language and postulated that parables are "language events", and that listeners *experience* them as events. The challenge lies in the apparent difficulty of reconciling the two "worlds" with each other, the world of the everyday experience of the listeners, and the world of the parable. As a result of the challenge being posed, some listeners may "shut the door" on the alternative world of the parable, whereas others may "take up the challenge" and endeavour to enter this new world. The challenge is not an appeal to the will, "Do this", but rather "Consider seeing it this way" (Borg 1994:75). "This way" may be irreconcilably different to the world known and experienced by the listener.

Worlds being juxtaposed again raises the issue of reference (see our discussion in 3.2 above) and poses two related questions: (1) What is referred to by the parable? and (2) What is the direction of the reference? The "juxtaposition" of two worlds has been understood by some scholars as a total abolition of reference. This is however not the case. The word "juxtapose" is used consciously to contrast it with the word "transfer". This is done to distinguish between metaphor and allegory and also to guard against the traditional understanding of metaphor in which the meaning of one word is *transferred* to another word (substitution theory). Referencing remains central to the metaphorical process.

With regard to the parables of Jesus, the referent is in some cases explicitly named. In many cases, however, it is left unspecified. Of interest to us is, what Ricoeur (1981:239) has termed the "second-order" reference. The "first-order" reference, is the reference for the literal level, which is easily assessed when specified. The "second-order" reference, however, is for the nonliteral level - when the literal level is suspended. Whereas in Rabbinic parables the second-order reference, as assumed by the rabbis, is the *Torah*, the reference in Jesus' parables is the Kingdom (rule) of God, or more precisely its fictional re-description

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(cf Scott 1990:48). This assumption is based on the centrality of the Kingdom of God in the language, message, and teaching of Jesus. The *status* of the Kingdom of God, however, remains a controversial issue and constitutes an ongoing debate. An invaluable contribution has been made by Norman Perrin. Since Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer the Kingdom of God has generally been understood as an apocalyptic concept, with both a present and a future dimension. Perrin (1976:33) however rejects the notion of a concept for Kingdom of God all together in favour of a *symbol*. A “concept” grasps cognitive experience and can be translated into discursive speech. A “symbol”, however, is perceptive and experiential and cannot be substituted by some larger meaning or set of meanings. Perrin’s understanding of symbol is based on the distinction made by Peter Wheelwright between *tensive* and *steno* symbols (see 2.1.2 above). “Kingdom of God” is not a *steno* symbol in a one-to-one relationship with what it describes, but a *tensive* symbol which by definition is open-ended and polyvalent. As a *tensive* symbol “Kingdom of God” does not describe one particular, fixed meaning, but is itself symbolic and incapable of complete capture. Scott (1990:61) contests that opting to interpret Jesus’ parables exclusively against the background of the apocalyptic, restricts that which “Kingdom of God” as a symbol refers to. As a symbol in Jesus’ parables “Kingdom of God” opens out on a much wider range of associations. The *mediate* referent of the parable on a “second” level is the Kingdom of God. But the *ultimate* referent is human reality in its wholeness (Scott:1990:62; Jones:1995:99).

Based on the above insight, we have used the word “worlds” to define the entities juxtaposed in the parables of Jesus. As such, “world” is used interchangeably with “worldview” (a view of reality), which includes a convergence of the temporal and the transcendent. A narrative (story) always reflects the worldview of the author. Accordingly, the parables of Jesus refer on a “second level” to the distinctive worldview of Jesus (or that of the evangelists). This in turn is juxtaposed with the worldview of the person or community to whom the parable

is addressed. The worldview of the storyteller (Jesus / evangelist) is reflected in the world of the fictional narrative; that of the listeners in the “everydayness” of the narrative and the repertoire of associations it calls to mind. Scott (1990:36) shows how the parables of Jesus repeatedly draw on the conventions of Israel’s heritage. Their “everydayness” consists not only of events that could happen everyday, but out of allusions to well-known stories and themes in the history of Israel, termed “mythemes”. The word “mytheme” consists of the two words “myth” and “theme”. Again the word “myth” is not used in the popular sense of “made-up” stories, but as “world-establishing” stories (see above 3.4). Myths legitimise and sustain a social world; they confirm and further impress a dominant worldview on a particular society. An example of such a mytheme is that of the “two sons”, a common theme in the Hebrew Bible: Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, and so on (cf Scott 1990:109; cf Syrén 1993). The younger son, although often a rogue, is portrayed as the favourite, with the older son usually portrayed as the one not loved by the father. A parable starting with “A man had two sons” immediately places the parable within a known story tradition (articulating a particular worldview). But as Crossan (1975:54-57) contests, Jesus’ parables are not myth, but antimyth. The “challenge” posed to a new vision of reality leads the listener along the path of disordering the mythical world. The “mythical world” is juxtaposed with the “world of parable” in a diaphoric structure.

That scholars have often overlooked the diaphoric nature of Jesus’ parables is related to the second question posed above: What is the direction of reference? For Scott (1990:47-51) this is a central issue in the understanding of the metaphorical process. Scott (1990:47) elaborates: “Does the transference go from parable to referent or the other way around? Does the referent determine the understanding of the parable? Is the parable a true illustration or is it dictated by what it illustrates?” The natural notion acceded to by most interpreters in the past is for the direction of movement to be from *referent* (Kingdom of God) to *parable*. In such a case the parable is indeed an ornament of something

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already known and in need of further illustration but with no cognitive value in itself. The referent is used to determine how the parable is to be interpreted with the result that the first-order (literal) reference is often bypassed by the interpreter. An example given by Scott (1990:48-49) is the interpretation of the "leaven" in Matthew 13:33. Although leaven is a well-known example from the ancient world that stands for "corruption", interpreters consistently argue that in this parable "leaven" cannot signify that, because it is a parable of the Kingdom, that is, something "good". The parable is robbed of its cognitive value and indeed becomes an illustration of an already known referent, not to speak of the exegetical illegitimacy of bypassing the literal level for a secondary level. Scott (1990:49) argues for a movement from the *parable* to the *referent* (symbol), which allows for a "literal" understanding of the parable on the first level. This coheres with our understanding of metaphor as an *instrument* of knowledge. The metaphorical process remains one of juxtaposing two entities (worlds), exposing both similarities and differences between the parable and the referent. Whereas the substitution theory of metaphor (epiphor) taught us to focus on the similarities, the interaction theory of tension metaphors (diaphor) has taught us not only to take *notice* of the dissimilarities, but has *demand*ed a connection. Demanding a connection, where no connection is naturally perceived, paves the way for a new vision. Strong dissimilarities should therefore not be bypassed, but heighten the awareness that the dissimilarity may well be a way of challenging a listener's vision of the referent. The choice in parable, as so rigorously advocated by Crossan (see 3.4 above), should however not be a choice of one (its diaphoric nature) *against* the other (its epiphoric nature). In essence, parable can do both, either exploit the associations (mythemes) that resound in the narrative (epiphor), or turn against them (diaphor) (cf Scott 1990:61). Invariably, however, the parables of Jesus pose a challenge. We believe that this challenge is not confined to the original audience, but is equally present in the context to which the parables have been transferred.

3.6 Parable and context

For the purpose of this study, in which we focus specifically on the *Lukan* metaphorical stories, the relationship between parable and context needs to be specified. Adopting the last clue of Dodd's definition discussed above, we stressed that the parables of Jesus are open-ended and as such pose a dynamic challenge to their listeners - in both their original setting as well as in the context into which they have been imported. That parables can so easily be introduced into different contexts' arises primarily from the polyvalent character of metaphorical language. The polyvalence of metaphorical language was especially pursued by Crossan. In *Cliffs of fall*, Crossan (1980:9-10) argues that no metaphor has a precise, univocal, absolute, or fixed meaning to begin with. It has by nature a "void of meaning at its core". This "void of meaning" awaits *discourse* to give it specification. The specification is as diverse as the number of contexts into which the metaphor is introduced. Snodgrass (2000:21) draws attention to the different ways in which people use "polyvalence". Blomberg (1990:163) uses "polyvalence" to refer to multiple points made by a parable if read from the multiple perspectives of the characters within the story. He is not interested in reading the parables in any context other than that provided by the gospel writers. Crossan (1980:9-10), however, uses "polyvalence" to refer to the multiple meanings the reader may assign to parables from reading them in various different contexts (see also Funk 1996:187).

As metaphors, parables are not confined to one *Sitz im Leben*. They have a freedom of independence. The original context in which a particular parable was initially used can therefore also not determine the "true" (universal) meaning of the parable in all contexts. The meaning is always dependent on the context. The challenge posed by the *Lukan* metaphorical stories could, for example, be quite different from the challenge posed by the "same parable" when used by Jesus. This should not be confused with the endeavour of an interpreter to obtain insight into the historical situation of a particular parable. Historical insight is indeed

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essential to avoid misunderstanding and an arbitrary, ethnocentric, and misdirected reinterpretation of a parable. But an interpretation of the parables *in Luke* (or in one of the other evangelists) is not dependent on the interpretation of the same (or a similar) parable told by Jesus in a different social setting and to a different audience. Hypothetically there may either be continuity or discontinuity between a particular parable as used by Jesus and Luke. Many scholars have reflected on both similarities and differences in meaning. The focus of this study, however, is not to determine whether there is continuity or discontinuity between Jesus or Luke, but to determine *how* the Lukan metaphorical stories (of which the text is available and does not need to be reconstructed) challenged the conventional worldview of the audience addressed by *Luke*. Our focus on Luke is highlighted by the *Sondergut* status of the three parables selected for explication in this study. In this regard, however, it should be noted again, that as narrative fictions, parables have priority over their context. The parable interprets the context (Scott 1990:41-42).

Like Jesus, who told parables to communicate with his audience, Luke selected, edited, reworked (and possibly created) parables to address the needs of his community. The parables of Luke are therefore "in service of his own age and theology" (Kingsbury, cited by Herzog 1994:45). They are addressed to a particular community and are intended to *impact* on that community. As such, we must not only know what is written in the parable, but also the situation of the community. To understand the "part", we need to know the "whole". The need to know the situation of the community, makes it imperative for the interpreter to take cognisance of the social, political, cultural, and economic context of the first-century Mediterranean world in which the Gospel narrative features. Herzog's (1994) *Parables as subversive speech* is a good example of such an endeavour. In contrast to Herzog however, who focuses on the challenge that Luke's parables posed to the social and economic inequalities so prevalent in the first-century Mediterranean world, our focus falls primarily on how conventional visions of

reality (often the cause of their social and economic inequalities) were challenged and subverted by the parables told by Luke. This endeavour is based on the insight that narratives (stories) articulate worldviews (see chapter 2 above). A narrative, such as the Gospel of Luke, reflects the worldview of the particular community it is addressed to. It discloses “a world already graced and a mode of human being that corresponds to that world” (Jones 1995:77). Similarly the choice of a metaphor (a parable) reflects the author’s worldview, which through narrative fiction is juxtaposed with the world of the community. As a language event, the parable as a metaphorical story challenges the reader to see life and the world in a new way. Or more precisely, by building associations, creating interest, evoking sympathy and understanding, while at the same twisting, turning and subverting, the parable *creates* a reality into which the reader is challenged to enter.

Imperative for the interpretation of the *Lukan* metaphorical story is insights into the “worlds” created by Luke, both his narrative world, as well as the social, cultural, religious, and political world of his community.

We proceed in chapter 4 with an investigation of these worlds.

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.

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 invariably 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,

those of Jesus as representing the βουλή 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

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 connotes 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

the translation “Jews” for the term Ἰουδαῖοι, 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 Ἰουδαῖοι 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 Ἰουδαῖοι who lived in Judea (Ἰουδαία) and those who, for example, lived in Galilee (Γαλιλαίῳς). 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 Ἰουδαῖοι. Ἰουδαῖοι 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

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” (Ἰουδαῖοι). 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 ἔθνη 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 Ἰουδαῖοι 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 Ἰουδαίος 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 Ἰουδαίος 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 Ἰουδαίος in Johannine literature, see Von Wahlde 1981-82:33-36). Apart from the geographical differences (the Ἰουδαίοι 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 Ἰουδαίος only to be contrasted with the Ἰουδαίοι 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 Ἰουδαίος (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 Ἰουδαίοι ("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.

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 relates in order a linear, chronological

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series of events forming “a story”, the specific use of the word διήγησις, instead of εὐαγγέλιον (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 (βουλή 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

(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:

“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 ἄφεσις - 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

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

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" (ἀφῆσις). 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"

(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

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 βουλή 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

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 Ἰουδαῖοι 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).

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” (ἄπας), 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

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 (Resseguie 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 βουλή 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* (πλήθος) 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 completely 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 βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ as realised by Jesus.

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

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

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

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 Marrison 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

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" (πρόται) 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 words 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

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.

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 an 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

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 licita* 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

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 exists, 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

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 Domitian 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 ἐπιηρέαζω, "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

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

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

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 undoubtedly 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 been 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

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

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 an 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 by 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

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

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 "legitimation". 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 (legitimation) 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,

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.

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

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 βουλή 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 βουλή 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

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 woman 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 woman receiving what she was seeking, release from her sins. But this story is not merely about the quest of the sinful woman 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

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).

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 βουλή 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

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

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

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 βουλή 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 *impartiality*.

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 Father's 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

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

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 βουλή 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 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

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

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

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 *κακούργοι* (evildoers). He avoids the word *λησταιί* (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

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 (γνώσις), 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 known 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 (ζυγόν) (Ac 15:10) and a burden (παρεινοξέω) (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.

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.

CHAPTER 5: THE GOOD SAMARITAN

5.1 Interpreting the Lukan parables

It has become common practice to study the parables ascribed to Jesus independently of the literary context in which they have been transmitted. This practice can largely be attributed to the fact that in the past few decades, especially after a period of focus on the metaphorical nature of Jesus' parables, the parables have largely been interpreted by *historical Jesus* scholars. Their approach has been fruitful. It has undoubtedly contributed to a better understanding of the historical Jesus. It has also raised awareness of the growth and transmission of the Jesus tradition, and the change in audience, depending on the setting of the parable. For the historical Jesus the setting is first-century Palestine, with the implied audience being Israelites. But with Luke the audience changes. It is a mixed audience, consisting now of both Israelites and Gentiles. The change of audience means that the way the parable is *heard* changes, depending on the religious and cultural associations provoked by the parable. Historical Jesus research assumes an Israelite audience with the parable's *Sitz im Leben* being that of first-century Palestine. Efforts to reconstruct the original *voice* of Jesus' parables have rightly been abandoned: the focus is on a reconstruction of the "original form" or the "originating structure" of the parables (cf. *inter alia*, Scott 1990:17-19). Although this approach has realised great advantages, it has not been without its disadvantages. One such disadvantage is that by focusing on the hypothetically reconstructed form of the parables the *written* form of the parables as transmitted to us by the Gospel writers have often been neglected (Vorster 1985:27). This applies not only to the parables themselves, but also to their literary context (co-text), both at micro and macro level, in which the parables have been embedded. It needs to be noted that not only are parables a narrative, but they are a narrative *within* a narrative and as such constitute an integral part of the Gospel narrative itself. To gain better understanding of the parables, one

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needs to take the Gospel narrative as a whole into account. In chapter 4 we endeavoured to gain such an understanding of Luke's story at a macro level.

A second disadvantage, directly related to the first, is that with the profound focus on the historical Jesus, studies on how parables transmit their meaning, how they refer, and to what they refer has largely been confined to the reconstructed parables of Jesus (cf Vorster 1985:27-32). That parables within different contexts mean different things, has been indicated above. Semantics have taught us that there is no such thing as a *Grundbedeutung* (see Barr 1961:107-160; Louw 1976:20-51). Meaning depends upon the context in which a word is used. Like words, parables are open to a multiplicity of meanings depending upon their contextual setting. Because contexts are never fixed, a parable that is retold in a different context invariably leads to its expressing a different meaning, depending both upon the context in which the story is told and the aim pursued by the story teller or writer. In the case of the *Sondergut* parables of Luke, there is no consensus among scholars that the parables can indeed be traced back to Jesus himself. Schmithals (1998:12-16) for example argues for a Lukan composition of the parables. But assuming that the parables in Luke's Gospel can be traced back to the historical Jesus, one should be careful not to make "value judgements" on how a particular parable of Jesus is used by Luke. Funk (1996:170) attributes the meaning of the parable of "The Good Samaritan" in Luke to a "(mis)understanding" of the parable as used by Jesus. Similarly, Crossan (1973:63-66) invests great efforts in explaining how Luke in the use of Jesus' parables confused the metaphorical with the literal. A word like "misunderstanding" is however too harsh a word to use. First, one needs to accept that Luke's motives for telling the parable may have been very different to those of Jesus. To use a parable for a different meaning does not presuppose a misunderstanding. It would be more meaningful to pursue the question of to what extent there may be continuity or discontinuity in particular aspects of Jesus' and Luke's teaching. Second, historical Jesus scholars need to be humble about the possibilities of their

discipline. Although both the originating form of a parable as well as its *Sitz im Leben* can be reconstructed with some certainty, it is impossible to reconstruct with any degree of certainty the historical situation in which Jesus uttered these parables (cf Vorster 1985:64-65). In telling these stories, Jesus obviously wanted to tell his audience about something. This something is generally regarded to be the Kingdom of God. But in talking to his followers various *reasons* may have given rise to Jesus telling a particular parable, some of which may be related to something that cropped up in their conversation. These reasons have been lost to us. This is not the case in Luke's narrative, however. Luke himself supplies the immediate context in which his parables have meaning. Our task is to analyse this context (the immediate co-text) in order to gain understanding of the meaning of the parables as Luke used them.

What has been said about meaning of parables also applies to referent. Although great emphasis has been placed on determining what Jesus' parables refer to, and how they refer, this has not always been so with the parables within their Gospel setting. Again, it has generally been accepted that the parables of Jesus, once the first-order reference (the literal reference) has been suspended, *refer* to the Kingdom of God and that this is done by means of a metaphorical process in which often paradoxical entities are juxtaposed so as to elicit a new vision of reality and God. However the backdrop against which "Kingdom of God" is referred to in the Gospel narratives has often been disregarded. The terms "intratextuality" and "extratextuality" serve to explain this backdrop. Our thesis is that God's Kingdom is intratextually referred to against the tension created between the opposing points of view of Jesus and his witnesses on the one hand, and the Israelite leaders and those who adopt their point of view on the other hand. This means that entities juxtaposed in the parables reflect the tension of the two opposing points of view in Luke's narrative. It is a tension within the "narrative world" of Luke. Notably, most parables of Luke are told in a conflict situation between Jesus and the Israelite leaders, in the course of which somebody "tests"

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Jesus, or someone “complains” about his actions.

In the parables, the contrasting points of view are accentuated by the juxtaposition of an Israelite with a Samaritan, an insider with an outsider, a rich person with a poor person, and so forth. Again it would be too harsh to suggest that Luke through lack of insight changed the vastly supreme “metaphorical stories” of Jesus into mere “example stories” (Crossan 1973:56). We believe that Kingdom of God is referred to *differently* by Luke, the difference being the Lukan frame of reference within which a particular parable features. Especially neglected has been the endeavour to explain how the Kingdom of God extratextually is referred to, that is, seen from within the political, social, and cultural context of *Luke's community*. That is the “contextual world” of Luke. Luke's narrative in general, and his parables in particular, are addressed to a particular audience (the implied or intended readers). Our analysis above (chapter 4) has shown that Luke's audience is itself characterised by tension. The followers of Jesus experience rejection from their Israelite counterparts, and the Lukan community itself is faced with the prospect of looming persecution. They are in need of assurance. The parables of Luke, characterised by a tension of opposites, reflect this tension. So the tension within the parables is a tension with which Luke's community can identify. In telling the parables, Luke however creates a new vision of reality and of God which Luke's audience is encouraged to embrace and in which the tension of their everyday lives can make sense. Accepting this new reality testifies the inbreaking of God's Kingdom.

Our analysis of Luke's parables follows in three major stages: (1) A description of the tension that constitutes the paradoxical backdrop of the parable, that is among other the repertoire on which Luke draws; (2) a detailed analysis of the text and immediate co-text of the parable; and (3) an interpretation of the parable against both the narrative and the contextual world of Luke in an effort to challenge conventional perceptions of reality and God in order to overcome religious, political and social segregation and to further the work for reconciliation.

The latter constitutes the focus of our study.

5.2 Judean-Samaritan tension

It has been noted that Luke's parables are invariably characterised by the juxtaposition of opposites. On a first-order reference the parable of "The Good Samaritan" (Lk 10:30-37) is written against the backdrop of the tension that existed between Judeans (that is, in particular the Israelites in Jerusalem) and Samaritans. Historical indications of a particular community that can properly be described as Samaritan can be traced back to about 180 BCE (Ravens 1995:73). This specifically Samaritan community lived at Shechem and had its own sanctuary on Mount Gerizim. It claimed to be descended from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Levi. Like the Judeans, they worshipped Yahweh at what they claimed to be the true Israelite sanctuary. Their only Scripture was the Pentateuch, and they observed many Israelite customs, such as circumcision, keeping the festivals and observing the Sabbath (Ravens 1995:74). Indeed they believed themselves to be the true Israel, the descendants of the tribe of Judah being the heretics.

It remains difficult to trace the origin of the Samaritans or date of the final schism between them and the Judeans. More recently, extensive research has been done on the Samaritans by Martina Böhm (1999), *Samaritanen und die Samaritaner bei Lukas*, and Ingrid Hjelm (2000), *The Samaritans and early Judaism*. Hjelm's literary study in particular accentuates the complexity of the matter. Invariably, past studies were primarily based on texts from the Hebrew Bible, both Judean and Rabbinic literature, and especially the writings of Josephus. These sources were often used uncritically, without taking necessary cognisance of the prejudice of their authors. Hjelm (2000:13-51) provides a helpful survey of the theories advanced in the past concerning Samaritan origins: Were the Samaritans a Jewish sect (Montgomery), the original Israelites (Gaster), or a separate Israelite state, the efforts made by Judeans to establish a single state destroying

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its very basis (Hjelm 2000:284)?

The popular (Judean/Pharisaic) version sees the origin of the Samaritans in the events related in 2 Kings 17. According to this view the Samaritans were a mixture of pagans from different nations who were settled in Samaria during the time of the "Assyrian exile". It was this view that provided the Judeans with the necessary arsenal to discredit the Samaritans as "unholy" and "unclean", a nation to be "set apart". The extreme Judean view is reflected in various Mishnah passages. A statement on intermarriage reads: "The Samaritan women are menstruous from the cradle. And the Samaritans defile a bed both below and above, because they have connection with menstruous women, and the latter sit upon every kind of blood" (*m. Nid* 4.1; cf Hjelm 2000:113). The impure state of the Samaritans, also finds proverbial expression: "He that eats the bread of the Samaritans is like to one that eats the flesh of swine" (*m. Sheb.* 8.10; cf Scott 1990:197). This popular view of the Samaritans as a "mixed nation" also finds expression in the writings of the Judean historian, Josephus. Josephus employs negative labelling by referring to the Samaritans as the "Cuthaeen sect" (*Bell. Jud.* 1:63; cf Van Aarde 2001:92), Cuthah being one of the heathen nations mentioned in 2 Kings 17:24. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, Cuthah is sometimes used to refer to the people of Assyria, or to the Egyptians, or to the Chaldeans, as the end-time enemies of Israel (Van Aarde 2001:92). As we have pointed out, the popular Judean view of the Samaritans as a "mixed nation" was fervently rejected by the Samaritans themselves. From their point of view there was little doubt that they, like the Judeans, were descendants of Joseph (see Hjelm 2000:239-272).

Based on an survey of the most important events in the history of the Samaritans, Böhm (1999:38-43) maintains that not one single factor, but a progression of factors, will have contributed to the schism between Judeans and Samaritans. What is central however to our study are the events and developments in and around the city of Shechem and the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim. This has prompted scholars to use the word "Shechemites" as a more

appropriate geographical designation for the Samaritans (cf Van Aarde 2001:91).

Shechem was totally destroyed in the eighth century BCE by the Assyrians and remained uninhabited for most of the Persian rule. During the Hellenistic Period at the end of the fourth century BCE, however, the city was rebuilt. Scholars have put forward a number of different reasons for this development and the subsequent building of the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim (cf Hjelm 2000:30-48). Alt (cf Hjelm 2000:30-31) has argued that the building of the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim was political, an unavoidable consequence of Persian policy, which gave Judea an independent political role similar to that enjoyed by Samaria. This created the need for their own sanctuary, especially for the common population, who resisted the rule of the Judean élite who had returned from exile. Klippenberg (cf Hjelm 2000:46-48; Böhm 1999:6061), in contrast, has attributed the building of the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim a religious motivation. The main reason can be traced back to the reforms concerning mixed marriages initiated by Ezra and Nehemiah. These reforms led a number of people in and around Jerusalem, accused of breaking certain purity regulations, to seek a new sanctuary in the north. They were in turn joined by dissident priests. The natural place for such a sanctuary was Shechem, which once before had been birthplace of all Israel (Jos 24).

Although it is exceedingly difficult to determine the exact motivations and reasons that led to the building of the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim, there is no doubt about the rivalry that developed between the Mount Gerizim (the temple of Shechem) and Mount Zion (the temple of Jerusalem) concerning the rightful place for Israel worship and Yahweh presence. Most well-known statements on the animosity between Judeans and Samaritans have reference to this period. No one seems to have described the events more provocatively, and clearly prejudicially (from a Judean standpoint) than Josephus. Josephus postulates that during the time of Alexander the Great, following the Persian rule and the building of the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim, the Samaritans courted the king's favour and asked

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for relief from tribute, upon which Josephus (*Ant.* 9.292) angrily remarks:

For such is the nature of the Samaritans, as we have already shown somewhere above (*Ant.* 9.291 and note). When the Jews are in difficulties, they deny that they have any kinship with them, thereby indeed admitting the truth, but whenever they see some splendid bit of good fortune with them, they suddenly grasp at the connexion with them, saying that they are related to them and tracing their line back to Ephraim and Manasseh, the descendants of Moses.

(in Massyngbaerde Ford 1983:89)

When however a few decades later the “Samaritans” suffered cruel persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes IV in 175 BCE, Josephus (*Ant.* 12.257-264) remarks:

... they [the Samaritans] would no longer admit that they were their kin or that the temple of Gerizein [Gerizim] was that of the Most Great God, thereby acting in accordance with their nature, as we have shown (*Ant.* 9:291); they also said they were colonists from the Medes and the Persians, and they are, in fact, colonists from these people.

(in Massyngebaerde Ford 1983:89)

The verbal attack on the Samaritans recorded in the Wisdom of Ben Sirach (50:5-26) also reflects on this period: “There are two nations that my soul detests, the third is not a nation at all: the inhabitants of Mount Seir, and the Philistines, and the stupid people living at Shechem” (cf Bailey [1980] 1983: 48). That the animosity was not confined to the regions of Judea and Samaria is recorded by Josephus, who reports of a dispute that had developed between the Judeans and the Gerizim-supporters in Alexandria concerning the sole legitimacy of the temple

in Jerusalem or the temple on Mount Gerizim, both maintaining that their temple was erected according to the “Law of Moses” (*Ant.* 13.74-79; cf Böhm 1999:80). This is paralleled by the dispute between the Diaspora Israelites and Gerizim-supporters, also in Egypt, as to where their sacrificial offerings should be sent (*Ant.* 12.8-10; cf Böhm 1999:82). Commenting on the latter incident, Crown (cited by Böhm 1999:82) writes:

The Jews argued that they should go to the temple in Jerusalem and the Samaritans asserted that they should go to Gerizim. The story, though brief, is most informative. It tells us directly that the Samaritans offered sacrifices in their temple, and it implies that there was nothing to choose between these and the sacrifices at Jerusalem that would clearly distinguish them from each other. In other words, the Samaritan sacrificial rites were clearly considered as equivalent to the sacrifices offered at Jerusalem.

Part of the struggle for legitimacy was the question of priesthood, with accusations being reciprocated. From a Judean perspective, the priestly succession from father to son was not maintained in Shechem (*Ant.* 11.306-312; cf Böhm 1999:83); but then again it was the Hasmoneans who broke the high priestly succession in *Jerusalem*, when after the murder of Onias III (175/4 BCE), Jonathan was assigned the functions of the office of high priest. This led to a break in the Zadokite lineage.

The tension between the Judeans and Samaritans reached a climax with the destruction of the temple on Mount Gerizim and the conquest of Samaria near the end of the second century BCE (cf Esler 2000:239; Böhm 1999:84). Most scholars propose this period as a formal date from which time onwards the two communities existed as separate entities (cf Böhm 1999:84). Historically however it is difficult to determine who was exactly responsible for the destruction of the

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temple on Mount Gerizim. Josephus (*Ap.* 13.1, 9; *Ant.* 13.4, 127, 145) attributes it to the high priest John Hyrcanus who conquered Samaria. Hjelm (2000:282) however points out that the Samaritan Chronicle does not relate any destruction of the temple to the time of Hyrcanus but rather to a Simeon, who - on the evidence available - cannot be associated with the high priest Simeon II Just, but rather with the Hasmonean Simeon. Josephus seems to have placed the event in the time of Hyrcanus as a consequence of his account of the latter's conquest of the region of Samaria (Hjelm 2000:282).

This period was nevertheless decisive in Judean-Samaritan relationships, each community seeking scriptural legitimacy for their place of worship. This is witnessed by an adaption of certain passages in the Pentateuch, leading to a number of textual differences between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Masoretic Pentateuch texts (see Böhm 1999:58-59, 79, 313-316). Some examples follow: The words "at Shechem" appearing in Deuteronomy 11:30 of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Furthermore, the decalogue in Exodus 20:17 is followed immediately by Deuteronomy 27:2b-3a, 4-7, with its reference to the "Gerizim". Conversely in the Masoretic Pentateuch Deuteronomy 27:4 (with its reference to an altar which should be erected on crossing the Jordan), seems to have been changed from the original reading "on Mount Gerizim" to the secondary reading "on Mount Ebal", which, according to Deuteronomy 11:29, was the mount from which the "curse" was to be spoken over the land.

It has generally been accepted that Pentateuch-adaptions were made by both communities to legitimise their particular theology. Hjelm (2000:282) however advocates that it was not the Samaritans who (first) revised their Pentateuch, but rather the Judeans. This assertion is based on the observation that the Shechem traditions do not conflict with the Samaritan tradition, which maintains its coherence with the past. In contrast, the Judeans did not create its own origin-story independent of the Shechem traditions, but developed a new tradition consisting of the "New Israel" that should gather all its tribes to *Jerusalem*

(cf Hjelm 2000:283). These considerations lead to a revision of the variant claim in the Ezra tradition: that Ezra brought the “Law of Moses” to Jerusalem. The Law of Moses could well refer to the “Samaritan Pentateuch”, that had been adapted in Jerusalem to establish identity and legitimacy for the nationalist movement of the Maccabees (Helm 2000:284). As such, the revision of the Pentateuch by the Judeans reflects the reinterpretation of the Torah in particularist and ethnocentric terms, and marks, as Hjelm (2000:284) notes, “a shift from the Mosaic Yahwism of בני ישראל to a Judaism of new covenanters who now call themselves יהודים (Jews).”

After the tensions of the late second and early first century BCE, the Roman occupation brought relative peace to the whole region. But the tension between Judeans and Samaritans remained. In the period 6-9 CE this bitterness was intensified when some Samaritans secretly entered Jerusalem by night and scattered human bones around the temple, thereby defiling the temple area (*Ant.* 18.9-30, cf Esler 2000:330-331). Oesterley (cf Bailey [1980] 1983:48) in turn observes, that the “Samaritans were publicly cursed in the synagogues; and a petition was daily offered up praying God that the Samaritans might not be partakers of eternal life.” In 52 CE, during the time of the Roman governor Cumanus, a Galilean on his way to Jerusalem was murdered in the Samaritan village of Gema (*Bell. Jud.* 2:232-246; cf Massyngbaerde Ford 1983:90-91; Esler 2000:329). Enraged by the incident, a large group of Galileans assembled to take revenge upon the Samaritans. The Judean authorities, however, tried to negotiate with Cumanus, beseeching him to punish the murderers. When he dismissed their request, a large crowd abandoned the Passover, and under the leadership of Eleazar (a bandit) attacked and massacred the inhabitants of Gema and burnt down their villages. Cumanus in turn went down to avenge the Samaritans. Fearing the further wrath of the Roman authorities, the magistrates of Jerusalem implored the insurgents to return home. A full-scale war was only prevented by the eventual intervention of Quadratus, the governor of Syria.

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It is well-known that among the synoptic authors Luke takes most interest in the Samaritans. Mark never mentions them. Matthew excludes them from Israel and from the mission of the disciples (Mt 10:5-6), at least until the final commission to go forth as disciples with their message to "all nations" (Mt 28:19). In contrast, Luke narrates various passages featuring Samaritans (Lk 9:51-56; 10:30-37; 17:11-19; Ac 1:8; 8:1, 4-25; 9:31; 15:3).

A critical passage is Luke 9:51-56. It forms the introduction to the so-called Lukan "travel narrative" (Lk 9:51-19:44), and is as such situated at a very important juncture in Luke's narrative (cf Böhm 1999:205-238). At this point the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem begins. But, at this point notably Luke also leaves his Markan source. Whereas in Mark (and Matthew) Jesus and his disciples follow the route that leads beyond the Jordan through Perea to Jerusalem (Mk 10:1), Luke recounts that Jesus travelled through *Samaria*. As Böhm (1999:232-233) shows, this can hardly be attributed to geographical ignorance on Luke's part, who despite arguments to the contrary is well acquainted with the geography of at least certain parts of Palestine. From the point of view of narrative construction, this journey takes up a considerable amount of space and time ("narrating" space and time) in Luke's narrative, so that Luke's account seems to create the impression that a large part of Jesus' ministry took place in Samaria. Ravens (1995:78) observes that the whole travel narrative, which extends over a number of chapters in Luke's Gospel, contains only two indications of Jesus' location, both mentioning Samaria (Lk 9:51; 17:11). This is in stark contrast to Luke's narration of Paul's missionary journey in Acts, which can be traced step by step on a map. Apart from the introductory pericope of the travel narrative (Lk 9:51-56) establishing the tension between Judeans and Samaritans (by implication the question of temple legitimacy - Jerusalem/Gerizim), the travel narrative is further characterised by two further stories concerning Samaritans, the parable of "The Good Samaritan" (Lk 10:30-37) and the story of "The ten healed of Leprosy" (Lk 17:11-17), both of which evoke sympathy for the Samaritans.

These observations raise the question: Why does the Lukan Jesus travel through *Samaria* and what is the purpose pursued by Luke by his accented interest in Samaritans (both in the Gospel and Acts)?

Various scholars have explained this stress on the Samaritans by referring us to Luke's universalist tendencies, by which, here, we mean that not only the Judeans but also the Samaritans are included in the salvation of God. Over the years, this thesis has seen various refinements (cf Böhm 1999:8-30), the most well-known being the position of a "unified Israel" in which Judeans and Samaritans, who historically belong together, are reunited through the ministry of Jesus (cf Jervell 1972:113-127). Through the ministry of the Samaritans, the "restoration of Israel" takes place (cf Ravens 1995).

More recently Thomas and Van Aarde (1998:760-788; see also Selling 1975:42-43; Van Aarde 2001:111) have advocated a two-fold hypothesis as an explanation for the (narratological) accent on the Samaritan mission in Luke-Acts: (1) Samaria functions as a "hinge" between the crossing of the message to Israel, and the world; and (2) Samaria functions as a "hurdle" on the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. Scholars have observed the mirrored pattern: Galilee/Samaria/Jerusalem = Jerusalem/Samaria/ Rome in the Gospel and Acts respectively, with Samaria each time constituting the "hinge". It thus seems as if Luke uses Samaria in a context in which Jesus wishes to explain to his disciples and others (implied readers) *how* he wants to be followed on his "way to Jerusalem" (used symbolically; see "taken up to heaven" in Lk 9:51). This "way" includes the mission to the Samaritans. Those who are not prepared to follow Jesus through Samaria are not ready for the journey to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Rome (Thomas & Van Aarde 1998:784): Samaria is the "hurdle" that needs to be cleared. The crossing of the hurdle constitutes the "breaking in" of God's Kingdom. Again in Acts, Samaria is the hurdle that needs to be crossed before the message reaches the rest of the world. Notably John, who according to Luke 9:54 was one of the disciples who wanted to call down fire from heaven

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to destroy the Samaritans, is sent with Peter to confirm the acceptance of the gospel by the Samaritans in Acts 8 (Thomas & Van Aarde 1988:785; see also Massyngbaerde Ford 1983:91). On their return, Peter and John preach the gospel in many Samaritan villages. The hurdle has been crossed and Luke continues his narrative with the spread of the gospel (primarily through Paul) to the end of the world (Rome).

The above observations (illustrative of a wide scholarly debate) provide us with valuable insight concerning the Samaritans in Luke-Acts. A weakness however seems to be that not enough attention is given to *point of view*. The focus invariably falls on the debate concerning the Judeans/Samaritans versus Gentiles as separate and distinctive groups. It is our conviction that the focus should not be on the groups as such, but on the *attitude* (point of view) that prevails within these groups, when they are challenged by the alternative view presented by Luke in his narrative. Furthermore "characterisation" in Luke's narrative is not absolute, meaning that the point of view conveyed by the characters is *fluid* (open to change) within their particular social or ethnical group. Not all Judeans (Israelites) reject Jesus. Not all Samaritans are good (or evil). Not all Gentiles accept the gospel. The juxtaposition of people (Israelites with Gentiles, or Judeans with Samaritans) invariably involves the juxtaposition of contrasting points of view; and it is this that serves as a challenge to the Lukan audience to see God differently. This thesis finds support in the summary remarks of Böhm (1999:310-311):

Die Samariter sind bei Lukas die abseits der offiziellen Toraauslegung und des offiziellen Kultus Stehenden. Ihr Glaube an den Gott Israels wird ihnen an keiner Stelle abgesprochen oder auch nur in Frage gestellt. Lukas ist vielmehr wichtig, an ihrem Beispiel auf das aufmerksam zu machen, worauf es beim Glauben und für die Erlangung des Heils eigentlich ankommt. Bei denen, die

den Gotteswillen und sein Heilangebot erkannt haben und ihren Glauben über alle einengenden Bestimmungen hinweg in Dank und Tat umsetzten, relativieren sich alle anderen "konfessionell bedingten" Unterschiede - sie sind, obwohl sonst abseits stehend, gerettet.

Böhm refers to the Samaritans as an "example" (*Beispiel*). They are an example of those who have accepted God's salvation. Böhm however fails to explain *how* and in what *way* they are an example. Our reading of Luke-Acts indicates that they are an example not in the sense of a "substitution" or a "comparison theory", a "simile" whereby A is *like* B (see chapter 3). Samaritans do not "illustrate" proper behaviour, but constitute an "interaction" with the behaviour of those who claim to represent God, but from a Lukan perspective oppose God and his purpose as realised by Jesus and his witnesses. For this thesis to hold water, the Lukan audience would at least have to have had knowledge of the tension between Judeans and Samaritans. We may recall that the "interaction theory" of metaphors presupposes what Max Black (1962:40) called a "system of associated commonplaces". The "associated commonplaces" are those properties commonly believed of an object, a person, or an event. The metaphor, as a diaphoric juxtaposition of opposites, can only be a force to ignite new insight if these "associated commonplaces" are known. The question is: are they known to Luke's audience, that is to his community?

Based on the assumption that Luke's audience consists of *Gentiles*, scholars have suggested that the animosity between Judeans and Samaritans may hardly have impacted on the intended readers of Luke-Acts (cf Scott 1990:192). The target audience of Luke is of course the subject of a highly contested scholarly debate in itself (see especially Forbes 2000: 307-327). Our literary reading has indicated that Luke's audience probably consisted of both Gentiles and Israelites, the Gentiles emanating largely, if not exclusively, from the

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so-called Godfearers with close affinity with the cultural and religious traditions of Israel (cf Ac 10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26, 43, 50; 17:4, 17; 18:7). Tyson (1992:19-41) and Forbes (2000:323-327) support the thesis of the Lukan audience being Godfearers, but as yet unconverted Godfearers (that is a “non-Christian” audience), whom Luke is trying to reach through his narrative (which would give Luke-Acts a distinctive evangelistic ring). Whether the Godfearers are converted “Christians” or as yet unconverted Gentiles, is for our immediate purpose irrelevant. Whoever they were, however, knowledge of the tensions between Judeans and Samaritans can be presupposed. A careful analysis of Luke-Acts confirms this.

The animosity noted above is well documented in the pericope of Jesus entering Samaria on his way from Galilee to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-56), which, among other, features to prepare Luke’s audience for the parable of “The Good Samaritan” that follows shortly thereafter. This pericope is characterised by the inhospitality of the Samaritans. When they hear that Jesus is on his way to “Jerusalem” they turn him away.¹ Notably there is no need for Luke to explain why “Jerusalem” should be a problem to the Samaritans. Obviously the word “Jerusalem” suffices to *recall the tension* that existed between Gerizim and Jerusalem. Indeed, as Jervell (1972:116) notes, for a reader who is unaware of the relationship between Gerizim and Jerusalem, this pericope would be quite “unintelligible”. Similarly the calling down of fire by Jesus’ disciples, with its allusion to Elijah who called down fire three times upon the Samaritans (2 Ki 1:9-16), needs no further explanation. Knowledge is presupposed. The same applies to the other Samaritan pericopes in Luke-Acts. Luke 17:11-19 (the ten healed from leprosy) may serve as a further example. This pericope is even less informative than Luke 9:51-47. What can the line Luke “... and he was a Samaritan” (Lk 17:16) mean to readers who have no knowledge of Judean-Samaritan animosity? It may be true, as Böhm (1999:309-310) concludes, that the Lukan audience hardly pictured the Samaritans in the traditional sense as the

“hated half-breeds” or something on these lines. But the traditional animosity and the tensions between Judeans and Samaritans was well-known among Luke’s audience, and as such could serve the purpose of literary reflexion and provide the backdrop of two opposing entities juxtaposed in a tensive metaphor.

Knowledge of the tension between Judeans and Samaritans plays indeed an important role in determining the challenge posed by Luke in telling his story. This challenge needs to make sense to an audience which consists of both Israelites and Gentiles. It is our thesis that the challenge is directed to anybody in Luke’s audience, Israelites or Gentiles, who might adhere to the conventional Israelite view of God as one characterised by exclusivity and partiality. Luke’s narrative is one of crossing boundaries to a new vision of God. The tone is set by Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem crossing the boundary into Samaria.

5.3 The text of “The Good Samaritan”

The travel narrative is characterised by extensive teaching and frequent dialogue. Scholars have attested that Luke wants to portray Jesus as teaching his disciples the “way of discipleship” (cf Donahue 1988:128), a Markan motif taken over by Luke, although Luke at this point abandons his Markan source. From this perspective the lawyer’s question in Luke 10:25, which seems to interrupt the preceding passage, is not out of place. It introduces the first of many instructions on discipleship embedded in a juxtaposition of opposing points of view. The instruction in Luke 10 takes the form of a prolonged dialogue between Jesus and a lawyer in which the parable is embedded. As the dialogue resembles similar dialogue also transmitted by Mark (12:28-34; cf Mt 22:34-40) it is highly probable that the dialogue does not provide the original historical situation of the parable.

Crossan (1973:58) discerns four separate units: (1) 10:25-28, the questions concerning eternal life; (2) 10:29, the question regarding one’s neighbour; (3) 10:30-35, the parable of “The Good Samaritan”; and (4) 10:36-37, the Lukan conclusion. Crossan’s unit identification is based primarily on what has been

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termed a number of "inconsistencies" in the pericope. Two of these stand out. First, the shift in question from, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" in 10:25, to "Who is my neighbour?" in 10:29. Second, the shift from "neighbour" as the object of love in 10:27, 29, to "neighbour" as the subject of love in 10:36 (cf Crossan 1973:58-62; Funk 1996:178). But leading scholars have also affirmed both the authenticity of the parable's context in Luke (cf Keesmaat 2000:276; Forbes 2000:55-58), as well as the basic unity of the entire passage (cf Bailey [1980] 1983:33-34; Green 1997:427). For an understanding of the *Lukan* meaning of the parable, there is no need to evaluate its structure in terms of original unity. Our focus falls on the parable as narrated by Luke. It is however imperative not only to explicate the parable as such, but to consider the whole dialogue in which the parable features. According to Bailey ([1980] 1983:33); it is a failure to do so that has led to the hasty and superficial conclusion that the parable as narrated by Luke is merely an ethical exhortation to reach out to those in need, with the Samaritan providing the good example called for.

The dialogue consists basically out of two parts, (1) 10:25-28, and (2) 10:29-37, which show a remarkable structural resemblance. This is aptly demonstrated by Bailey's ([1980] 1983 :34) structural analysis, slightly revised by us:

Part one: A lawyer *tests* Jesus (identification of motive)

(1) Lawyer: (Question 1) "What must I *do* to inherit eternal life?"

(2) Jesus: (Question 2) "What about the *Law*?"

(3) Lawyer: (Answer to 2) "Love God and your neighbour."

(4) Jesus: (Answer to 1) "*Do this* and you will live."

Part two: The lawyer desires to *justify* himself (identification of motive).

He asks:

-
- (1') Lawyer: (Question 1') "Who is my neighbour?"
- (2') Jesus: (Question 2') "A certain man went down from Jerusalem ..."
 "Which of these three became a neighbour?"
- (3') Lawyer: (Answer to 2') "The one who *did* mercy on him."
- (4') Jesus: (Answer to 1') "Go and *do* likewise."

This structural analysis shows that in order to appreciate the force of the parable (10:30-35) it is imperative to examine both parts of what is a unified composition. The italicised words stress what to us seems to be the two central issues of the dialogue: (1) It involves a challenge (2) relating to the interpretation of the Law. The challenge is highlighted by the words ἐκπειράζω ("to test"; 10:25) and δικαιόω ("to justify"; 10:29). Both words expose the motives of the lawyer and prepare the reader for the challenge lying in the passage ahead. Although both Luke and Mark situate the dialogue in a conflict situation involving the controversies between the Israelite religious leaders and Jesus, the setting within Mark's Gospel is less prejudiced than in Luke's. In Mark, the lawyer's question is motivated by the good answer given by Jesus to the Sadducees concerning the resurrection (Mk 12:28). The lawyer is portrayed as earnestly seeking an answer. In Mark the dialogue also ends on a positive note, on mutual agreement, Jesus confirming that the lawyer is not far from the Kingdom of God (Mk 12:34). That the Kingdom of God has not yet quite dawned in the lawyer's life is made plain by Mark in the pericope of the widow's offering - she gave all she had (Mk 12:41-44). In Luke the lawyer's question is clearly narrated as a "test". It involves a challenge, the opening gambit in the social dynamic of "challenge-and-response" typical of first-century Mediterranean culture (Malina 1993:34-37; cf Esler 2000:333).

Within the wider framework of Luke's narrative as a story of opposites it is worthy to note that the conflict is initiated by the lawyer, a member of the Israelite religious leadership. This lawyer is not necessarily a real lawyer appearing in the life of the historical Jesus. He is a character in Luke's narrative, who as a

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character must have made sense to Luke's audience. The lawyer, it seems, is a prototype of those who constitute the opposition to the βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ in Luke's narrative. This is confirmed by Luke's adding to the motif of a "test" in 10:25 that of "self justification" in 10:29, an attitude which throughout Luke's narrative epitomises the "exaltation-orientated point of view" of those who oppose God's will as presented by Jesus and his disciples (cf Resseguie 1982:45; Lk 16:15).

The second central issue highlighted by the structural analysis above is the "Law", more specifically the interpretation and *practice* of the Law. The topic of the "Law" is introduced by Luke with the use of the word νομικός. Böhm (1999:241) notes that Luke replaces the word γραμματεὺς in Mark with νομικός, a term used by Luke only in passages which relate specifically to an understanding of the Law. The Law by implication poses the question, here articulated by the lawyer: "What must I *do*?" The word "do" features repeatedly. Following the exchange with the lawyer, Jesus responds "*Do* this" (10:28). The same word is heard again in the lawyer's response to the question of Who was a neighbour? - "The one who *did* mercy" (10:37a), followed by the concluding response of Jesus, "Go and *do* likewise" (10:37b). The repeated call by Jesus to "do this" in both 10:28 and 10:37b, implies that the lawyer has not yet fulfilled the Law. But it is not the Law per se, which is at stake here, but its construal, its interpretation and application (Green 1997:428). Luke 10:25-37 indicates that there is a certain distance between the Lukan Jesus and the Mosaic Law.

This observation is confirmed by the second major way in which Luke diverges from Mark (cf Esler 2000:334). In contrast to Mark, in whose Gospel the lawyer's initial question concerns the greatest commandment (Mk 12:28), the lawyer's question in Luke's Gospel concerns the acquisition of eternal life (cf Lk 18:18). This has been noted above as an "inconsistency". However Esler (2000:334) maintains that this "inconsistency" reflects on a particular Lukan understanding of the Mosaic Law. Luke's attitude to the Law has resulted in wide scholarly debate (cf, inter alia, Jervell 1972:133-147; Esler 1987:110-130).

Conzelmann's traditional view that for Luke the Law is a matter of history, and as such plays no significant role in Luke's narrative, has found much criticism. Jervell (1972:137-138) notes that Luke's narrative nowhere contains any criticism of the Law or any part of the Law in itself. Luke recounts in detail how all the rituals prescribed in the Law are carried out by Jesus and his parents (Lk 1-2). Similarly Luke makes every effort to portray Paul as someone who has a high regard for the Law (Ac 15, 21). For Luke the "Law" in the strict sense as the "Law of Israel", relates to the *identity* of the people of God, and can therefore never be abandoned or reduced to insignificance (Jervell 1972:134). Significantly, Luke does not - like the rabbis - attempt to raise certain parts of the Law above others; nor, for Luke (in contrast to Matthew, Mark, and Paul) can the Law be summarised in the one central commandment of love (cf Jervell 1972:139). This is most apparent in Luke 10:25-28. Whereas in Mark Jesus responds to the question of the greatest commandment by citing Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18, the Lukan Jesus refrains from doing so: the summary is given by the lawyer. For Luke, the status of the Law is not in question. This does not exclude the fact that the Lukan Jesus sometimes transcends and sometimes challenges the Law (see Esler 1987:114-118). The challenge however is not a rejection of the Law as such, but as Esler (2000:334) attests, a *subversion* of the "Mosaic Law", whenever the Law is used to justify exclusivity and partiality based on group differentiation.

This argument finds support in the unique terminology used by Luke concerning the Law, especially in his use of the name "Moses" (Jervell 1972:136-137). The expression "to speak against Moses" is present only in Luke's writing (Ac 6:11, 13, 14 [18:13]; 21:21, 28: 25:8 [10]; 28:17). The expression "the Law of Moses" (only used three times by other New Testament authors), is employed five times by Luke (Lk 2:22; 24:44; Ac 13:38; 15:5; 28:23). Similarly the name "Moses" referring to the Law appears frequently in Luke-Acts and seldom in other writings (Lk 5:14; 16:29; 24:27; Ac 6:11; 15:1; 21:21). Reading Luke 10:25-37 as a subversion of the Mosaic Law radically revises traditional interpretations of the

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parable. Jesus' closing words, "Go and do likewise" (10:37b) is then no longer an admonition to moral behaviour for which the Samaritan featured as a good example. Indeed, the closing remark is not an answer to the parable per se but to the original question of inheriting eternal life (10:25); or as the term ζάω in 10:28 suggests, it is a challenge to embrace the life within the Kingdom of God. These remarks warrant a closer look at the two parts that constitute this dialogue.

Verses 25-28: Luke presents the dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer as one between two colleagues. The lawyer "stands up" and addresses Jesus. That the dialogue concerns the Law is not only indicated by the word νομικός for the lawyer (see above), but also by the word διδάσκαλος with which the lawyer addresses Jesus. Within the setting of first-century Palestine διδάσκαλος invariably refers a teacher who gives instruction on the Torah (Böhm 1999:241). The word ἐκπειράζω however reminds the audience that the lawyer belongs to the Israelite leadership which has continually monitored Jesus' faithfulness to the Law, and indicates that the encounter will follow antagonistic lines (cf Forbes 2000:59). The "priests", one of whom is introduced later in the parable, formed part of the Israelite leadership, and when not performing priestly duties often functioned as legal experts (Green 1997:427). The introduction of a priest returning from his temple duties is therefore scarcely arbitrary. It serves to heighten the drama, and paves the way for the lawyer (and others who share his point of view) to be drawn into the world of the parable, and for the challenger to become the challenged.

The initial question of the lawyer concerning "eternal life" is closely related to that of the "Law" (cf Keesmaat 2000:276-277). A connection between obedience to the Law and inheritance/life is noted in Deuteronomy 6:16-18. Whereas this passage makes no explicit reference to "eternal" life, the connection is clearly expressed in the rabbinical commentaries on the Torah. The following quote from the well-known Rabbi Hillel serves as an example. He writes: "... who has gained for himself words of Torah has gained for himself the life of the world to come" (*m. Pirke Ab.* 2.8; cf Bailey [1980] 1983:36). Similarly, an anonymous

rabbinical saying reads: "Great is Torah, for it gives to them that practise it life in this world and in the world to come" (*m. Pirke Ab.* 6.7; cf Bailey [1980] 1983:36). That such practising of the Law was often presented in the form of a list of requirements to be fulfilled, is witnessed by the following extract from *Slavonic Enoch*. Enoch is told:

This place (Eden), O Enoch, is prepared for the righteous, who endure all manner of offense from those that exasperate their souls, who avert their eyes from iniquity, and make righteous judgements, and give bread to the hungry, and cover the naked with clothing, and raise up the fallen, and help injured orphans, and who walk without fault before the face of the Lord, and serve him alone, and for them is prepared this place for *eternal inheritance*.

(in Bailey [1980] 1983:36)

Fulfilling certain requirements in order to obtain eternal life forms part of the symbolic universe of those represented by the lawyer in Luke's narrative. It implies that the lawyer could have expected a similar list of requirements from Jesus. The setting into which Luke has placed this dialogue however is not that of a "classroom teacher" but a conflict situation marked by a "challenge" from the lawyer. The challenge is countered with a question posed by Jesus: "What is written in the Law? How do you read?" Jesus' response rejects any thought that he had any unfavourable view of Israelite piety centred on observance of the Law in itself (see also Lk 1:6; 2:22-25; Ac 10:2). Forbes (2000:59-60) notes that the debate was possibly initiated by the very fact that the lawyer was uneasy about Jesus' attitude to the Law and wanted to discredit him publicly. However by referring the lawyer to the Law, Jesus was both stressing the continued validity of the Law and seeking to gain clarity on the lawyer's understanding of it.

Just as the lawyer's initial question derived from the connection between

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obedience to the Law and the inheritance of eternal life as set out in Deuteronomy 6:16-25, so his answer is an extract from the same passage: unreserved love for God (Green 1997:428). To this he adds the Law of "love for your neighbour" in Leviticus 19:18, a combination otherwise only found in the mouth of Jesus (Mk 12:30-31; Mt 22:37-39; cf Forbes 2000:59).

From the lawyer's side the quote from Leviticus 19:18 paves the way for a wider discussion. Jesus' response, "You have answered well; *do this* and you will *live*" (10:28) carries a double critique and at the same time indicates his intention to end the discussion. First, it is a critique levelled at the interpretation of the Law without *practising* it. This critique is to be read against the background of a society governed by group differentiation, a society in which love for one's neighbour always involves different kinds of partiality and exclusivity. Second, Jesus' answer implies a critique of any interpretation of the Law in which some connection is made between meeting the requirement of the Law and obtaining "eternal life". Notably, Jesus avoids the term "eternal life". He says: "... and you will *live*" (cf Bailey [1980] 1983 :38). By doing so he indicates that loving God and your neighbour is what *life* (within the Kingdom of God) is all about.

Verse 29: As Jesus' answer ("do this") suggests that the lawyer may not have fulfilled the Law, the lawyer feels the need to "justify" himself. He does not allow the debate to end there. The Law needs some commentary. By revealing the motives of the lawyer, Luke indicates to the readers of Luke-Acts that the intentions of the lawyer are not pure. The question imposed on Luke's audience now is: Is the lawyer concerned with understanding God's Law and practising it? Or with his own status and honour-rating? It should be noted that in the co-text of Leviticus 19:18 love towards one's neighbour is presented as a disposition of the heart (Green 1997:428). But where is the heart of the lawyer? Has he love for his neighbour? Or is he more concerned with an interpretation of the Law by which his status and repute can be asserted?

While granting the importance of Leviticus 19:18 when quoting the Law

(10:27), the lawyer exploits its ambiguity. The God whom one must love is known. But who is the neighbour? In Leviticus 19:11-18 reference is made five times to one's "neighbour". The Greek word πλησίον is used to translate the Hebrew words עמית and רע, both of which have a wide range of meanings, extending from an associate to any one of one's own countryman (cf Böhm 1999:243). In Leviticus 19:18 reference however is made to "sons of your own people" intimating an understanding of "neighbour" to include only members of the Yahweh covenant. Based on this context, the rabbis concluded that all Gentiles were excluded from an act of neighbourliness. As to the Israelite proselytes, they were divided, some arguing for their inclusion others for their exclusion. Orthodox Israelites drew the line even more tightly, excluding certain categories of fellow-Israelites (see Forbes 2000:61). No "sinner" could be a neighbour, as such an inclusion would invariably condone their sins (cf Sir 12:1-7). Jeremias ([1963] 1984:135) refers to a rabbinical saying that heretics, informers, and renegades should be pushed (into the ditch) and not pulled out. Based on the historical background and the animosity that existed between Judeans and Samaritans, the Samaritans belonged to those who should be "pushed into the ditch".

Esler (2000:335) notes that the question posed by the lawyer is not merely a question of, "Where does one draw the line?", but that it is a "legal" issue, and indeed of an "exclusionary" nature. He refers to a similar passage in Exodus 21, where the directive is given that if a man kills another man (his neighbour) deliberately, he must be put to death (21:12-14). As the context of Exodus 21 clearly indicates that the neighbour is a fellow Israelite, the *Mekilta* interprets the verse in such a way as to suggest that the deliberate killing of a non-Israelite would not trigger the same result (*Nez.* 4.60-64; cf Esler 2000:335-336). Killing a fellow Israelite is forbidden; killing a foreigner however is justified.

The legal issue, then, posed by the lawyer's question, is: "Whom are we Israelites obliged to treat as our neighbours and who not?" The question is an indicator, determining who are the insiders to whom one is obliged to show love,

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and who are the outsiders for whom no such obligation exists. Esler (2000:336-337) observes that while the lawyer's question is "a perfectly respectable legal one in fact, it inevitably conveys an invitation to engage in group differentiation and stereotypification."

Verses 30-35: In his response to the lawyer's question, Jesus employs a parable. On a first-order reference the parable is used to expound Leviticus 19:18. The story told by Jesus, although fictional, reflects everyday reality. The route from Jerusalem to Jericho was a well-known highway, often used by priests and Levites who made Jericho their habitat (Scott 1990:195; Böhm 1999:253). With Jerusalem situated about 2,500 feet above sea level, and Jericho in the Jordan valley about 800 feet below sea level, the word *καταβαίνω* (going down) adds to the realism. Realistic too is the picture of violence on the road. Throughout history the route was notorious for banditry (see Bailey [1980] 1983:41-42; Keesmaat 2000:278). An attack by bandits would pose no surprise for the listener. The everydayness of the setting serves to draw the listener into the world of the parable. The listener can thus no longer remain a detached observer of events. He becomes part of the story.

The story starts with a "certain man" travelling down the road (10:30). The ethnic identity of the man is not disclosed. Based on the premises that the story unfolds in Judea, scholars have argued that the *Judean* identity of the man is presupposed (Scott 1990:194; Funk 1996:171; Du Plessis 1995:365; Keesmaat 2000:278; Forbes 2000:62), and that the non-disclosure of the man's identity is without any point in the story (Böhm 1999:244). Others argue that the identity of the man is consciously concealed and forms a central part of the parable. It suggests that a half-dead man is to be regarded as a simple human being, someone in need, with whom any person can identify (Bailey [1980] 1983; Green 1997:429). For Esler (2000:337), the concealment of this man's identity is crucial. He argues that the parable, being a response to Leviticus 19:18, would have imposed the question: was this man to be classified among those whom an

Israelite was obliged to help. If it is not clear whether the half-dead man is a fellow countryman of the priest and the Levite, the legal debate concerning “love towards one neighbour” is compounded. Argument for the deliberate concealment of the man’s identity finds support in two details: (1) He is stripped of his clothes, and (2) is left behind half-dead (unconscious). Bailey ([1980] 198e:42) argues that the two ways to identify a man in a multi-ethnic community is by his dress and his speech. Although the area of “dress-code” needs to be investigated further, the assumption that an Israelite could be distinguished from a non-Israelite by his clothing seems probable. With the multiple dialects in first-century Palestine, identification by speech is likely. Esler (2000:338) postulated that the nakedness of the man meant that an observer could determine whether such a man was circumcised or not: “If uncircumcised, he was a Gentile and certainly not a neighbour; if circumcised an Israelite or Samaritan.” For Esler, who interprets the parable within the framework of “social identity theory”, this is important, as it would present a scenario of a person belonging potentially to one of three different ethnic groups. It does however remains difficult to ascertain to what degree the story implicates such a probable identification of the man as either a Judean or a Samaritan. Even without a “three group identification, the half-dead man provides the perfect background into which various Israelites can be introduced to test the meaning of Leviticus 19:18 and the question of keeping (“doing”) the Law.

The half-dead man is soon joined by another person, denoted by class as a priest. Notably it is not “just anybody” travelling down the road, but someone with whom the lawyer can identify, someone like himself who belongs to the upper classes of society. But more important than the social status of the priest is his status as a temple functionary - someone with authority to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures, well acquainted with the Mosaic Law (Böhm 1999:252). That “by coincidence” the first person to travel down the road is a priest, someone characterised by obedience to God and the Mosaic Law (it could have been a less favourable calling) heightens the expectation of help and underlines in the

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circumstances the fortunate state of the half-dead man (Mell 1999:135). The priest however, though seeing the victim, passes by on the other side. That the priest "passes by on the other side" (thereby not even noticing that the half-dead man is alive) is shocking. That is indeed the initial effect that the priest's actions will have had on listeners of the parable. The story itself is remarkably silent concerning any motivation for the priest's action. The silence is an intentional "gap" in the narrative - it is there to promote thought. After the initial shock it will have triggered a whole range of thought relating to the lawyer's initial question of neighbourliness. Did the half-dead man next to the road belong to those who according to Leviticus 19:18 could be classified as a neighbour; and why did the priest not help? If indeed the half-dead man was identifiable as a non-Israelite, the case - from the lawyer's point of view (conventional Israelite wisdom) - would have been solved: there was no need to render help. But as the parable gives no hint of the man's identity, focus now falls on what needed to be done if he was indeed a fellow-Israelite, belonging to the "house of Israel."

Apart from the fear factor that the robbers might still be lingering to attack once again, the priest's problem (as that of the lawyer) is compounded by the fact that in this particular case he is subject to two laws, one to love his neighbour (Lv 19:18) and the other not to touch a corpse (Lv 21:1-4) (cf Böhm 1999:256; Esler 2000:339-340). To somebody passing by, the half-dead man might *appear* dead. The risk of corpse defilement was real. According to Leviticus 21:1 "none (of the priests) may defile himself for the dead among his people (fellow Israelites)." An exception is made for the nearest of kin, a relative (Lv 21:2). The general directives of Numbers 19:11 and 19:16, however, know no such exception. Both passages clearly state that a person touching the corpse of "anyone" (unspecified) is unclean for seven days and has to undergo ritual purification (cf Keesmaat 2000:278-279). Of course the priest could have risked contracting uncleanness. As he was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho, it can be assumed that he had fulfilled his period of service in the temple, and that he would have had

enough time to cleanse himself before his next period of duty. But, as Bailey ([1980] 1983:45) notes, returning to Jerusalem to undergo ritual purification rites would have been a humbling experience, as the priest together with all the other unclean people would be made to stand at the Eastern gate to shame them for contracting ritual impurity. One can also imagine, as Esler (2000:340) notes, that in the light of the clear prohibition in Leviticus 21:1-4, the priest would refrain from committing any breach of the Mosaic Law, even if reparations would be possible later (see also Forbes 2000:62-63). Such considerations would accentuate an excessive defence of the temple cult and its purity regulations at the expense of the (most important commandment) of loving God and your neighbour as yourself (Lk 10:27). This leads to a preposterous reversal of priorities. The position is pushed to an extreme by an interpretation of Leviticus 21 in the Mishnah and the Talmud stating that the danger of contacting uncleanness did not apply to a “neglected corpse”, that is, a corpse with no one to bury it (Scott 1990:195-196). In such a case the corpse takes priority over religious purity and a priest would be obliged to take care of the corpse at all times. The Mishnah quote (*m. Naz. 7.1*) reads:

A high priest or a Nazarite may not contact uncleanness because of their [dead] kindred, but they may contact uncleanness because of a neglected corpse. If they were on a journey and found a neglected corpse, R. Eliezer says: The high priest may contact uncleanness but the Nazarite may not contact uncleanness.

(in Scott 1990:195)

That the priest may contact uncleanness for touching the corpse is not an excuse for “neglecting” the corpse. Prohibitions in Leviticus 21:1-4 with regard to touching the corpse of a family member are clear. But when it comes to a “neglected” corpse, the high priest has no choice, he *must* care for the corpse. Ironically, the

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exception of the neglected corpse is not in the Torah but in the tradition, the Mishnah and the Talmud. Hypothetically, the lawyer could argue that the priest was strictly following the Torah; but for any listener such a "passing of the buck" would be preposterous (cf Scott 1990:197). Without any direct reference to the Law, the point made by the parable is clear: help should have been rendered.

The introduction of the Levite is structured in perfect parallel to that of the priest. He formed part of the Israelite clerical hierarchy. Levites were temple functionaries, who among other duties served as gatekeepers, accepted tithes from the people and performed as singers (Böhm 1999:253; Keesmaat 2000:279). As the priest, the Levite is bound by the Law concerning love towards God and one's neighbour (Lv 19:18). The scenario is, however, slightly different. The prohibition in Leviticus 21:1, concerning the risk of defilement on touching a corpse, seem to apply only to priests. Also in the Mishnah commentary, quoted above, the prohibition is confined to the priests. The Levite could therefore allow himself more latitude than the priest. At least the repercussions for him would be of less consequence. Expectations of help are aroused when the Levite "comes up to the place", suggesting that he drew closer to the half-dead man than did the priest (Bailey [1980] 1983:47). But he also passes by on the other side. Again this behaviour is not explained. In the background, however, the echo resonates: there is no excuse.

As many parables progress through a triad structure (see also Lk 14:18-20 and 20:10-14), the introduction of a third person, in this case an "ordinary Israelite" is expected. The triad of "priest, Levite, and Israelite" represents the threefold division of the Israelite people (Scott 1990:198). This hierarchal character is evidenced in the following quote from the Mishnah (*m. Hor.* 3.8):

The priest preceded a levite, a levite an Israelite, an Israelite a bastard, a bastard, a *Nathin* a proselyte, and a proselyte a freed slave. This applies when all are [otherwise] equal; but if a bastard

is learned in the Law and a High Priest is ignorant of the Law, the bastard that is learned in the Law precedes the High Priest that is ignorant of the Law

(in Scott 1990:198)

Apart from evidencing the hierarchal structure in Israelite society, this quote is illuminating, as noted by Scott (1990:198), because it highlights the importance of point of view. The somewhat scandalous comparison between a High Priest and a bastard originates from the writers of the Mishnah who belonged to the rabbinic tradition. From their point of view the priests constitute the enemy, while they themselves are the Israelites.

The introduction of a “Samaritan” instead of an ordinary Israelite causes what Funk (1966:138) called an “imaginative shock”. The framework that marked the discussion is simply knocked away. There is no ordinary Israelite who could be presented as the one who “does” the Law, thus providing the implied critique to the lawyer in verse 29. With that, the issue of an Israelite exercising neighbourly love is not wiped off the table. But the paradigm which views the problem in a particular way has been sprung. This perspective undoubtedly includes that of “group identification” and “group differentiation” as attested by Esler (2000:341-342). The introduction of the Samaritan nullifies any dialogue which proceeds solely from an Israelite (ethnocentric) perspective: whether a particular person (an Israelite or not) should be shown love. But more particular, in the light of the tension between Jerusalem and Gerizim, it also springs the paradigm which echoes the belief that the supporters of the temple cult in Jerusalem - based on their apparently stringent adherence to the Law - constitute *exclusively* the true Israel.

The introduction of the Samaritan, who from an Israelite point of view is a representative of a hated out-group, is used in the parable metaphorically. The juxtaposition in this case is not epiphoric but diaphoric; not illustrative, but tensive.

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The Samaritan does not fit on the basis of similarity, but dissimilarity. It is not an obedient Israelite who shows mercy and obedience to the Law but a hated Samaritan. The diaphoric structure signifies that the introduction of the Samaritan does *not* serve as an illustration of something (love towards one neighbour), but that something new is being created which evolves out of the juxtaposition of two opposites that simply cannot be assimilated. The lawyer is faced with a scenario that fits neither into his worldview nor into his perception of reality.

In contrast to the perceptions that arise out of a “group identification” and “group differentiation” paradigm, the surface structure of the parable suggests that contrary to popular belief there is not much to distinguish the Samaritan from the priest and the Levite. The steps built around their descriptions are very similar and create what Donahue (1988:131) calls a “rhythmic cadence”, only to be broken abruptly by the word “compassion”:

1. A priest goes down

and when he sees (καὶ ἰδὼν), he goes by on the other side
(ἀντιπαρήλθεν)

2. The Levite comes to the place

and when he sees (καὶ ἰδὼν), he goes by on the other side
(ἀντιπαρήλθεν)

3. A Samaritan makes his way

and when he sees (καὶ ἰδὼν), he has compassion (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη)

This structure shows that, within the narrative world of the parable, what distinguishes the three is not fundamentally that two belonged to the house of Israel and one was a Samaritan (ethnic identity), nor that the first two were “pious” men, temple functionaries with a high regard for God’s Law, nor that the Samaritan was an “impious” scoundrel, a lawless “Gentile” (religious identity). What distinguishes the Samaritan from the other two is the word σπλαγχνίζομαι:

he has “compassion”.

The shock is not only that a Samaritan as such is introduced in the parable, but that the Samaritan by showing mercy “does” the Law. Within a context where the interpretation of the Mosaic Law is being debated, the irony is compounded by the fact that the Samaritan is *not* a lawless Gentile. Indeed, even if hated by the Judeans, he is a member of a group which had the Pentateuch as its Scripture and was therefore bound by the same Mosaic Law (including Leviticus 19:18) as the two Judean clerics (cf Bailey [1980] 1983:48). Strictly speaking, the Samaritan could therefore have argued along the same lines as the priest and Levite concerning the question as to whether he was obliged to help the half-dead man as his neighbour (as a fellow countryman or kinsman). But he does nothing of the kind. The whole issue of whom he may or may not help as imposed on him by the Mosaic Law is simply immaterial to him. He has “compassion” and helps. “Compassion” epitomises the crossing of socially and religiously defined boundaries maintained by the temple and a rabbinic interpretation of the Law, while also undermining any evaluation of a fellow human on the basis of his or her group identity.

The same juxtaposition of “seeing” and “compassion” occurs elsewhere in Luke’s narrative (cf Donahue 1988:132). In Luke 7:13 Jesus sees (καὶ ἰδὼν) the woman who is burying her son and has compassion. Similarly in the parable of the “A Man Had Two Sons” (to be analysed below in chapter 6), the father sees his younger son returning and has compassion (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη). Indeed “compassion” is a major theme of Luke’s narrative, central to his narrative world and the symbolic universe created by him. The tone is set as early as the first chapter of his narrative. In the Benedictus, Zechariah praises John, who “will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, through the tender mercy (σπλάγχνα ἐλέους) of our God” (Lk 1:77-78). Compassion is the core value that defines God and determines his relationship to humankind.

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The compassion of the Samaritan is enriched by a detailed description of his actions towards the half-dead man (verses 34-35). From a literary perspective his dragging out of events in time (narrating time) allows the lawyer (and Luke's audience) to absorb the sudden twist in events. It gives the lawyer time to reorder his by now shattered worldview.

The use of "oil and wine" for medical purposes is well attested. In Isaiah 1:6 reference is made to wounds and sores that are to be cleansed and soothed with oil. Wine serves the purpose of disinfection. For Jeremias ([1963] 1984:135) the order should be changed around. First the wine to disinfect the wound and then the oil to sooth it. In the light of the debate surrounding the interpretation of the Mosaic Law, maintained by the temple and its functionaries, the sacrificial element associated with "oil and wine" is more important (cf Bailey [1980] 1983:50; Donahue 1988:132; Böhm 1999:248-249). Both formed part of the daily temple sacrifice, in the course of which priests and Levites poured out oil and wine on the high altar of God (see Lv 23:13; cf Ex 29:40; Nu 28:13-14). The *sacrificial* element evoked by the words "oil" and "wine" should be heard against the backdrop of prophetic critique against the temple cult. Donahue (1988:132) draws attention to an allusion in the admission of the lawyer in 10:37 that the neighbour is "the one who showed *mercy*", to Hosea 6:6, where the prophet announces: "I [Yahweh] desire *mercy* not sacrifice." The same critique is echoed in Micah 6:7-8: God is not pleased with "ten thousand rivers of oil," he instead requires deeds of justice and "mercy" (see also Is 58:5-9). Ironically, the Samaritan who from a Judean perspective was unclean because of his apostate status and his potential contact with a corpse, offers the true sacrifice, pleasing and acceptable to God. Furthermore, although not recognising the books of the prophets, it is the Samaritan who epitomises the expression of love and mercy for which the prophets had called. It is a love which echoes the language used in the Hebrew Scriptures *of God* as the one who binds up the wounds of his people (cf, inter alia, Is 30:26; 61:1; Jr 30:17; Ezk 34:16; Hs 6:1; Ps 147:31; Keesmaat 2000:281).

Scholars generally pay little attention to the final action of the Samaritan: The Samaritan places the half-dead man on his donkey and takes him to an inn (10:34b). Bailey ([1980] 1983 :51) draws attention to the social distinction between riders and leaders of a riding animal in Middle Eastern society. The Samaritan humbles himself by placing the injured man on “his own riding animal” (10:34). The rider becomes the leader; the master the servant. Socially defined boundaries of honour and shame, so pivotal in first-century Mediterranean society are disregarded, undermining an “exultation-orientated ideology” so prevalent among the Israelite leaders (cf Lk 14:7-11; 18:9-14). In taking the injured man to an inn, the Samaritan not only shows unreserved generosity by paying the innkeeper two denarii (two normal day’s wages), but enters (again) what could well be a hostile environment in a society characterised by “blood vengeance retaliation” (Bailey [1980] 1983:51-52; Keesmaat 2000:281). It was an established phenomenon of Mediterranean society (as in many Middle Eastern and African countries today) that vengeance be exercised against a person believed to be responsible for causing bodily harm, all the more so if the presumed attacker belonged to an out-group. If the actual attacker sought was not available, anybody related to him in the remotest way might suffer. The Samaritan could have dropped the injured man at the door of the inn and disappeared. But when he stays the night and promises to return to pay any unpaid debt, anonymity is no longer possible. Indeed the Samaritan is not concerned about his own safety or well being. Compassion invariably focuses on the need of the other. Referring to Matthew 18:23-35, Donahue (1988:133) notes that unpaid debt could lead to enslavement. By promising to pay any possible debt, the Samaritan not only covers the debt itself, but assures the injured man’s freedom. All possible arguments to justify the “passing by” of the priest and the Levite, based on what could be valid legal considerations, are subverted. The well-organised world of conventional Israelite wisdom springs apart at both ends.

Verses 36-37: Having completed his parable, Jesus, as before, counters

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the lawyer's question with a question of his own. As many scholars have noted, the logical question would have been: Was the half-dead man a neighbour to the priest and the Levite? If that was the question posed by Jesus, the parable would indeed have been an "illustration" of mercy and unrestricted love, which could also be expressed in terms *other* than a parable. Our thesis however is that the Lukan parables (including the narrative in which they are embedded, both at micro and macro level) are metaphorical in nature and as such not translatable into discursive language without cognitive loss. Being metaphoric, the parable and its co-text invariably pose a challenge (diaphor) to conventional perceptions of God and reality. In the light of our analysis, Crossan's (1973:56) remark that Luke in error accepted many of "Jesus' reversal parables as actual examples of good and/or bad ethical action" needs to be revised (see also Scott 1990:200). The same "twist" characterising the introduction of the Samaritan, is evident in Jesus' question to the lawyer: "Which of these three men seems to you to have been a neighbour to the man who fell among the thieves?" (10:36). The twist is one from "neighbour" as the recipient of love, to "neighbour" as the agent of love. The lawyer's question focused on whether the injured man possessed neighbourly status, a question which in the light of the Mosaic Law and its rabbinical interpretation undoubtedly would have resulted in a lively debate, albeit if contested only by the temple hierarchy and without a conclusive result. But by juxtaposing "neighbour" as an agent in a story where the "neighbour" was to be a recipient, conventional realities are subverted and challenged. It is worthy of remark that the identity of the injured man is never revealed. His identity in the "world of Luke" (and Jesus) is a non-issue.

The lawyer's answer: "The one who did mercy on him" (showed him mercy) testifies to the existing animosity between the Judeans and the Samaritans. Jeremias ([1963] 1984:136) notes: "er vermeidet es, das verhaßte Wort Samariter in den Mund zu nehmen." But in the world created by Luke, the lawyer's answer is the *only* possible answer. It is a world in which compassion is the "essence of

life” (Van Staden 1991). Jesus’ concluding command, “Go and do likewise”, is not a general, moralistic admonition to help those in need, but a confirmation of the answer given by the lawyer and an invitation to enter the world of the parable.

The narrative does not disclose how the lawyer responded to the directive. What we do know is that the lawyer received an answer to the question he originally sought. Indeed he gives the answer himself, which is characteristic of Luke. In contrast to Mark and Matthew, the Lukan Jesus does not supply the correct answer. He guides the lawyer along to come to his own conclusion. It is an appeal to see things differently, which characterises the purpose of diaphoric language, used to ignite thought through the juxtaposition of dissimilar entities. This is further underlined by the use of the word “see”, both in the parable and in Luke’s narrative as a whole. It has been noted before that Luke presents the disciples of Jesus as being led along “from blindness to sight, from minds without understanding to open minds” (Tannehill 1986b:281; cf Lk 24:31, 45). The priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan all come and see (καὶ ἰδών). Two are blind, despite seeing. At the close of the dialogue the lawyer gives the correct answer. But does he see? The failure of the lawyer to explicitly name the Samaritan as “the one” who showed mercy, leaves the narrative open-ended. Indeed the narrative itself does not disclose the outcome. Will the lawyer enter the world of the narrative? The lawyer’s world characterised by group differentiation, legitimised by the rabbinic interpretation of the Mosaic Law and institutionalised by the temple of Jerusalem and its functionaries, has been subverted. Will he enter the world of “compassion”?

5.4 The challenge of a God who chooses all nations

We have stated that Luke uses the parable of “The Good Samaritan” not purely as an “example story” (illustrative in nature), but as a metaphorical story (subversive by nature). In the past, the subversiveness of this parable has largely been attributed to its use within the historical Jesus context. The failure to see the

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diaphoric nature of this parable as used by *Luke*, can be attributed to a failure on the part of many scholars to interpret the parable both intratextually within the literary context of Luke-Acts and extratextually within the socio-historical context of the Lukan community.

We have argued in chapter 4 that juxtaposing opposites constitutes part of the literary style of Luke, and that Luke in using this literary style invariably does not confirm, but challenges a conventional view of reality and God. It is to be noted that we have also argued that Luke is a "reconciler of opposites". This may seem to stand in direct contrast to the subversive nature of both Luke's narrative as a whole and this parable in particular. But reconciliation does not necessitate a non-subversive approach. In this particular context, where the conflict arises from an exclusive view of God, reconciliation between the two conflicting groups is best brought about by subverting and challenging the conventional exclusive view of God with one that is inclusive. The characters in Luke's narrative invariably reflect either the latter or the former point of view.

At first-order reference the parable of "The Good Samaritan" is a tension-filled debate between "two lawyers" on the interpretation of the Torah. The case study is "loving your neighbour as yourself" (Lv 19:18). The lawyer approaches the question within the paradigm of conventional Israelite wisdom, in which the question of neighbourliness is directly related to the Israelite concept of holiness. As shown above (4.5.2), the holiness of God was directly linked to the holiness of God's people, who preserved God's holiness by adhering to a number of purity regulations, including the avoidance of all contact with people and animals deemed to be unclean. However, by introducing a Samaritan into his narrative - an unclean outsider, who contrary to conventional expectations *does* what the Law requires - the paradigm of conventional Israelite wisdom is burst. According to the alternative view presented by this parable, the heart of the Law is not God's holiness as expressed in purity regulations, but God's holiness as expressed by *mercy*. The Law understood in terms of purity regulations is subverted by an

alternative understanding of Law as that of mercy (cf Lk 6:36). Note that the parable does not advocate that mercy supersede the Law, thereby rendering the Law redundant. Instead, mercy is presented as constituting the heart of the Law, which in turn reflects on the heart of God himself. In showing mercy, the Samaritan *does* what the Law demands. By defining the Law in terms of mercy, rather than Israelite purity regulations, the Law can no longer be used to promote separateness and exclusivity, but is by nature inclusive of everyone.

The notion of a merciful God is not new to Israelite thought. Keesmaat (2000:280) shows that God “having compassion” is the most often used confessional statement about God in the Hebrew Scriptures. It appears as early as Exodus 34 (verses 6-7), where God is described as *compassionate* and gracious, slow to anger and great in goodness. This description of God re-occurs throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and constitutes what Keesmaat (2000:280) has termed the “foundational” view of God. God’s compassion is depicted as

- the basis for God’s deliverance (cf Ps 40:11; 51:1; 19:16; 77:9; 79:8; 102:13; also Is 63:15-16);
- the basis for God’s remembrance of his people (cf Dt 4:13; 2Ki 13:23);
- the basis for God’s forgiveness (cf Ps 78:38; 1 Ki 8:50; Is 49:13; Hs 2:21-23; Mc 7:19 [...]), and, most importantly,
- central to the restoration and reconciliation of God with his people (cf Hs 2:19; Zch 1:16; also Zch 12:10).

In the parable of “The Good Samaritan” the mercy of God is juxtaposed with the Israelite view of God as a God who practises ethnocentricity, that is, as one who chooses one nation (Israel) and rejects the other (Gentiles). Ethnocentricity inevitably diverts attention from the Law of God and those who live by it towards a people, who as a group are either “in” or “out” (based on Israelite purity regulations) irrespective of both God’s attitude towards them (mercy) and their

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attitude towards God (keeping his Law).

That ethnocentricity constitutes a central feature of the Israelite view of God is demonstrated by Forbes (2000:285-290) who provides an overview of the attitudes prevalent in the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as in the intertestamental and rabbinic literature. It is of course notoriously difficult, as Forbes (2000:280-284) himself cautions, to present a *definite* Israelite view of God. Invariably, the teachings in the literature under investigation are not always systematic or consistent. Furthermore much of the material, especially the rabbinic literature, is from a period later than the first century. Literature from this period, however, remains important, as one can assume that if Luke and other first-century authors address attitudes which are clearly prevalent of the time of their writing, then these attitudes must have their *roots* in an earlier period. Our focus falls on what constitutes the *conventional view*, which does not reflect the diversity of views present in any particular society. The conventional view can also be termed the "popular view", that is, the view which over a prolonged period of time has become dominant and constitutes the grand narrative of a society. In this regard the investigation done by Forbes is valuable. Forbes (2000:288) reaches the conclusion that between the time of the Hebrew Scriptures and that of the rabbinic literature of the second to the fourth century, one can discern a definite but gradual intensification of a decidedly negative attitude towards "the nations". Within the Hebrew Scriptures, God's attitude towards these nations outside Israel is presented rather ambivalently. On the one hand all nations are included in God's salvation (cf Is 2:2-4; 42:1-7; 45:22; 56:6-8; 66:18-21; Mi 4:1-4; Zch 2:11; 8:20-23). But on the other hand there is a decidedly disapproving attitude towards the nations, who are presented as the objects of God's wrath (cf Ps 2:8-9; Is 13-23; 49:23; 54:3; Jr 4-51; Ez 25-32; Am 1:3-2:3; Mi 7:16-17). This ambivalence is not explained by Forbes. An explanation is given by Syrén (1993) who argues that the exclusion of the nations can be traced back to the post-exilic period, a time during which the identity of the "people of Israel" was under tremendous threat

(see below 6.2.2). During this time the “blessing” of Israel - which served to accentuate the gratuitous decision of God in choosing Israel as his people - is used *against* the other nations and becomes the “grand narrative” of conventional Israelite wisdom. This corresponds with our description of the Judean-Samaritan tension described above (5.1).

What according to Forbes (2000:288) still constituted a certain balance between salvation and judgement within the Hebrew Scriptures, experiences a marked and almost conclusive shift to the latter in the intertestamental and rabbinic literature. The negative thrust against the nations is naturally most apparent in the rabbinic writings regarding the Gentiles. Although the rabbis did at times indicate the ideal of doing good to all of God’s creatures, the scorn felt for the Gentiles is nevertheless evident. Forbes (2000:287) provides the following examples:

- God loves only Israel of all the nations whom God has made (*Deut. R.* 5.7).
- God is in a special sense the God of *Israel* - not the God of the nations (*Ruth R. Intro.* 1.1).
- The nations have no part in God (*Cant. R.* 6.1).
- The Lord is only gracious to Israel (*Midr. Ps.* 2.5).
- The best the *goyim* can do is kill! (*Mek. Exod.* 27a [on 14.7]).
- Only repentant *Israelites* are accepted: “If a man repents, God accepts him. Everyone? No, Israel, but not of another nation” (*Pes. K.* 156a). [Reference of abbreviation unknown - also does not occur in Jastrow 1975:XVI-XVIII.]

There may have been multiple reasons for this shift from inclusion to exclusion based on ethnocentric considerations. But more importantly, it testifies to what Borg (1987:86) has termed an intensification of the “politics of holiness” by the Israelite leaders, fuelled among other factors by the oppression of the Israelites by foreign powers, not least of all the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. In an

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effort to safeguard Israel identity, the Israelite leaders invariably fostered the view that those who failed to adhere to Israelite Law and its purity regulations, were rejected by God and are as such *excluded* from his Kingdom. Being excluded from God's kingdom, they were no longer objects of neighbourly love.

Within the parable of "The Good Samaritan" the priest and the Levite epitomise an ethnocentric, exclusive view of God (see also Green 1997:431). The parable however subverts this view by the (diaphoric) introduction of the Samaritan who "does the Law", albeit not as defined by Israelite purity regulations but that of God's mercy. Inclusion or exclusion based on ethnic or tribal ties is rejected. This view is also echoed by Esler (2000:351) who draws attention to what seems a perfect parallel to the "dissolution of social categories" in Acts 10:34-35: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to God." The worldview that gives rise to a question like "Who is my neighbour?" has capsized.

At literary level, the parable of "The Good Samaritan" features a tension-filled debate between two lawyers, the "scribe" and Jesus. Intratextually, the debate reflects the tension between the Israelites leaders and Jesus and his witnesses, who constitute the two opposing poles in Luke's narrative. The former epitomises a conventional worldview, the latter its subversion in the realisation of an alternative view of God. Extratextually, the debate reflects the tension between Judeans and Samaritans (as members of an out-group), which at a second-order reference reflects the tension between the Israelites (regrouped under Pharisaic leadership after 70 CE) and that of the Lukan community, consisting of both Israelites and Gentiles, who are - in view of the tension - in need of assurance (Lk 1:4). Assurance, we have argued, is realised by juxtaposing opposing points of view, so aiming to create a symbolic universe in which nobody is excluded per se, but both Israelites and Gentiles are included in God's salvation. This is in essence "reconciliation". But how does Luke effect the work reconciliation in this particular parable?

We have noted above that “mercy” (as practised by the Samaritan) does not render the Law redundant. This is often overlooked or stated without the necessary nuance by scholars. Forbes (2000:289) for examples concludes: “Jesus thus challenges the view whereby God orders the world according to the law, and where his holiness and righteousness are seen in terms of the destruction of, or separation from, those who do not follow the law.” Although Luke draws different maps of holiness (cf Neyrey 1991a:285-288), and subverts the principle of any categorisation of people according to conventional Israelite purity regulations, he does not reject the notion of God’s holiness as such; nor does he question the validity of the Law (cf Jervell 1972:137-138; Green 1997:428; Esler 2000:335). What he questions is, a *particular* understanding and application of the Law as advocated by the Israelite leaders that in essence promotes exclusivity and separateness (evidenced by the action of the priest and the Levite). But the Law as such remains valid. Note, the Samaritan does not *violate* the Law in showing mercy. In contrast to the priest and the Levite, he does what the Law in essence *demand*s. A rejection of the Law per se, the Samaritan doing what is laudable but outside the frame of the Law, would lead to what Crossan (1973:5) termed a “polar reversal” of roles, whereby the latter (the Samaritans) are included at the expense of the former (the Israelites). But exclusion of any kind is not the purpose pursued by Luke (see 4.6 above): exclusion is self-inflicted - whenever a point of view based on ethnic or social categorisation is in tension with the βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ is adopted. Luke promotes reconciliation by letting the Law stand unchanged, while presenting a member of an Israelite outgroup doing what the Law says he should do. Luke thus subverts a world in which salvation is determined by ethnic or social association (coded in the Israelite purity regulations), and creates a world in which salvation is for all. The challenge posed to the listener is: Will he or she enter the world of the parable? - a world which is both the world of compassion and the world of the Law, not contrasted but reconciled with one another on the basis of God’s mercy.

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One last question needs further consideration. Why did Luke use a Samaritan? The obvious answer is that the Samaritan provides Luke with a diaphor which by shock tactics jerks his audience out of any comfort zone in which they may be and compels them to consider the "new world" created by Luke through his subversive story. This in itself does, of course, not necessitate the use of a Samaritan: any member of an out-group would provide the same shock effect. The subversiveness of the story, however, and the harshness of the exclusive attitude prevalent in conventional Israelite wisdom are accentuated by the ironic fact that the Samaritan *knows* the Law and (like the Judean priest and Levite) has the Pentateuch as his Scriptures.

Apart from this metaphorical function attributed to the Samaritan, scholars have noted that the Samaritan-pericopes both in Luke's Gospel and in Acts constitute a "hinge" or "bridge" to the inclusion of the Gentiles (cf Selling 1975:42-43; Thomas & Van Aarde 1998:760-788, see also Sanders 1987:148-150). As such, the Samaritan-pericopes prepare the reader for the ultimate mission to the Gentiles. More specifically however for Luke's audience, the Samaritan brings into focus the temple rivalry between Jerusalem and Gerizim to be considered the only legitimate place of Torah interpretation and as the sole place of God's presence. By telling a story within an Israelite context, where a Samaritan *does* what the Law says he should do, the validity of this rivalry is subverted. The temple cult is relativised, which is of great significance to a community without a (recognised) sanctuary (cf Böhm 1999:258). This subversion is echoed in Stephen's speech: "God the Most High does not live in dwellings made by human hands" (Ac 7:48), and by Paul's word: "God ... does not live in dwellings made by man" (Ac 17:42).

In sum, the parable of "The Good Samaritan" is a metaphorical story, characteristic of the literary style of Luke, with the distinct aim of subverting a conventional, exclusive view of God, in order to create a vision of God whose salvation is for all. This is done, not by choosing between two groups of people,

whereby one is included at the expense of the other, but by juxtaposing alternative points of view (expressed by the actions of the priest/Levite and the Samaritan respectively) without questioning the validity of the Law as such, thereby promoting reconciliation and challenging the hearer to enter the world of the parable. In this world, the Law of God and the mercy of God are not opposites, but united one with the other.

CHAPTER 6: A MAN HAD TWO SONS

6.1 Introduction

Before proceeding with a detailed analysis of this parable, traditionally called the parable of "The Prodigal (or Lost) Son", we need to engage two preliminary questions. The first question, touched on in chapter 5 above (5.1), concerns the nature of metaphor, the second the naming of the parable. Both questions form an integral part of the analysis that is to follow.

The approach throughout this study has been that of interpreting Luke's narrative within a metaphorical paradigm, metaphor becoming the lens (and thus the model), through and beside which Luke's narrative in general, and his parables in particular are viewed. As with the parable of "The Good Samaritan", most historical Jesus scholars have "hijacked" metaphor in so far as they attribute its use almost exclusively to that of the historical Jesus. Invariably the debate revolves around contrasting allegory and metaphor. It is argued that the historical Jesus used the parables as metaphors, but the evangelists and early Christianity used them as allegories. This is epitomised in Dominic Crossan's analysis (1973:63-36) of "The Good Samaritan", and that of Robert Funk (1996:184-189) on "The Prodigal Son". Despite objections raised, there is little doubt that parables placed in a particular narrative and socio-political context do have particular referents beyond the story (cf Forbes 2000:51). When these referents are implied by the contextual setting of the parable, the conclusion should not be drawn that the metaphorical nature of the parable has inevitably been lost, and that the parables have been turned into allegories (as defined by Jülicher). More recently such sentiments have also been echoed by Hermann-Josef Meurer. Meurer (1997:646) writes: "In das Evangelium eingebettet, erfüllen sie [die Gleichnisse] einen argumentativen Zweck, wollen sie eine Erkenntnis vermitteln, verkümmern sie zur Beweiskraft eines Belegs."

Meurer's conclusion above typifies an analysis of parables, where not

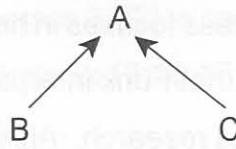
enough attention has been given to the macro-text (both the narrative and the contextual world) in which the parables feature. Furthermore, the process of domestication, in which the metaphor undergoes conceptual development and thereby loses its initial metaphorical thrust, should be considered with caution when the parables are interpreted within their Gospel contexts. The “domestication” which the parables have undergone as they were carried worldwide through the Christian era must not simply be assumed for the Gospel audiences. Such an assumption would be anachronistic. Funk (1996:187) in discussing the parable of “The Prodigal Son”, for example, argues that the ambiguity of the parable, and thereby its metaphorical nature, have been resolved by the “single sense that Luke attached to the parable”, and that “the details have been buried under an avalanche of familiar meaning.” But the “familiar meaning” is the “domesticated meaning” as known to *contemporary* Christianity (today) and not necessarily at all that attached to the story by the Lukan audience. To a Lukan audience the parable may have been just as shocking as it was to the original audience in first-century Palestine, albeit *differently* shocking. It will be shown that the parable of “The Prodigal Son”, although contextualised within the Gospel of Luke, has nevertheless not lost its metaphorical thrust, nor its ambiguity. It functions as a true metaphor, diaphoric (tensive) in nature, challenging conventional perceptions of God.

The naming of the parable is directly related to the centrality of the characters and the plot of the parable. Based on the premise that Jesus’ parables are characterised by both ambiguity and polyvalence, Funk (1996:187, 190) proposes two models (“categories”) for understanding the relationship between characters and plot in Luke 15:11-32. Funk (1996:190) explains: “In the first category, two persons or groups respond to the situation in different and contrasting ways. In the second category, one person responds to the initial situation, and his response becomes the focal point to which a second person responds.” Diagrammatically these categories are presented as follows:

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Category One

B and C respond to A



Category Two

B responds to A, and C responds to B



In both categories “A” is the central figure. In the first category, he is the person to whom the other two respond; in the second category, his action elicits some response from the other two.

The traditional naming of the parable as that of the “Prodigal Son” indicates the choice of the latter category. The younger son is the main character to whom the others, the father, and the elder son, respond differently. If however the father is seen as the main character, the story is about the relationships of the *two sons* with their father (or of the *father* with his *two sons*), intimating a renaming of the parable as done by Jeremias. Jeremias ([1963] 1984:86) proposes “das Gleichnis von der Liebe des Vaters.” Scott (1990:90), from whom we have borrowed the heading of this chapter, follows Jeremias in naming the parable “A Man Had Two Sons”. More recently, however, Green (1997:578) again asserts that despite the importance of the father in the parable, “center stage belongs to the younger son.” He argues along the lines of Category Two and describes the turning point of the narrative as the respective (diverging) responses of the father and the elder son to the return of the younger son. There is clearly no consensus among scholars. How do we account for these discrepancies?

The answer lies indeed, as Funk (1996:187) suggests, in the ambiguity of

parable and the standpoint from which the parable is read. Funk (1996:187-189) himself, although he on the one hand makes a choice for Category One (the centrality of the father), nevertheless focuses in his analysis almost exclusively on the younger son. The reason is that Funk interprets the parable within the wider parameters of his historical-Jesus research. Although the younger son at literary level refers to the toll-collectors and sinners (Lk 15:1), he also “mirrors the journey of Jesus” as he was perceived socially by those who adhered to purity codes (Funk 1996:189). Similarly, those scholars who interpret the parable exclusively within its immediate co-text (that is, chapter 15, in which the parable forms one of three parables all featuring the “lost”) invariably focus on the younger son. If however the parable is interpreted within the macro-text of Luke’s narrative, both intertextually and extratextually, the centrality of the father figure is confirmed. Our literary reading of Luke-Acts (chapter 4) indicated that Luke’s narrative is to be understood as one of “opposites”, with God as the central albeit unseen character (cf Knight 1998:58). Looking at Luke’s narrative as a whole, therefore, and at the purpose of this study, Category One seems to be the more appropriate model for interpreting this parable - hence also our re-naming of the parable: *A Man Had Two Sons*. The father in the parable is not just one of two characters who respond to the return of the younger son, he also responds to his elder son, who refuses to enter the house and join in the celebrations. Indeed not only is the younger son lost, but the elder son is lost as well.

6.2 A background of tension

In analysing and interpreting the parable of “A Man Had Two Sons” most scholars highlight the literary unity of chapter 15 which features three distinctive parables. The literary unity of this chapter is ascribed to Lukan redaction as all indications are that in their historical context they featured separately (cf Forbes 2000:112). Lukan redaction is evidenced by a number of typical Lukan characteristics (Scott 1990:101): First, the connection of two short sayings by the word “or” (verse 8)

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followed by a longer parable (verse 11), is found elsewhere in Luke's Gospel (see Lk 13:1-9). Second, the threefold pattern of action by Jesus (verse 1), attack on Jesus (verse 2), and response (verses 3-32) is common in Luke, especially in the central section of Luke's Gospel (see Lk 13:10-17; 14:1-14). Third, verses 1-2 are almost a replica of Luke 5:29-30:

Luke 5:29-30	Luke 15:1-2
v. 29: a great crowd	v. 1: all
v. 30: toll-collectors and others murmured	toll-collectors and sinners
the Pharisees and scribes	v. 2: murmured
saying - sinners - you eat	the Pharisees and scribes
	saying - sinners - eats

The similarity between these two passages is further highlighted by the conclusion of Luke 5:32 which could also feature as the conclusion of chapter 15: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The impetus for casting the three parables in a literary unit is provided by their strong verbal and close thematic relatedness (cf Green 1997:568-569; Barton 2000:201-202). They all share the common theme of the return of the lost (a sheep, a coin, a younger son). Certain key words and phrases recur in all three parables: "repentance" (verses 7, 10, 18); "joy", "rejoice", "make merry" (verses 5-7, 9-10, 23-24, 32), and "because the lost is found" (verses 6, 9, 24, 32). Despite the length of the third parable, there is also a close structural resemblance between all three parables (see Bailey [1976] 1983:144-158). The unity provided by Luke is further underscored by the common audience and setting (verses 1-2), with no narrative markers designating a change of scene until chapter 16:1 (Green 1997:568).

Based on the thesis that Luke's narrative is one of "opposites", our intention is not to identify and explicate the common themes of this chapter, but to interpret

them within the *contrasts* in which they are presented. As indicated above, chapter 15:1-2 provides the new setting given to the parables by Luke. This new setting reflects the well-known juxtaposition of two different and contrasting points of view, that of the toll-collectors and sinners, and that of the Pharisees and scribes. These two groups of people mirror the two main opposition groups that run throughout Luke's narrative, Jesus and his witnesses on the one hand, and the Israelite leaders and those who submit to their ideology on the other (see chapter 4 above).

From an Israelite socio-religious perspective the toll-collectors are categorised with the "sinners" (see Herzog 1994:178-189 for an extended social description of toll-collectors and Pharisees; see also Scheffler 1993:69-71). Scholars have endeavoured to define the exact identity of the "sinners" in Luke 15:1, in particular their relationship to the *עמ הארץ* as either two distinctive or homogenised social groups (cf Barton 2000:202-203; Forbes 2000:109-110). But within Luke's narrative the toll-collectors and sinners present an *ideological* category (a "code"; Herzog 1994:178, 191) which from the viewpoint of the Pharisees and scribes represents those who as a result of their deliberate and consistent violation of the Law and temple purity regulations are excluded from the Kingdom of God. In particular the toll-collectors are equated with the group of "sinners" both as a result of their occupation, their contact with Gentiles, and their failure to tithe (Barton 2000:203). They are rendered unclean, and indeed corporatively so (see "all" in Lk 15:1). As such, they are classified as outsiders excluded from God's salvation.

The Pharisees and scribes constitute a group of people at the other end of the spectrum. The Pharisees in particular saw themselves as God's chosen ones. By strict adherence to the purity regulations they set themselves apart from those who threatened the holiness of God and God's people, such as the toll-collectors and sinners (cf Barton 2000:202). Together with the scribes, they appear in Luke's narrative as monitors of Jesus' legal observance. From their point of view

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they are the insiders, included in God's salvation.

In typical Lukan style, Luke presents these two groups in strikingly different ways, resulting in an ironic reversal of roles. Chapter 14 concludes with the admonishment: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Ironically in Luke 15:1 those gathered around to "hear" Jesus are not the Pharisees and scribes, but the toll-collectors and sinners (cf Forbes 2000:110). The Pharisees and scribes in contrast "murmur" (Lk 15:2; cf Lk 5:29-32). Their murmuring is a subtle allusion to the stubborn Israelites in the desert who during the exodus from Egypt continually complained against Moses and Aaron, God's representatives at the time (cf Barton 2000:202). This casting of characters follows a similar reversal of roles in Luke 7:39-30 (cf Green 1997:570). Ironically the toll-collectors are some of those people who "justified God", whereas the Pharisees and scribes represent those who have "rejected God's purpose for themselves" (see also Lk 3:10-14; 5:27-32; 7:35, 36-50).

By casting his characters in unconventional roles, Luke turns the world of conventional Israelite wisdom upside down: The insiders (Pharisees and scribes) are out, and the outsiders (toll-collectors and sinners) are in. This introductory line indicates that the parables which follow, including that of "A Man Had Two Sons", are not mere illustrations of a given truth, but present a challenge to conventional perceptions, that is, they are diaphoric in nature.

The casting of characters raises awareness of the background of tension in which the parables of Luke 15 are set. This background, however, can and needs to be explored further, both within the contextual and co-textual (including the intertextual) worlds of Luke-Acts. The contextual world refers to the socio-historical circumstances within which the text is set. The co-textual and intertextual world refers to the larger textual units surrounding the text (Luke's narrative) as well as the frame of reference on which the text draws (Israelite literature, in particular the Hebrew Scriptures).

The text of Luke 15 provides us with two indicators. The first indicator

forms part of the setting given by Luke to chapter 15. Verse 2b summarises the problem Jesus presents to the Pharisees and scribes: “This man receives sinners and *eats* with them.” Reference to “eating” places all three parables against the tense background of conflicting customs and prohibitions governing first-century Mediterranean *table fellowship*. The second indicator follows from the introductory line of the parable of “A Man Who Had Two Sons”. Verse 11 refers to “A certain man had *two sons*” (verse 11). The story that follows falls structurally into two clearly defined parts. The first part (verses 12-24) relates the actions of the *younger* son; and this is contrasted in the second part (verses 25-31) with the actions of the *elder* son. The introductory line of the parable therefore sets the parable against the tensions attendant on the theme in the Hebrew Scriptures of *younger and elder sons*.

6.2.1 Table fellowship

Although scholars have noted points of contact between chapter 15 and the surrounding narratives, in particular the setting of the table in chapter 14 and the issue of hospitality in chapter 16 (cf, inter alia, Donahue 1988:162-169; Green 1997:568-569), there has been a general failure to explicate these themes in detail when interpreting the parable of “A Man Had Two Sons”. This failure can be attributed to the fact that the setting of this chapter is not a “meal” as such but what seems to be a normal gathering of people around Jesus. But the accusation levelled at Jesus that he welcomes sinners, and “eats” with them immediately calls to mind the numerous references in Luke’s narrative to table fellowship.

Luke’s interest in meals and table fellowship is immense and clearly exceeds that of the other evangelists. Markus Barth (1988:71) notes that in “approximately one-fifth of the sentences in Luke’s Gospel and in Acts, meals play a conspicuous role.” Realisation of Luke’s interest in meals and table fellowship has led to a number of related works being published (cf, inter alia, Smith 1987:613-638; McMahan 1987; Esler 1987:93-109; Moessner 1989; Elliott

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1991a:102-109; Neyrey 1991b:361-387; Just 1993; Moxnes 1997:17-175). Each of these works highlights different aspects of what has become known as a "literary motif" in the Gospel of Luke (Smith 1987:613-638). David Moessner (1989) develops the thesis that the travel narrative of Luke's Gospel initiates an understanding of Jesus as the "journeying guest". Within the travel narrative, the disciples of Jesus (as messengers) are sent on ahead to prepare for his arrival. But on arrival Jesus is invariably rejected both by the Samaritans (Lk 9:53-56) and the Judeans (Lk 10:8-16), culminating in his final rejection in Jerusalem (Lk 19:45-23:49). After his crucifixion and resurrection, however, Jesus is received by the disciples on the way to Emmaus and becomes the "Lord of the Banquet" (Lk 24:13-53). At this banquet, that is, the banquet of God's kingdom, everyone who accepts his invitation is welcomed. Craig McMahan (1987) in turn identified and explicated four "meal type scenes" in Luke's narrative, highlighting Luke's frequent references to meals: Meals with women (Lk 4:38-39; 8:1-3; 10:38-42; Ac 6:1-6), meals with outcasts (Lk 5:27-32; 15:1-2; 19:1-10; Ac 11:1-8), meals with Pharisees (Lk 7:36-50; 11:37-54; 14:1-24), and meals with apostles (Lk 9:10-17; 22:14-38; 24:13-35; Ac 27:33-38). Not included in this list are a number of passages with no direct meal setting, but with extensive use of the meal *metaphor* (cf Just 1993:128-195). The meal metaphor, for example, constitutes the backdrop to Acts 10, Peter's visit to the gentile Cornelius, and Acts 15, the council in Jerusalem, both of which are key passages in Luke's table fellowship matrix. An extensive list of all references to food in Luke's Gospel has been compiled by Robert Karris (see Neyrey 1991b:361-362). Based on the frequent occurrences of meals and meal metaphors in Luke's narrative, scholars have drawn the conclusion that according to Luke, Jesus' table fellowship practice was one, if not the main reason, why he was put to death by the Pharisees and priests (his main antagonists) in Jerusalem (cf Just 1993:128).

Within Luke's narrative and within first-century Mediterranean society, meals are not just about supplying nourishment. Anthropologists have shown that

meals and table fellowship are highly complex social events. Mary Douglas (cf Elliott 1991a:103) has argued that food is a “code” communicating a multi-layered message:

If food is treated as a code, the message it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries Food categories therefore encode social events ... the ordered system which is a meal represents all the ordered systems associated with it.

This tells us clearly that food and meals relate to and replicate patterns of and rules of social systems. There is a correlation between with whom one eats, what one eats, when one eats, how one eats, and to what community, group, or kinship one belongs. Furthermore, the food codes are a potential source of information about a group’s symbolic universe, that is its traditions, cultural values, norms, and worldviews. Meals therefore form part of a community’s effort to structure its world, to create order in what otherwise seems to be chaos. The facets of a particular community’s symbolic universe in and through which the meaning attributed to meals and table fellowship can be studied, are numerous. Valuable work has been done by Neyrey (1991b:362-374) who developed a model for this purpose based on the four basic maps of the first-century Mediterranean cosmos: maps of persons, things, places, and times. Our focus falls not on all facets of this model, but on the potential of meals to serve as social boundary markers, that is to set people apart from others. The boundaries are, of course, not set or defined by the meals, but they reinforce or bolster the already existing boundaries that define a group or institution (cf Neyrey 1991b:363; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:367). Our focus falls on two particular aspects: ranking at tables, and the

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limits of table fellowship, both of which are central in fostering conventional exclusive perceptions.

The basic pattern of ancient meals were similar in most first-century Mediterranean cultures, whether the meals were designated secular or sacred. As a result of the material available, many studies have focused their attention on the traditions and rules of etiquette associated with a Greco-Roman banquet. These constitute the social contexts in which Israelite and later also Christian meal practices developed in form and function (cf Smith & Taussig 1990:22). In many ways meal customs became standardised and had much common. Most traditions were attached to the evening meal or banquet. The banquet was a special occasion for a special social gathering. The norm was that some individual person would host such a banquet, to which he would invite his friends and associates. As the guests entered, a household servant would wash their feet (cf Lk 7:44; Jn 13:1-11). Distinction between servants and guests provide the first form of ranking (cf Neyrey 1991b:364). Status is symbolised by who reclines and who serves. The one who reclines at table is greater than the one who serves (cf Lk 17:7-10; 22:27).

Another form of ranking is provided by seating arrangements. Although there are examples of guests being "seated" (in an upright position) at a table, the general posture at *formal* or *festive* meals during the first century was that of reclining. The couches were arranged in numerous ways. The most common arrangement was that of the "triclinium", the couches being arranged in a u-shaped formation around a central table (Smith 1987:617). Once the guests had arrived and their feet had been washed, a position at the table was allocated to them. The position mirrored the guest's status within that group, and served to affirm his social rank (cf Neyrey 1991b:364-368). The ranking order would start at the highest position (occupied by the host) and continue from the right hand to the lowest position. Traditionally the "right hand" was always the place of highest honour (cf Lk 20:42; Ac 2:33). This feature helps us to interpret, for example, the

reference in John to the disciple who dined “lying close to the breast of Jesus” (13:23) or the reference in the parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus” to the position of Lazarus after death in “Abraham’s bosom” (Lk 16:22). Both enjoyed the highest honour. Besides the practice of ranking through positions at table, ranking was also practised by providing different quantities or qualities of food (Smith 1987:635). Some Roman sources even describe meals at which guests of different social rank are seated in different rooms (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1993:368).

In a culture where honour is the pivotal value of society, ranking one’s guests appropriately was a tricky and often embarrassing procedure. This is evidenced by Plutarch’s description of such an instance in *The dinner of the seven wise men* (see Smith 1987:617-618). A certain man felt insulted at the position he was offered. One of the wise men present counselled the acceptance of one’s table position: the man who objects, is not only objecting to his host, but also to his neighbours, causing shame to both.

These and similar instances often provided typical discussion topics for the *symposium*. The word “symposium” is used in more than one sense. It is used in the general sense to refer to the social institution concerning the dining traditions at a Greco-Roman banquet. On the other hand it is used in the restricted sense to refer to the “second course” of the banquet, the *symposium proper* (cf Smith 1987:614). The first course (at times preceded by an appetiser) was the meal itself. This was followed by what is termed in short as the “drinking party” (Smith & Taussig 1990:25). The “drinking party” provided leisure entertainment for the guests in various forms, including party games, musical items, and dancing. In the philosophical tradition however, the entertainment was often devoted to elevated conversation and discussion, hence called the “symposium” (cf Smith 1987:620-623). This tradition was widely adapted for use in most first-century Mediterranean cultures. Tradition also determined discussion topics, which were restricted to such as were appropriate to the occasion, that is, to “table talk”. There would be discussion on the meal itself, meal etiquette, the

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“friendship character” of the meal, and so on (Smith 1987:621). As a result, the symposium was the appropriate and most common place to discuss issues relating to table ranking.

Plutarch's *Table talk* recounts a number of such discussions. On one occasion diners debate the pro's and con's of ranking at table (see Smith 1987:619). One diner argues for the custom on the grounds that table ranking is an instance of good order, and good order is necessary for a pleasurable banquet. Another diner argues for the custom to be abolished on the grounds that equality at meals would enhance the notion of “friendship”. On another occasion the issue is discussed whether the host himself should arrange the placing of guests or leave it to the guests themselves (see Smith 1987:618). The discussion is introduced by an anecdote in which Plutarch's brother, Timon, decided to break with custom and allow guests to recline wherever they wished. Unfortunately, when an especially distinguished guest arrived late and discovered that no place worthy of his honour remained at the table, he was insulted and left. These accounts provide a clear picture of the first-century mind-set, according to which everything had to be ordered for it to correlate with the honour rating attributed by society to a person concerned.

Although Plutarch recalls events at actual meals, his style of writing has been identified as one falling into a specific literary tradition (genre), also referred to as the “symposium”, used frequently among ancient writers (Smith 1987:615-616). Luke probably utilises the same tradition. Scholars have pointed out that apart from the Passover meal (Lk 22:7-38) at least three other Jesus' meals reflect the symposium form (Lk 7:36-50; 11:37-53; 14:1-14), all of which are embedded in the central section of Luke relating the conflict between the Israelite authorities and Jesus (cf Smith 1987:630-623; Neyrey 1991a:376-377). Placed within a setting of conflict, the symposium tradition is used by Luke to *challenge* conventional perceptions: although meals are expected to reinforce the role assumed by status among members of a group, Luke uses the literary tradition of

table fellowship to challenge convention.

Ranking at table provides the conversational topic in Luke 14:1-10. The passage shows remarkable resemblance to Plutarch's accounts referred to above (cf Smith 1987:618-619). In this particular instance the host does not arrange the placing; but the guests themselves choose their "place of honour" (Lk 14:7). This setting implies the customary behaviour of guests seeking a higher place. Earlier in Luke's Gospel the Pharisees had already been singled out as those who "love the first seat" (11:43). The tussling for better positions is noticed by Jesus and provides the impetus for the ensuing symposium. The symposium is introduced by the parable of a guest who seeks the first (highest) place, but is then humiliated by his host, who requests him to give up his seat to a more distinguished guest who arrives later. The parable challenges the Pharisees and the scribes to act in a radically different way. Instead of seeking the highest place, they should seek the lowest place. The conventional world is again turned upside down. In God's Kingdom, those who exalt themselves are humiliated, whilst those who humiliate themselves are exalted (Lk 14:11; see also Lk 18:14).

The issue of ranking also surfaces among the disciples of Jesus: "A dispute arose among them, which of them was to be regarded as the greatest" (Lk 22:24). The question and Jesus' response are given added emphasis by Luke's use of the literary device of placing them in the meal setting of the last Passover (Smith 1987:620). In contrast to Jesus' response in Mark and Matthew, the disciples are addressed by Jesus in Luke not as those who wish to become great, but simply as those who are leaders and are to assume positions of leadership in the church (cf Tannehill 1986b:257). Leadership positions as such are therefore not questioned (see Lk 17:7-10), but the attitude prevalent among the secular leaders as "lording over others" is denounced (Lk 33:36). Within God's Kingdom the greatest are to be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves (Lk 22:26). Conventional roles are reversed: The one who serves is deemed greater than the one who rules (Lk 22:27). The first mention of this

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occurs in Luke 12:35-37 (cf Neyrey 1991b:379). The disciples of Jesus should be like servants waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast. On his arrival, the roles are radically reversed: the servants recline at table, and the master serves them (Lk 12:37). Thus it is that conventional worldview of status as replicated in "table ranking" is challenged and subverted by Luke. In the Kingdom of God, participants at the (messianic) feast are characterised by an attitude of humility replicated in, and through, Jesus' own actions (Lk 22:27).

Even more striking and disconcerting was Jesus' association with people deemed to be unclean by conventional Israelite wisdom. Again Luke makes extensive use of the table fellowship motif. Although meals in antiquity might include people of differing social rank, that would not normally occur. There were *limits* to table fellowship. The communal meal designated a special relationship between the participants. It served to exemplify group identity and solidarity. Eating together implied the sharing of a common set of ideas and values (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:367). The question of who eats with whom was therefore central.

Within Israel, table fellowship gained special emphasis through the *religious* significance attributed to the meal. Making reference to Jeremias, James Dunn (1983:12) notes that for the people of the "house of Israel" table fellowship meant fellowship with God. If people ate a piece of a broken bread, they all shared in the blessing which the master of the house had spoken over the unbroken bread. This is highlighted by a saying of rabbi R Simeon (*m. Ab.* 3.3; cf Dunn 1983:12): "... if three have eaten at one table and have spoken over it words of the Law, it is as if they had eaten from the table of God, for it is written, 'And he said to me, This is the table that is before the Lord'" (Ezek 41:22). A devote Israelite would therefore never exercise table fellowship casually. There were clear limits to table fellowship, determined partly by the explicit laws in the Torah (particularly those relating to unclean foods) (Lv 11:1-3; Dt 14:3-21), and in differing degrees by the oral traditions concerning ritual purity and tithes (cf Dunn 1983:12-13).

Limits to table fellowship were also directly related to food. Based on the concept of “holiness”, no devout Israelite would consider eating any unclean food. Malina (1993:162) provides a detailed description of the categories of unclean animals. The issue of eating unclean food was a central issue during the Maccabean rebellion. In the course of the rebellion, many Israelites resolved rather to die than defile themselves (1 Macc 1:62-63). That this attitude was not restricted to the Maccabees is evidenced by Peter’s reaction to the vision in Joppa (cf Elliott 1991a:105-106). Peter is commanded to sacrifice and eat unclean animals or food. Twice it is stated that Peter objected with the words: “No, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean” (Ac 10:14; cf Lv 11:4-7). Apart from certain categories of food deemed unclean, Israelites also refrained from eating any food which had been sacrificed to idols (Ac 15:29, 29; 1 Cor 8-10), or the meat of animals from which the blood had not been drained (Lv 3:17; 7:26-27; 17:10-14; Dt 12:16; 23-24; 15:25). Adherence to these laws were central, as it marked the Israelites as God’s chosen people, distinct from all other peoples.

From his studies on rabbinical traditions, Jacob Neusner (cf Dunn 1983:14) concludes that of the 341 individual rulings, 229 (that is 67%) apply directly or indirectly to the practice of table fellowship. Proper tithing and ritual purity were two major concerns. These concerns can be traced back to the practices of the חברים (the associates) (cf Sanders 1985:180-181). Within first-century Palestine those were a small group of lay people who took voluntary upon themselves the observance of some of the priestly laws of purity. It is a programme that gained support from the Pharisees, and was generally accepted by the rabbis after 70 CE (Sanders 1985:187). In opposition to the Sadducees, who controlled the temple, the Pharisees advocated that all temple regulations should also be applied to the *outside* world, a sphere where the Pharisees could exercise control (cf Dunn 1983:14; Van Aarde 2001:129-230). The “house” became a “replica of the temple”. It was thus forbidden to eat, at home, any food that had not been previously tithed (cf Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:382-383). Furthermore,

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preparation of meals and the slaughtering of animals had to proceed according to temple purity regulations. Also hands, perceived to be especially liable to uncleanness arising from unintentional touching of a defiled object, had to be washed before each meal (cf Lk 11:38; see also Sanders 1985:185-186).

Because of the emphasis on ritual purity it was common for persons to form closely knit associations with whom alone table fellowship was practised. In order to avoid pollution a חֵבֵר would, for example, never accept the invitation to a meal from the עַם הָאָרֶץ - the common people (cf Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:367). As Sanders (1985:182) notes, the עַם הָאָרֶץ were not irreligious. They presumably kept most of the Laws most of the time. But they were not as scrupulous as the Pharisees in applying temple purity regulations to their households. They could thus not be trusted to provide tithed and consistently pure food. If conversely such a person was invited to the home of a חֵבֵר, he was required to put on a ritually clean garment provided by the host (see Mt 22:11). Because of the ritual purity attached to table fellowship and the notion that table fellowship epitomises group identity, any devout Israelite took special precaution in ensuring "cleanliness" at a meal or banquet.

Table fellowship with *known* sinners was taboo. The Gospel writers frequently refer to "sinners" as a description of a group of people with whom Jesus shared meals. Sanders (1985:177) distinguishes the "sinners" from the עַם הָאָרֶץ as "those who sinned wilfully and heinously and who did not repent." Although not exclusively, they can be seen as "professional sinners". This explains why "sinners" and "toll-collectors" are often mentioned together. The toll-collectors who collaborated with Rome to collect taxes of all the people (both Israelites and Gentiles) clearly fall by their very profession into this category of people referred to as "sinners" (cf Lk 15:1). Both the profession itself, as well as fellowship with toll-collectors, is perceived as a wilful rejection of God's holiness. Excluded from table fellowship were however not only those people (sinners) who through unethical or immoral behaviour clearly disobeyed the Law, but indeed everybody

who was defiled through the lack of “wholeness” (Neyrey 1991b:370). This included all those with a physical defect, such as the eunuchs, the lame, the blind, the deaf, and indeed any one with any physical defect (cf Malina 1993:159-169).

Within Luke’s narrative Jesus crosses every conceivable boundary. On one hand he dines with the Pharisees, who within their own culture are classified as holy, separated people (Lk 7:36-50; 11:37-44; 14:1-10). On the other hand however he also dines with those who are regarded as sinners and outsiders, who have excluded themselves from the Kingdom of God (Lk 5:29-32; 15:1-2; 19:5-7). In a conventional Israelite mind-set these mixed signals caused confusion. And this led to the extensive criticism of Jesus. For the Israelite the world was no longer ordered as it had long been.

In the first meal setting, the feast with Levi the toll-collector (Lk 5:29-32), the Pharisees and the scribes complain and ask: “Why do you eat and drink with toll-collectors and sinners?” (Lk 5:30). The question stresses right away the confusion caused by Jesus’ table-fellowship practice, and it results in a stinging attack on the “holiness” of Jesus himself in the succeeding passages. What is remarkable here is the conclusion drawn by the Pharisees and scribes: Jesus, being a “friend” of toll-collectors and sinners, is himself a “glutton and drunkard” (Lk 7:34). Both the description of Jesus as a “glutton and drunkard” and a “friend” of toll-collectors and sinners set the tone for the ensuing attack on him.

Historically there is no evidence of course that Jesus was in fact a “glutton and drunkard”. The remark stigmatises Jesus as an “undesirable” in a society where labelling one’s opponent formed part and parcel of the dynamics of Mediterranean culture (cf Malina & Neyrey 1991b:97-124). The code represented by the reference to Jesus as a “glutton and drunkard” is that “meal habits represent lifestyles in a large sense” (Smith & Taussig 1990:44). Somebody who eats with sinners is therefore himself characterised as a “glutton and drunkard”. Jeremias and other scholars (cf Just 1993:147; Funk 1996:193) have postulated that this phrase is derived from Deuteronomy 21:18-21. On the strength of this

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connection Jesus is stigmatised as a "rebellious son", who by Law deserves death. But any retrospective allusion to a "rebellious son" deserving death immediately prepares the reader for the coming allusion between Jesus and the younger son in the parable of "A Man Had Two Sons". The younger son is described as one who "scattered his [father's] wealth in wild living" (Lk 15:13). That Luke clearly intended this allusion is very plain.

Important here too is the reference to Jesus as a "friend" of toll-collectors and sinners. The description is again based on the social code that those who dine together belong together. In the use of the term "friend", Smith (1987:636) sees a connection with the Greek philosophical tradition of social bonding specifically referred to as "friendship". Friendship therefore also provided the guests at a meal with an appropriate and frequently exploited topic during the ensuing symposium (Smith 1987:636). Luke thus makes use not only of the symposium tradition in general but also of the notion of "friendship". By eating with toll-collectors and sinners, Jesus was classified as their "friend".

The "symposiums" in Luke's narrative show that Jesus' selection of table companions is not a mere lack of regard for the customs of his day. Being a "teacher" (Lk 3:12; 7:40; 9:25; 11:45; 12:13; 18:39) Jesus' choice of table companions, both Pharisees and scribes, as well as those regarded as sinners, clearly forms part of his message. And this choice of table companions holds a code for Jesus' message concerning the Kingdom of God. The underlying question is: Who forms part of God's Kingdom? The answer provided by conventional Israelite wisdom is inherently *exclusive*: only those who adhere to Israelite purity regulations are included. Luke presents Jesus as one who proclaimed an alternative, inherently *inclusive* vision of salvation. Part and parcel of this proclamation is Jesus' choice of table companions. He eats with *everyone* who *accepts* him. This inclusiveness of God's kingdom is presented in Luke by his utilising the "meal". In typical Lukan style this occurs in the juxtaposition of opposites. Elliott (1991a:102-109) describes the juxtaposition as that of

“household and meals vs. temple purity”. Whereas only the *whole/holy* could enter the temple, everybody *receptive* of Jesus’ message (including the outcasts and sinners) could enter the household and partake in the (messianic) feast. The temple symbolises an exclusive community governed by adherence to purity regulations and social rank. The household and the meals symbolise an inclusive community governed by a social relationship of mutual sharing, generalised reciprocity, generosity, love, and mercy. This message is consistently demonstrated in the meal settings of Luke’s narrative and the ensuing “symposiums”.

In Luke 7:36-50 Luke narrates the visit of a “woman living in sin” entering the house where Jesus was reclining with a Pharisee. She proceeds to anoint Jesus. Conflict first appears when the Pharisee both rejects the woman and makes an unfavourable remark about Jesus, who cannot be a prophet for not recognising the sinfulness of the woman. The scene proceeds with the juxtaposition of contrasting points of view about the woman and Jesus (cf Tannehill 1986b:116-117). The woman is rejected because of her sinfulness, and Jesus for associating with her. Ironically however, the ensuing symposium reveals that the “righteous” Pharisee failed to provide the culturally proper reception for a guest (water for the feet, kiss), which the sinful woman as a result of her love had provided. The symposium supplies a vision of God’s kingdom in which the rigid observation of purity regulations, which leads to separation, is subverted by the notion of a love which bridges all cultural, social, and religious distinctions.

Even more striking in Luke’s ideology of the inclusiveness of God’s kingdom is the symposium following the meal setting in Luke 14. The issue of ranking at table, provoked by the quest for higher honour, prompts Jesus to initiate a second symposium debate on the question of who should be invited. Whereas the Pharisees and scribes generally engaged in “balanced reciprocity” (cf Neyrey 1991b:372) inviting those who could and were obliged to return the favour (creating exclusivity), Jesus admonishes them to invite “the poor, the crippled, the

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lame, the blind" (Lk 14:13). The ensuing parable of the Great Banquet (Lk 14:15-23) in part demonstrates the inclusiveness of God's invitation, with the messengers being sent out to invite to the banquet not the élite, but the non-élite, "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame" (Lk 14:21). The criteria for banquet admittance are not social status, or adherence to purity regulations, but acceptance. Those who accept the invitation "enter" the banquet (cf Lk 18:17). As noted by Resseguie (1982:44-48), the whole chapter is characterised by the juxtaposition of two opposing points of view with the intended purpose of evoking a new vision of reality in general and of God's Kingdom in particular. The new vision is not a total rejection of the notion of "holiness" as defined in conventional Israelite wisdom, but a redrawing of its conventional maps so as to include the social outcasts and sinners (cf Neyrey 1991a:289-292). For the Lukan Jesus, holiness is not so much a matter of separation from sinners, but rather openness to the God who is drawing near (cf Lk 14:25-33); it is not "a status to be possessed and hedged around for self-protection, but a relationship to be celebrated and shared" (Barton 2000:203).

The parables of Luke 15 are, at literary level, an apology for the attack upon Jesus for "welcoming" sinners and "eating" with them (Lk 15:2). The encoded message of Jesus' table-fellowship practice is: sinners and outcasts are included in the Kingdom of God. Their inclusion should not be resisted, but celebrated. All three parables in Luke 15 stress the need for celebration at the return of the lost, and contain an implicit and open-ended invitation to join in these celebrations. In so doing, the parables reveal the shocking attitude of not only the Pharisees and scribes who show displeasure at the actions of Jesus, but also the rabbinic belief that God delights in the downfall of the wicked, echoed in the following line: "And when the wicket perish there is exultation" (*b. Sanh.* 11b; Forbes 2000:123, footnote 71). This belief stands in stark contrast to Ezekiel 18:23 and 33:11 where God categorically denies any joy in the destruction of the wicket, but instead declares his joy in their return. "Joy" also resonates in Luke's

narration of Jesus entering the house of the chief toll-collector Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10). The scene is set in such a manner that Jesus' presence demands response. Zacchaeus at once "receives" him with "rejoicing". The result is that "salvation" (used as a metaphor for the Kingdom of God) enters the house of the despised chief toll-collector (cf Moessner 1989:166-171).

Table fellowship between Jesus and Israelite outcasts and sinners constitutes the immediate co-text of "A Man Had Two Sons". At first-order reference, the parable features as part of the challenge to Pharisaic exclusivity as practised within Palestine among fellow Israelites. Whereas Pharisaic table-fellowship practice serves as a vehicle to demonstrate this exclusivity, Jesus' table fellowship with all who will accept him, demonstrates the inclusiveness of God's kingdom, turning the first-century Palestine word upside down.

The context of Luke's narrative however extends beyond the physical realms of Palestine and the relationship between fellow-Israelites. Luke's narrative is addressed to the "Lukan community" (the implied audience) which consists not only of Israelites (living in the Diaspora), but also Gentile converts (Greeks and some Romans). At second-order reference, the parable of "A Man Had Two Sons" therefore also reflects the tension-filled relationship between Israelites and Gentiles, again epitomised in Luke's narratives, particularly in Acts, in and through the practice, or non-practice of table fellowship between devout Israelites and Gentiles.

The refusal of devout Israelites to practise table fellowship with sinners and outcasts applies even more where the Gentiles were concerned. The general tendency in and around the first century was to avoid any form of social intercourse with Gentiles as far as possible. These convictions were in part based on the example of the faithfulness and success of Israelites who refused to eat the food of Gentiles (Dn 1:8-16; Tob 1:10-13; Jdt 10:5; 12:1-20; 3 Mac 3:4). The exclusivity in table fellowship was fuelled by the immense fear by the devout Israelite of idolatry and impurity (cf Dunn 1983:18). A Gentile was by definition an

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idolater. Most tractates in the Mishnah on idolatry are therefore also concerned with defining permissible relationships with Gentiles. Israelite exclusivity is further epitomised by a number of rabbinic sayings in which the uncleanness of Gentiles has taken on axiomatic qualities. Gentiles are simply "unclean persons" (*Mak.* 2.3); or the dwelling place of Gentiles are by nature "unclean" (*Oholot* 18.17); or a Gentile is in every respect like a man who "suffers a flux" (*Eliyah R.* 10) (cf Dunn 1983:18). In the light of these views, and of the message that table fellowship encodes, no devoted Israelite could even consider participating in table fellowship with a Gentile.

Despite the categorical nature of these views, exceptions were made, and this allowed for some form of table fellowship. Such exceptions were extremely rare. The exceptions applied to Gentile converts and Gentiles who showed themselves sympathetic to the Israelite religion. In each case minimum requirements were set, which initiated a wide debate within conventional Israelite wisdom often resulting in major disputes among the rabbis. Early Israelite religion was not totally exclusive, but always revealed a positive attitude to the non-Israelite stranger (גר) living within Israelite borders (see, inter alia, Ex 20:10; 21:21; 23:9, 12; Dt 1:16; 5:14). Dunn (1983:19) however shows that in and around the first century these commands concerning the גר, referring to the foreigner in general, were being applied almost exclusively to the proselyte, that is the Gentile convert to the Israelite faith. Indeed in the LXX the regular translation of גר is προσήλυτος. As a proselyte, the Gentile undertook to observe the whole Law, including circumcision, and was thus regarded as more or less a full Israelite. Although the stigma of being a proselyte remained, once the initiation process was complete the same limits of table fellowship applied as to the native-born Israelite.

The second group were the so-called Godfearers. Israelite relationship to the Godfearers was more complex. The Godfearers were not converts, but sympathisers with the Israelite religion. They attended the synagogue, prayed to the God of Israel and gave alms to his people (Ac 10:2; 13:16; cf Tyson 1992:36-

37). What is not clear is the extent to which Godfearers kept, or were expected to keep, the Law - including the traditions in respect of tithing and ritual purity. Based on various passages from Josephus' works, Dunn (1983:21-23) draws the conclusion that the commitment varied from occasional visits to the synagogue to total commitment bar circumcision. Invariably this commitment was mirrored in the degree to which the dietary laws were being observed. The devout Israelite would continue to avoid table fellowship with Godfearers as far as possible, with the less scrupulous occasionally accepting invitations to meals where such Gentiles would be present. But whatever the case may be, the strictness with which the Law was observed determined the limit of table fellowship, the dietary laws in particular serving as boundary markers between insiders and outsiders. The greatest concern of the devout Israelite remained the degree to which the purity regulations had been followed. Within an exclusive mind-set such as was conventional Israelite wisdom, the debate on where boundaries were to be drawn, in other words who was to be included and who excluded, prompted continuous debate.

In Luke's narrative the conventional boundary markers that distinguished the devout Israelite from the Gentile, the righteous from the unrighteous, the clean from the unclean, are redrawn and replaced by new maps. In Acts, Luke traces the advance of the Gospel from Jerusalem and Judea to *Samaria and the end of the earth* (cf Ac 1:8). Judean exclusivity is progressively replaced by ethnic inclusivity, that is, people of "all nations" are included in God's salvation irrespective of their ethnicity and nationality. In drawing this new map, Luke again makes extensive use of meal metaphors. As early as Luke 10:7-8 the seventy(-two) messengers who are sent ahead of Jesus are commanded to "eat and drink what they (the hosts) provide: and "eat what is set before them". No concern is to be given to whether foods are clean or unclean. Moessner (1989:138) comments:

The messenger could have taken their own undefiled provisions along or bought them selectively along the way (cf. John 4:8) or

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even have relied upon Jewish friends. But the fact that they are not to take provisions (v. 4a) nor carry money (v. 4a) or rely on sympathizers (vv. 4b, 6, 10-12) indicate the importance of sharing even “unclean” food with their hosts.

These directives strongly suggest that the mission of the seventy(-two) is not restricted to the “people of Israel” but will take them into regions of unknown ethnicity. That they are to “eat what is set before them” clearly signals (encodes) an inclusive sense of mission.

The inclusiveness of Jesus mission becomes most apparent in Acts 10. This chapter is characterised both by the way the two themes, food and people, are carefully woven together as well as by the repeated juxtaposition of a Gentile (Cornelius) and an Israelite (Peter). This is illustrated by Neyrey's (1991b:381) broad structural analysis of Acts 10:

A Cornelius' dream and summons of Peter (10:1-8)

B Peter's dream of *all foods* clean (10:9-16)

C Peter's vision and the reception of Cornelius' men (10:17-23)

B' Peter's declaration of *all peoples* clean (10:24-29)

A' Cornelius recounts his dream about Peter (10:30-33)

The theme of clean and unclean *food* clearly symbolises the issue of clean and unclean *people*. The episode is narrated against the increasing tension resulting from the association of the Jesus movement with Gentiles, in particular the crossing of ethnic boundaries and the continuing validity of conventional Israelite purity regulations. However “all” conventional boundaries are crossed. “All” foods are declared clean (10:15) and the Holy Spirit falls on “all” people in Cornelius' house (10:44). The crossing of boundaries paves the way for the central message, of both this chapter in particular and Luke's narrative in general: “God

shows no partiality, but rather in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (10:34-35). The importance of the redrawing of the conventional maps with new ones is symbolised by the fact that the vision and conversation with Peter happened "three times" (10:16), the entire episode being rehearsed again in Acts 11:2-10 in response to some concerned disciples, the so called "circumcision party" (cf Neyrey 1991b:381). Peter is characterised as a devout Israelite who fervently rejects association with the "unclean", but is overwhelmed by a vision sent from God.

Part and parcel of the redrawing of old maps is the shift in scene from "temple" to "house", noted especially by Elliott (1991a:102-109). Luke uses temple terminology. Peter is commanded by God to "sacrifice" (θύσον) and eat" (Ac 10:13). The term θύω refers to the slaughtering of an animal in a ritual manner as a sacrifice to deity (cf Ac 14:13; Louw & Nida 1988: 534). Similarly Cornelius' prayers and alms are described as "a memorial (μνημόσυλον) to God" (Ac 10:4, 31). The word "memorial" has cultic overtones recalling the sacrifices offered in the temple as a "memorial" (אזכרה) to God. Elliott (1991a:107) notes that the "implication is that Cornelius' prayers and alms in his home are equivalent to or a replacement of the 'clean' sacrifices at the temple." Temple exclusivity is replaced by the inclusivity of the house, and temple sacrifice is exchanged for deeds of mercy (alms) and prayer.

In Acts 11 the controversy concerning the boundaries of ritual purity is presented as an internal controversy within the Jesus movement. The controversy breaks out anew in Acts 15. The occasion narrated by Luke is at the council in Jerusalem. The council is initiated by the demands of some (the circumcision party) that, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Ac 15:1). Circumcision is used here not in the restricted sense (to refer solely to the act of circumcision) but as a code to denote the Law of Moses in its entirety, including circumcision. The demand however is unanimously rejected by the council (Ac 15:7-19). The succeeding verses, however, indicate

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practices and beliefs (worldview).

6.2.2 Younger and elder sons

Whereas table fellowship provides the tense background to the three parables in Luke 15, the reference to a man having *two sons* in the introductory line of the parable of "A Man Had Two Sons" (Lk 15:11), provides the narrator with the repertoire from stories concerning younger and elder sons to be found in the story tradition of Israel. Such stories are common in the Hebrew Scriptures, particularly in the patriarchal narratives: Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Reuben and Josef (and Benjamin), and Manasseh and Ephraim (Syrén 1993). The tensions here arise from the fact that (despite the importance attributed to the first-born in the Israelite tradition) God often shows favouritism to the younger son. This motif persists, in part, beyond the patriarchs: Aaron and Moses are elder and younger sons; David and Solomon are both younger sons who become God's anointed king (cf Scott 1990:112). Gideon and Judas Maccabaeus are also younger sons (see Donahue 1988:159).

Although various scholars have noted the tensions in the relationship between younger and elder sons, it was Bernard Scott (1990) in particular who recognised and demonstrated the importance of this motif in analysing the parable of "A Man Had Two Sons". Indeed, before the work of Scott this motif largely went unnoticed, or its use was misguided. An example is the parable interpretation of John Donahue. Donahue (1988:159) makes a connection to the biblical motif of the "younger child". But in contrast to Scott, he focuses exclusively on the "younger child" and fails to interpret the parable within the tensions commonly buried in the relationship of younger and elder sons. The elder son plays no role in his interpretation at all. For Donahue (1988:159), the motif of the "younger child" merely serves to stress or to illustrate the gratuity of God's favour. Donahue (1988:159-160) therefore also sees a number of contacts here with Pauline theology. Paul argues that Israelites and Christians are descendants of the

younger son (Jacob) who are chosen not because of their works but because of God's promise and his call (Rm 9:6-13; cf Gl 4:21-31). The parable presents in narrative form Pauline theology concerning the justification of sinners.

More recently the same sentiments have also been echoed by Stephen Barton (2000:209-210). Like Donahue, he focuses on the younger son, and states that "biblical stories about younger brothers were a classic source of reflection on the unpredictability of God's ways - in particular, of *God's refusal to limit the measure of his grace* to human ways of seeing and doing things" (Barton 2000:209, author's emphasis). The parable, then, is seen as an "illustration" (an epiphor) of God's unpredictable grace.

Although both Donahue's and Barton's interpretations hold some truth, they present only one side of the coin. They are in effect a reduction of the parable in which *two* sons, a younger and an elder, feature. The dynamics of the story are provided by the tension resulting from the favouritism shown to one of the two sons. According to conventional Israelite wisdom, as will be shown below, the election of one brother (the younger) invariably leads to the rejection of the other brother (the elder).

As noted above, for Donahue there is little doubt that Paul made use of the motif of the "younger child" in developing his theology of God's unmerited grace. Despite the fact that Donahue (1988:159) recognises the same motif in the infancy narratives of Luke where God takes the side of the "lowly on earth" (a priest of one of the minor grades, a childless couple, or shepherds), he does question whether Jesus or Luke in composing the parable of "A Man Had Two sons" was conscious of this part of their Israelite religious heritage. These sentiments are in part shared by Kenneth Bailey. Bailey (1992:118) questions whether Luke, if indeed aware of this motif, made use of it. Making direct reference to Scott, he argues that the parallel drawn between the younger son in Luke's parable and the younger son in the Israelite tradition is rather weak. He points out that with the exception of Jacob, not all younger sons in the Israelite tradition were rogues in

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their youth, and can therefore hardly be set aside the "prodigal". But again like Donahue, Bailey focuses almost exclusively on the younger son. Whether the younger son is indeed a rogue, is not critical. More critical are the expectations of the audience, who would expect favouritism to be shown to one of the two brothers - and indeed, based on Israelite tradition, to the younger son. However, it can hardly be denied that even if not *all* younger sons are presented as rogues who trick their fathers into receiving a (special) blessing, there is in most cases, as Scott (1990:112) notes, "something slightly scandalous or off-colour in their [the younger sons] stories." Within conventional Israelite wisdom, this very fact can only serve to demonstrate the unmerited quality of God's grace to Israel. Whether Luke made use of the "two-sons" motif depends largely on two factors: (1) the widespread use of the motif in the story tradition of Israel, and (2) whether its use would fit the literary style of Luke.

The use of this motif within the patriarchal narratives has been explored in depth by Roger Syrén (1993) in *The forsaken first-born: A study of a recurrent motif in the patriarchal narratives*. As the title of this book attests, it is a motif which features repeatedly. Indeed from one perspective the history of the patriarchs is along the lines of two sons, an elder and a younger son, with favouritism shown to the younger one. That Israel's line of heritage should run through the younger son is of course in direct tension with the privileged position attributed to the first-born in the ancient cultures of the Near East. Central to an understanding of the privileged position of the first-born is the term בכרה (birthright), which features in the story of Isaac and Jacob in Genesis 25:31-35. Syrén (1993:88) traces its origin back to ancient agricultural rites in which the first-fruit and the first-born were sacrificed to the gods. A version of this practice is described in Numbers 3:40-43. Moses is to count the first-born males, but then, instead of sacrificing them, he is to redeem them by consecrating the Levites to Yahweh as his special property. The reason for this is traced back to the slaying of the Egyptian first-born during the Passover (Nm 3:12-13). Although ancient

rites laid a cultic obligation on the father, the birth of the first-born was also proof of the father's procreative power. Reuben, for example, is praised by Jacob as his first-born, his "might", the beginning of his "strength", and his highest "honour" and "power" (Gn 49:3).

The first-born enjoyed special rights and privileges, which evolved in a well-defined hierarchy within the family (cf De Vaux 1978:41-42). During the lifetime of his father, he took precedence over his brothers (Gn 43:33). After his death he became the head of the family and received a double share of the inheritance as witnessed in Deuteronomy 21:17. The Deuteronomy passage as a whole (21:15-17) is concerned with safeguarding the birthright of the first-born in cases where fathers had sons by two wives, and showed a greater love for one of his later wives. Determining who should be the lawful first-born, accentuates the importance attributed to him. Scott (1990:112) believes that this passage is designed to protect the eldest son from any favouritism which might be shown to a younger son. If that is so, the Deuteronomy passage features as a "small" or "contra narrative" (*petits récits*), written against what in Israel had become the "grand narrative" (*métarécits*) (Lyotard 1984; cf Breytenbach 1997:1169-1180). This contention needs to be explored further.

Within the patriarchal narratives, the line of Israel's inheritance runs, then, through the younger son. From Abraham, the line runs to Isaac (not Ishmael), from Isaac to Jacob (not Esau), from Jacob to Joseph (not Reuben), and from Joseph to Ephraim (not Manasseh). An early indication of the subversion of the birthright of the first born within the story-tradition of Israel, is the story of Cain and Abel, where without any apparent reason Abel's offering is accepted and Cain's rejected (Gn 4:3-4). A detailed exposition of the patriarchal passages has been undertaken by Roger Syrén (1993). Our focus here falls on some textual perspectives, on the relevance of the motif, and especially on the historical *Sitz im Leben* of the motif, that is, the historical context in which this motif was utilised. For this short overview we will follow almost exclusively Syrén's (1993) work and

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the conclusions he draws.

It is not uncommon that stories within the tradition of a country or nation are used for specific purposes. In doing so, certain aspects and factors are highlighted rather than others and systematised in a unified whole. This unified whole then constitutes the "grand narrative". But as already noted in chapter 2 above, the grand narrative is not a particular narrative, but rather the "red line" (a theoretical construct) which runs through all the stories and acts as an interpretive tool revealing the singular truth inherent in the many narratives of that culture (cf Breytenbach 1997:1169). It is in this perspective that the work done by Syrén is most enlightening. The question is not whether the "two sons stories" in the patriarchal narratives are in all respects similar. Syrén's textual analysis shows that there are indeed many differences, and that those features that they have in common, need to be searched for.

A point in common is that the "forsaken first-born" is never totally excluded from Yahweh's blessing. Both Ishmael and Esau are explicitly designated to be become "a [great] nation" (Syrén 1993:140). In the case of Ishmael the promise comes from God and recurs no less than three times (Gn 17:20; 21:13, 18). For Esau it is proclaimed in the oracle, Genesis 25:23. Although the biographical information on Manasseh and Reuben in Genesis is restricted, both receive a blessing of some kind. Manasseh is promised that he too will become a great people (Gn 48:19). Reuben is included in the blessing which his father Jacob extends to his sons (Gn 49:2-27), resulting in the coming to birth of the twelve tribes of Israel (Gn 49:28).

Invariably, the promise given to the "forsaken first-born" leads to a distinguishable group of people. In its earliest stage the Ishmael-Isaac story reflects a family feud (see also Scott 1990:112). Whether the Ishmael tradition existed separately from the Isaac tradition is uncertain (Syrén 1993:54-58). Whatever the case may be, the role of Ishmael is regarded as important enough to be included in the Abraham and Isaac cycle: within this cycle of stories, the

blessing takes the form of a tribal oracle, a *Stammesspruch* (Syrén 1993:20, with reference to Westermann). The story of Ishmael serves to explain the history of the “Ishmaelites”, as a nation separate from Israel. The Esau passages too reflect a development along similar lines, running through various stages, and culminating in the formation of a separate nation. Apart from the earliest stage (“conflict within a family”) two other stages are identified (see Syrén 1993:66-94). In the first of the two stages, Jacob and Esau represent types of social division. They typify the shepherd and the huntsman and relate their continuing struggle for primacy. In the last stage, the early typologies are “nationalised”, Jacob and Esau becoming Israel and Edom respectively - again, two nations that are distinguished from one another.

The primary interest in the patriarchal narratives rests within the context of the last stage. It is there, Syrén (1993:141) concludes, that the “two-sons stories” receive a distinctive meaning, described by the word “blessing”. The blessing is identified as the one element that comes the nearest to a common denominator. The word “blessing” expresses the specifically *Israelite* element of the stories. Notably, the blessing not only brings fortune with it, but inevitably also the final renunciation of the first-born, leading to the formal announcement of his demotion (Syrén 1993:141). From then on he is forsaken, his task being to fulfil the future described to him. This decision is communicated in different ways. Sometimes harshly as with Esau, who is openly declared as someone “without grace” in his fathers’ house, or less harshly as with Manasseh. But in each instance the result is an inferior rank in relation to the ancestors of Israel. Ishmael, Esau and Reuben have in common their association with a concubine. As a result, they threaten to subvert the original intention of the call made to Abraham. The function of the blessing is evidently to abort this threat. Syrén (1993:141) notes that in “these instances the blessing is really an act of dissociation *from* the ‘blessed’.”

Although it is difficult to trace the origins of the motif of the “forsaken first-born”, the meaning and relevance of this motif within the patriarchal narratives

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point in two directions (Syrén 1993:142-143). On one hand they set out the formation of the nations and races on earth under the auspices of the God of Israel. This is based on the original promise made to Abraham that he would become a father of many nations (Gn 17:4, 5; cf 12:2). On the other hand they underline Israel's consciousness of its own standing as God's elected people. This is based on one particular covenant, the one covenant between Isaac and Yahweh (Gn 17:19, 21).

Of special interest to us is the historical *Sitz in Leben* of the motif. This is important in so far as it helps us to determine whether there are points of contact with the context of Luke's narrative, which would in turn warrant Luke's use of this motif. Luke's context was explored above in chapter 4 as one characterised by opposition and fear of persecution. Syrén (1993:54-65; 143-145) asserts that the historical *Sitz im Leben* in which the motif of the "forsaken first-born" would fit the best, is that of the postexilic community. For the exilic and postexilic community the loss of identity was a burning issue. It is against this background that the stories of Abraham and his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, are especially relevant. Abraham's story, as narrated within the patriarchal narrative, is one of an enduring threat. First, he is confronted with the threat that he may have no offspring; then that his offspring may be blotted out. Genesis 15:1-2 reflects the early fear over the procreativity of Abraham. "Abraham said: 'You have given me no children, and so my heir must be a slave born in my house.' Then came the word of the Lord to him: 'This man shall not be your heir; you heir shall be a child of your own body.'" Once this threat is overcome with the birth of first Ishmael and then Isaac, both sons are threatened with imminent death. Abraham is commanded to send his older son, Ishmael, away into the desert (Gn 21:10). Abraham's concerns are however overcome when God reconfirms his promise to him by pledging that his offspring will be reckoned through his younger son Isaac (Gn 21:11-12). But once again Abraham's procreativity is threatened when he is commanded to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, whose life is spared only at the very last moment (Gn 22).

The exilic and postexilic community closely identified with Abraham's fear. In many ways their story was Abraham's story and became a "model" (a lens) through which they could view and interpret the events surrounding their own lives. The greatest threat to their identity was the Babylonian exile. That they could survive the exile and return to their land was to them a sign that God after all was keeping his promise to Abraham and Isaac. This is reflected in Isaiah 41:8-9: "But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I take from the ends of the earth and called from its farthest corner." But not only the returned Israelites appealed to Abraham. Back in Judah the struggle for true Israelite identity escalated into an intense rivalry between the returned Israelites and those who possessed the land (see also 5.2 above). This is evidenced by Ezekiel 33:23-24. This reflects on a claim made by those who remained behind *against* those who had returned from Babylonia: "Abraham was only one man, yet he got possession of the land; but we are many: the land is surely given to us to possess."

For the returned exiles, foreign presence among and within the ranks of the Israelites was a direct threat to national unity. In the interests of national unity a line had to be drawn between Israelites and non-Israelites. Syrén (1993:141) argues that the conflict between Ishmael and Isaac served as a perfect "model" to make such a clear distinction and promote a policy of "separateness". This is done primarily by stressing that God's covenant was established with *Isaac* (Gn 17:20). Israel therefore needed to be safeguarded against the influx and influence of foreigners. This was to be done by embarking on a strong *exclusivist* course, which finds expression first and foremost in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah (cf Syrén 1993:59-62). Both books present the radical, religious view that there can be only one Israelite nation: the returned exiles. The others are foreigners. Survival is to be ensured by initiating the highest degree of national and religious "purity", of which Ezra's uncompromising attitude towards mixed marriages serves as a code (see Ezr 9-10).

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That Israel should separate itself from the other nations emerges as the "grand narrative" of the postexilic community. This is evidenced by the recurring motif of the "forsaken first-born" and the sometimes vindictive attitude of some prophets and psalmists against the other nations. Invariably Esau serves as the primary "model". The classical examples is provided by Malachi 1:2-4. Within this "grand narrative", a heightened sense of religious purity, distinctiveness and apartness are the key to the proper interpretation of the patriarchal narratives. The two brothers, the younger (being Israel) and the elder son (the other nations), are to be separated.

Although dominant, grand narratives seldom remain totally unopposed. Within the story tradition of Israel there is some evidence of an *inclusive* line of thought with its roots clearly traced back to the patriarchal narratives (see Syrén 1993:57-48). A more universalist attitude is, for example, proclaimed by Deutero-Isaiah, who welcomes proselytes in the assembly of God (Is 56:3-7). Together with Deuteronomy 21:15-17, referred to above, this constitutes part of what can be termed the "small", "contra-narrative" of the post-exilic community. Deutero-Isaiah shows awareness of the threat which the exile posed to Israel's continuing existence, but his view of history is that the threat was self-imposed: the people of Israel were suffering as a result of their disobedience to God's commandments and their rejection of the prophets (see Is 48:18-19; cf Gn 22:17; 13:16; 15:5). Ironically, God uses the hands of the "foreigners" to turn events around. Syrén (1993:58) notes:

Deutero-Isaiah's view of events provides the general background for understanding the "Ishmael theology" of Genesis 17 and 21. The priestly writers/redactors had to ponder the future of the holy people in the midst of the many foreign groups that surrounded them - some of whom, on crucial occasions, struggled for dominance over the whole region.

The existence of other nations, as well as the presence of foreigners among the “people of Israel”, could not summarily be done away with. Israel’s heritage *does* follow through the line of the younger son. But the “blessing” of the first-born as “also-people” (also a [great] nation) paves the way for an understanding that the other people around Israel also have some standing in God’s plan. A corrective criticism (within the patriarchal narratives themselves) against a policy of separateness is possibly provided by Genesis 32-33, Jacob meeting Esau (Syrén 1993:144).

There is however little doubt that the “grand narrative” of post-exilic Israel is that of separation. The “two-sons” stories, in particular the gratuitous favouritism shown to the younger son, provided the leaders of post-exilic Israel with the necessary model for the propagation of segregation between the nations. The model functions to explain that (1) the “people of Israel” alone are heir of the promise made to Abraham; and that (2) God has continually chosen his people even when they have apparently wandered from his way. In sum, the fact that Israel’s heritage runs through the younger son shows that God chooses freely. The grand narrative concludes that his choice is *for* Israel and therefore *against* the nations, from whom Israel must separate itself.

The widespread use of the motif to describe the fate of Israel is further evidenced by its use in at least two passages from the *Midrash on Psalms* (cf Scott 1990:112,123-124). The first one is a commentary on Psalm 9:1

R. Berechiah said in the name of R. Johnathan: The verse means therefore that God has set love of little children in their fathers’ hearts. For example, there was a king who had two sons, one grown up, the other a little one. The grown-up one was scrubbed clean, and the little one was covered with dirt, but the king loved the little one more than he loved the grown-up one.

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The second one is a commentary on Jeremiah 3:18-9, explaining why Israel receives a land desired by other nations:

Can *sibe'ot goyim* [desired by the nations] mean anything else except that the land of Israel was desired and coveted by all the nations? Consider the parable of a king who was seated at his royal table. He had many children, but he loved the youngest one the most. He was about to apportion their inheritance. Among the parcels of land there was one of great beauty, which all the children coveted, and so the king said: "Let this parcel of land remain as my own portion." As Scripture says, "The Most High apportioned to the nations their inheritance" (Deut. 32:8), but to whom did He finally give His own portion? To His youngest child, for the next verse says, "The Lord's portion to His people, to Jacob the lot of His inheritance."

Both quotes make use of the "two-sons" motif, with the younger son enjoying the favour of his father as a code of God's love and election of Israel.

As noted above, Paul also makes extensive use of the motif. Indeed, as Donahue (1988:159-160) asserts, Paul uses the motif to accentuate God's unmerited love and argues on the basis of the younger son, the "son of promise", that the Gentiles are part of God's grace (cf Rm 9:1-18; Gl 4:21-31). Ironically, Paul uses the motif *against* the "Israel of flesh" to argue for the *inclusion* of the Gentiles. What is important for us at this stage is that Paul's use of the motif further verifies that the motif was well-known in the first century and that it was a powerful interpreter of the fate of Israel in relation to other nations. The probability of Luke not only being aware of the motif but also making conscious use of it, is therefore highly probable.

Bailey (1992:119) disqualifies the use of the motif on the basis that the

favouritism shown to the younger son “evaporates as the parable comes to its conclusion.” But this argument hardly disqualifies its use. If the motif was used, as we contest, in order to subvert conventional perceptions, such a result is to be expected. The exposition of the parable will proceed to show that by the very use of the motif, favouritism to one of the sons at the expense of the other is subverted. In contrast to conventional perceptions, God does *not* make a choice between the two-sons. Both are welcomed to join in the celebrations. The story of the “forsaken first-born” and the “favourite younger son”, separated from one another, becomes the story of a father’s love for *both* his sons.

6.3 Parable exposition

The parable of “A Man Had Two Sons” consists of two acts juxtaposed. Each act is introduced by one of the two sons referred to in the introductory verse: Act One, verses 12-24 (νεώτερος), and Act Two, verses 24-32 (πρεσβύτερος), the father forming the combining factor.

It is to be noted that in contrast to the other two parables in Luke 15, “The Lost Sheep” (verses 4-7) and “The Lost Coin” (verses 8-10), both of which are introduced in the second person, “What man of you”, the narrator introduces the third parable in the third person, “A certain man had two sons” thereby blocking the audience’s immediate identification with the man (Scott 1990:102). The audience is thereby forced to identify with one of the two sons. Because of the ranking system in ancient families - first father, second elder son, and third younger son - Bailey (1992:112) believes that it would have been quite shocking to the Mediterranean mind that a story should commence with the actions of a younger son. This will however have hardly been so, as the announcement that what is to be told is a story involving two sons will have immediately called to mind the well-known story tradition in Israel, in which the younger son is often regarded as the favourite (see 6.2.2 above). Indeed, no story teller would normally commence a story in which identification with the first character is immediately

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blocked. Identification with the younger son is intended. Despite the privileges and rights attributed to the elder son in ancient Mediterranean cultures, the younger son is here nevertheless favoured. The well-known story tradition in Israel would therefore not only make identification with the younger son plausible, but would also guide the audience into what would seem to be the likely ending of the story: the younger son will receive the father's blessing, the elder son will be rejected.

Within the story tradition of Israel, scandalous behaviour is often associated with the younger son. This anticipated behaviour is confirmed in the parable when the younger son requests his portion of the property (verse 12). Reference to property evokes another element in the Israelite repertoire: that of the legal codes concerning inheritance. Evidence about inheritance practices is not altogether clear. According to Deuteronomy 21:7 the first-born had rights to a double share of the inheritance, the younger son therefore receiving a third. The property could be left either by means of a will, which would become effective on the death of the father, or it could be given as a gift during his lifetime (cf Jeremias [1963] 1984:87). Based on this information, various scholars have argued for the commonality of the younger son's initial request. Donahue (1988:153), for example, writes that "the request of the younger son should not be considered as rebellion or a desire for unwarranted freedom" (see also Linnemann 1966:75). But that the son's request is hardly conventional is evidenced by the following passage from a third-century source reflecting earlier Israelite custom (cf Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:373):

If one assign in writing his property to his children, he must write, "from today and after [my] death." ... If one assign in writing his estate to his son [to become his] after his death, the father cannot sell it since it is conveyed to his son, and the son cannot sell it because it is under this father's control The father may pluck up

[produce] and feed it to whomsoever he pleases, but whatever he left plucked up belongs to his heir.

(*m. B. Bat.* 8.7)

The situation described in this passage is that of man who wishes to protect the inheritance rights of the sons of a first marriage. By assigning the property to the sons, their inheritance (after the father's death) would be guaranteed. Sirach 33:19-30 however contains a strong warning against such an early division of property (cf Scott 1990:109):

To son or wife, to brother or friend, do not give power over yourself, as long as you live; and do not give your property to another, lest you change your mind and must ask for it. While you are still alive and have breath in you, do not let any one take your place. For it is better that your children should ask from you than that you should look to the hands of your sons. Excel in all that you do; bring no stain upon your honour. At the time when you end the days of your life, in the hour of death, distribute your inheritance.

Although both passages clearly indicate the possibility of property being divided during the lifetime of a father, the strong warning issued by Sirach indicates that it was *not* the norm. Indeed, Sirach's warning reflects on bitter experience. Two issues are especially striking. First, even if property is divided during the lifetime of a father, disposition of the property should only come into effect *after* the father's death. The second issue is the reference to honour: The degree of irregularity in the son's request only becomes apparent when seen within the social dynamics of "honour-and-shame" and "challenge-and-response" of first-century Mediterranean culture (see Malina 1993:28-62).

Honour was the pivotal value in the Mediterranean society, much as money

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is in our Western society today. It is understood as the status one claims in one's community together with the all-important recognition of that claim by others (see Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:309-311). Honour is either ascribed or acquired. Acquired honour is the honour that a person can build over his or her lifespan and is the result of skill in the never-ending game of challenge and response. That means, in order to gain honour, someone needs to challenge another person, be it positively by means of a compliment (gift), or negatively by means of an insult. If someone succeeds in the challenge, honour is gained. If however the other person successfully counters the challenge, honour is lost. Ascribed honour, in contrast, is the honour attributed to a person by birth or genealogy. Although honour can also be ascribed, for example, to a governor by the king, it is in most cases directly related to family status. The latter is evidenced by the fact that ancients referred to themselves as "son of", thereby referring to the honour status of that family. The main bearer of the family's honour was the father by virtue of his being the head of the house. After his death, his honour is attributed to his eldest son as he is the one who stands to inherit the greater portion of the family property. But family honour was never confined to the individual. Every member of a family shared in the honour of that family. Although family honour was ascribed, it could nevertheless be challenged, resulting in a loss of honour.

Because the honour of one's family played a crucial role both in one's societal status and interaction (determining whom one could marry, do business with, eat with, and so on), it needed to be protected at all costs. Children were therefore at an early age socialised into being loyal to the family and taught what was honourable behaviour according to the set norms of their society (cf Hagedorn 2000:111-113). Because loyalty kept a family together, disloyalty to one's own family was unthinkable. This would include failure to respond to an attack on the family, the possible result of this being a permanent loss of honour. But ill-disciplined and ruffianly behaviour also threatened family honour, the severity of the crime being reflected in Leviticus 20:9: "If anyone treats his father or mother

with contempt, he shall be put to death. He has condemned his father and mother, his blood guilt is upon him.”

As the quote from Sirach 33:12-23 illustrates, giving away one's property out of hand was tantamount to relinquishing one's own power and honour. The father ran the risk in fact, of losing his whole livelihood. In the story under consideration, however, what is shocking is not the division as such, but the fact of the son *asking* for it (Bailey 1992:112-113; Green 1997:580; Forbes 2000:132-133): no Mediterranean son would ever ask his father for his share of the property. Bailey (1992:113) quotes Ibn al-Tayyib who comments: “This is an illegitimate request! The son has no right to make such a request.” Bailey ([1976] 1983:176) refers to rabbinic legislation, stating that inheritance, even as a “gift” while the father is still alive, is invalid if the gift has not been given voluntarily, free of all duress. It is therefore not surprising that in ancient texts the question of a son, elder or younger, *requesting* his inheritance is never discussed (Bailey [1976] 1983:164; Bailey 1992:114). Such a request would amount to a direct challenge to the honour of the father. He is wishing his father dead. The father would be expected to explode in anger and rage culminating in a public humiliation of the son (cf Dt 21:18-21). Indeed, in a situation like this, it would also be expected that the elder son defends his father's honour. But he is conspicuously quiet.

By acceding to the request of the younger son, the father places his family honour in jeopardy, indeed he gives up his own “life”. This is confirmed by the Greek text. The younger son requests his portion of the property (οὐσία) and the narrator remarks that the father divided his life (βίος) among them (Scott 1990:111).

The intertwining of the two repertoires, the two-sons stories, and that of the Israelite legal code concerning the division and disposition of property, puts the audience in a complex situation. On the one hand, the story tradition of “two-sons” leads it to identify with the younger son. On the other hand, the younger son goes clearly too far. This tension is intensified in the next verse (verse 13). The

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division of an estate during the lifetime of a father is one thing. But actually disposing of one's inheritance is quite another. In ancient Israelite writings there is no precedent for the right of disposal during a father's lifetime (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:373). The verse outlines a series of acts which lead from one infamy to the next, witnessing to a break with all familial ties. The younger son leaves for a foreign country. Jeremias (1963]1984:87; see also Meurer 1997:658) maintains that there was nothing amiss with the son emigrating to a foreign country to seek more favourable living conditions. But *χώραν μακράν* indicates alienation from the family (Forbes 2000:134). This is confirmed by the son squandering his inheritance in wild living as though he was a Gentile. In squandering his property, the younger son both ignores the claim that the father still had on the property and violates Israelite law by refusing to maintain his father from the property in his old age (cf Mk 7:11-13; Scott 1990:115; Forbes 2000:133).

With reference to Daube and Rengstorf, Bailey ([1976] 1983:167-169; 1992:121-125) draws attention to an ancient Mediterranean ceremony, called the *getsatsah*, which literally means "a cutting off". It refers to an offending person being cut off from his community. The ceremony was enacted when a man married an impure woman or sold his land. Relatives would bring parched corn and nuts, place them in a jar and break the jar in front of the people declaring that the offending person is now cut off from his inheritance. That the younger son hastily (*μετ' οὐ πολλὰς ἡμέρας*) departed to a foreign country could indicate the fear of the *getsatsah* ceremony being enacted. If he returns and buys back the land, all could be forgiven. But by spending it amongst Gentiles, he has blocked all avenues for his return, lest the *getsatsah* be performed then.

In verses 14-16 the audience's patience with the younger son is tested to the limit. The famine might have introduced some sympathy from the audience, as it could indicate that the younger son is not alone responsible for the downward turn in his fortunes. But he does what from a Pharisaic point of view is the worst thing he could do. Rather than facing up to public shame on returning to his

father's house, or at least seeking help within an Israelite community, he attaches himself to a foreign family. By doing this, the break with his family is complete.

But even worse is to follow. In feeding pigs, the younger son also breaks with his religion. That the pig was considered to be an unclean animal for the Israelite is well-known (Lv 11:7; Dt 14:8). Indeed, Israel's loathing for the pig was especially strong. In Leviticus 11:4-7 the pig is listed neutrally among other unclean animals. But in the second century BCE it became an especially unclean animal because of its use as a sacred animal by outsiders (Malina 1993:165). The height of Antiochus Epiphanes' abomination was the sacrifice of a swine on the altar of the holy temple (cf Dunn 1983:13). Israelite antipathy to the swine continued, attested by the refusal in the Mishnah to allow an Israelite to rear swine *anywhere* (*m. B. Qam. 7.7*; cf Dunn 1983:13). The abhorrence of rearing or feedings pigs is further endorsed by the rabbinic maxim: "Cursed be the man who would breed swine, or teach his son Greek philosophy" (*b. B. Qam. 82b*; cf Scott 1990:114; Forbes 2000:134). In this aphorism, "swine" is equated with "Gentile", an allusion which resonates throughout our parable. In herding pigs, the younger son is practically forced to abandon his religious customs. He can no longer keep the Sabbath (Jeremias 1963] 1984:87). The audience is shattered.

Verse 16 highlights the sorry state of the younger son. He does not only feed the pigs, but wishes to eat their food. Most scholars understand *κεράτιον* to refer to the pod of the carob tree known as Saint John's Bread (*ceratonia siliqua*) which was sweet and widely eaten (cf Jeremias [1963] 1984:87). In his earlier work, Bailey ([1976] 1983:172-173) however contends that the carob referred to here was another variety which was wild, thorny and bitter, devoid of nourishment, eaten by animals and the very poor alike to bridge periods of severe drought. It is difficult to ascertain what variety is assumed in the parable. The lack of nourishment in the "wild and bitter" variety would explain why the younger son could "not fill the stomach" - suggesting that he never felt nourished. In his later work, however, Bailey (1992:128-129) again leans towards the *ceratonia*

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siligua, based on a Talmudic reference that it was readily chopped up by the Israelites for cattle feed. Bailey (1992:128) assumes that after the carob molasses were extracted, the coarse pulp was possibly fed to the pigs, the younger son not having the stomach to digest it. Whatever the case may be, the younger son is reduced to a state in which he envies a pig.

Also uncertain in our parable is the meaning of the phrase that "nobody gave to him". Forbes (2000:135) argues that this phrase cannot refer to the carob pods, as the younger son could have helped himself to these. Conversely, the younger son may have been too closely monitored to steal from the pod. In the literary perspective, this phrase serves to contrast the lack of food the younger son is experiencing (verse 16) with the abundance of food of the servants at home (verse 17). All in all, at this point the tension created by juxtaposing the theme of the favourite younger son in the Israelite story tradition with the rebellious younger son in the parable, has reached so close to breaking point that any identification of the two is nigh impossible. Despite all this, the audience will have expected either the younger son to have turned from his ways or for someone else to restore him to his previous state and status. Hopes of this may have been raised with the reference to the carob. A rabbinic maxim states: "When the Israelites stand in need of carob-beans, then they return (to God)" (cf Linnemann 1966:76).

The long awaited turn in events is covered in verse 17-20a. The actual turning point is introduced by the phrase, "he came to himself" (verse 17). Whether this phrase can be equated with repentance, based on the assertion that it reflects an underlying Semitic phrase signifying repentance (Jeremias [1963] 1984:87), has become a much debated issue (cf Bailey [1976] 1983:173-176). Green (1997:581) asserts that the phrase "does not on its own signify repentance." Repentance is rather to be deduced from the co-text, in which the act of repentance (μετάνοια, μετανοέω) is twice highlighted (Lk 15: 7, 10). Bailey (1992:129-133) fervently rejects the notion that at this point in the narrative the younger son shows true repentance. He argues that *if this* is repentance, the

parable conflicts with the meaning of repentance in the two preceding parables, where repentance is not defined as an active act on the part of the repentant, but the “acceptance of being found”. For Bailey (1992:132) it seems more probable that at this point the younger son’s actions are motivated by his predicament. Returning to his father and working as a slave is seen as a cunning way out of his dilemma, with true repentance following only after the acceptance of his father. Bailey (1992:132) finds support for his argument in the fact that the sin of which the son apparently repents is in no way defined. Bailey’s arguments, however, seem to be controlled by theological presuppositions (cf Barton 2000:210). That the sheep and the coin are simply “found” may, for instance, be ascribed to the nature of the sheep and coin when compared to the human character (Forbes 2000:137). Bailey (1992:132) is however correct in asserting that it was not remorse for his sins, but rather the fact that the younger son was in need and had to eat, that initiated the turn in events. This is confirmed by a rabbinic proverb, “When a son (in need in a strange land) goes barefoot, then he remembers the comfort of his father’s house” (in Forbes 2000:137). Bailey’s polarisation of repentance and prudence is however unnecessary (cf Barton 2000:210-211). The diaphoric nature of the events narrated, lies not foremost in the dichotomy between repentance and prudence, but between conventional Israelite expectations concerning actions surrounding repentance and those narrated by Luke in verses 20b-24. In this parable the emphasis is not on the repentance of the son (whether true or simulated) but rather the (compassionate) actions of the father. The critical question is: How will the father, who together with his family were shamed by the younger son, react if he should return?

The purpose of the rehearsed speech in verses 17-20a is to highlight the low status to which the younger son has sunk. He is no longer “worthy to be called a son” (verse 19a). The phrase indicates an awareness on the part of the younger son that his actions have destroyed the father-son relationship (cf Hultgren 2000:77). Instead of returning as a “son”, he is prepared to take the

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status of a μίσθος (verse 19b). For Bailey ([1976] 1983:176-178; 1992:133-134) this forms part of his cunning behaviour. With reference to Oesterley, Bailey ([1976] 1983:176; see also Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:372; Pöhlmann 1993:183-184) distinguishes between:

- bondsmen (δοῦλοι), who as slaves were part of the estate and indeed almost part of the family
- slaves of a lower class (παῖδες), who were subordinates to the bondsmen
- hired servants or day-labourers (μίσθοι).

For Bailey ([1976] 1983:176-177), it is critical that the hired servants were free men, which would allow the younger son to live independently of his father. As such, he could earn his own money, pay back his debt, and maintain his pride. Bailey however fails to see that the honour of the younger son is intrinsically linked to that of the father, and that in contrast to the bondsmen and other slaves, the hired servants were, viewed from the standpoint of the father, *outsiders* - not part of the family. Based on the shame he has caused his father, and his inability to rectify the situation, the younger son realises that he cannot gain full access to his family again. If at all, he can only work as a hired servant. He has no other option. Scott (1990:116) notes that the younger son views his situation in legal terms: having lost his status as son, the younger son expects his father to stand in judgement of him and *expects* everything to be earned. In verse 20a he stands up to return to the father and do what he has resolved to do.

Verses 20b-24 relate the extraordinary events that follow on the younger son's return. Although the son's coming to himself and rising to return to his father may still have raised the audience's hope that the favourite younger son may be restored to his expected place in the family, the events narrated are most unusual and unexpected, epitomising Luke's use of diaphoric approach and language. According to conventional Israelite expectation, any restoration of the son can only

follow once certain preconditions have been fulfilled by the sinner. Bailey ([1976] 1983:179) shows that the idea that repentance is a “work” is found throughout rabbinic literature. A Midrash on Psalm 18:3 reads: “Three things can cancel evil decrees; namely, prayer, almsgiving and repentance” (in Bailey [1976] 1983:179). Bailey’s reference to repentance being a “good work” is of course based on theological considerations. From a social perspective it is a matter of repentance being tangible (cf Forbes 2000:295-296): If everything that happens in a first-century Mediterranean village is everybody’s business, repentance needs to be not only visible but also measurable. Repentance therefore becomes inseparably bound up with restitution and reparation. Verbal repentance does not suffice. For the father to regain his lost honour, the shame caused by the son needs to be atoned for. Making reference to Montefiore, Bailey ([1976] 1983:180) argues that after the destruction of the temple, the atonement element in repentance had become dominant to the degree that it replaced the sacrificial system. Restitution now formed part of the proof of genuineness, of being truly remorseful, with no want of readiness on the part of the community to receive the penitent until he had sufficiently proved himself (Linnemann 1966:78). From a conventional Israelite standpoint the expected narration of events is: (1) the son runs to the father, falls at his feet, and confesses his sin; (2) he declares his determination to make restitution; and (3) proves himself by being a faithful servant. All these events find full expression in the rehearsed speech of the younger son

The actual narration of events turns the world of the first-century Mediterranean upside down. The father sees his son at a distance, has compassion, runs, embraces, and kisses his son (verse 20). Like the younger son, the *father* now goes too far. It is beneath the dignity of an oriental to run in public (Linnemann 1966:77). The father’s running towards his son and not waiting for the son to come to him, violates his honour. That he “runs” is in itself undignified. According to ancient tradition, the way “a man walks shows what he is” (Sir 19:30). For the father to run, he must pull up the robe, exposing his legs,

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which is considered shameful in Semitic culture (Bailey 1992:144-145; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:372). Bailey (1992:142-143) notes the implications of the father running. He does not run to welcome the boy, but to protect him from hostile village reaction (see also Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:372). By (publicly) kissing and embracing his son, he signals that the son is under his protection. Kissing is also a sign of reconciliation (see Gn 33:4; 45:14; 46:29). The kiss on the cheek, in contrast to kissing the feet or the hand, is the sign for unreserved acceptance to one's own social status. The verb ἐσπλαγχνίσθη gives insight into the father's character. Notably, his response is similar to that of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:33).

In the confession to his father (verse 21) the younger son follows his rehearsed speech, except that he omits the last line where he asks to be treated as a μίσθος. Most commentators conclude that the speech is interrupted by the father, as he has heard enough and is convinced of the genuineness of his confession (see, inter alia, Green 1997:532; Hultgren 2000:79). But this is hardly correct. Bailey (1992:152-153) suggests that the son has come to true repentance and has realised that serving as a hired servant would not heal his father's broken heart. More likely however is that within the social dynamics of the first-century Mediterranean world, a request to serve as a hired servant (in the light of the unexpected acceptance of the son by the father) would be tantamount to another challenge and would constitute an insult to the father's love.

Verses 22-24 contain cultural clues designed to alert the audience to the restoration of the son's honour (Scott 1990:118). Shockingly the emphasis is not on the father's honour being restored, but that of the son - the son who had snubbed and abandoned his father. The son receives a robe, which in the ancient world was a special way of honouring somebody. Jacob honours his younger son Joseph with a richly ornamented robe (Gn 37:3). The adjective πρῶτος (first, best) could refer to the robe of the father himself which would indicate the full restoration of the son's familial honour (Bailey 1992:154). The ring is probably a

signet ring, signifying the bestowal of authority (Jeremias [1963] 1984:130). The shoes distinguish a free man from a slave, who walked barefoot (Forbes 2000:140). The father's actions culminate in the slaughtering of a fattened calf. The calf indicates that this is not just a small party with friends, but a full-blown banquet to which the whole community is invited. The banquet signals the community's "acceptance of the father's wish to bring his son back into the family and the village" (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:372). It is intended to reconcile the younger son with the community and restore his honour. The banquet, in a word, signifies table fellowship with a known sinner who has failed to adhere to purity regulations and shamed his father (see Lk 15:1-2).

The reason for the celebration is elaborated on in verse 24. The younger son who had slandered his father is nevertheless again the "son of mine". From the point of view of conventional Israelite wisdom, he is a sinner, who should be rejected. But from the father's point of view he was dead and now is alive, he was lost and now is found. Forbes (2000:141) draws attention to the perfect participle ἀπολωλώς indicating the complete state of loss, which in turn confirms the suitability of νεκρός. A seemingly irreversible situation has been reversed. The father and the younger son are truly reconciled.

Verse 25 marks the beginning of the second act of the parable. This act is not just a lame appendix. In typical Lukan style, opposites are juxtaposed. The explicit reference to the "elder" son, recalls the well-known Israelite story tradition of "two sons" (Scott 1990:119). Based on this story tradition, the audience expects the elder son to be rejected.

This section (verses 26-30) is marked by numerous spacial markers and contrasting points of view. Although the elder son in contrast to the younger son stayed at home, he is not in the house, but in the fields, *far* from the father. Like the younger son returned home, the elder son now approaches the house, but does not enter. The natural reaction for any son who hears festivities in the house would be to enter and join in the celebrations (Bailey 1992:166). Instead, the

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elder son calls a servant (παῖδος) and seeks information (verse 26). The servant's answer summarises the events of the first act. The direct speech of the servant serves a dual purpose. First, it highlights family relationships: "your brother", "your father" - one would have expected the servant to refer to the actions of "his master", and the return of the master's "son". Second, it prepares the reader for the family confrontation that is to follow.

The scene for the confrontation is set when the elder son reacts in anger and refuses to enter the house (verse 28). The reason for his anger is not immediately stated. The return of the younger brother would, of course, have meant that he would be supported from the proceeds of the property (now belonging to the elder brother) as long as the father still lived (Scott 1990:120). In a limited-goods society (cf Malina 1993:71-93) this could only be at the cost of the elder son. What is now striking is that the events described, clearly parallel the actions involving the younger son earlier in our story, both concerning the shame caused of the father, and the father's reaction to his son's behaviour.

The elder son's refusal to enter the house in which the father hosts a public banquet is a direct challenge to the father's honour (cf Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:310). It is an insult of the highest degree, equal in magnitude to the insult caused by the younger son in requesting his property. It is a scene that can hardly be imagined within ancient Mediterranean culture. The elder son shows an utter disregard for the feelings and personal dignity of the father. His challenge, in fact, amounts to a break with the family. Within ancient cultures, such a challenge to the father's honour cannot be ignored: it calls for an appropriate response - one of dismay and condemnation. The expected scenario would be for the father to publicly discipline his son.

As with the younger son, the father in his response, ignores all cultural expectations. Risking humiliation and shame, he leaves his guests behind in the house, and approaches his elder son outside. Instead of rebuking him, he pleads with him to come inside. Forbes (2000:142) observes that the imperfect *παρεκάλει*

corresponds to ἤθελεν, indicating that the elder son's persistent refusal is met with the father's persistent pleas. This provides the elder son with the opportunity to give air to his frustration (verse 29-30). In his complaint he contrasts his own actions (verse 29) with those of the younger son (verse 30). An important aspect of the elder son's complaint centres on the demands of honour. He had always honoured his father by serving him and never breaking a commandment. In contrast the younger son had brought shame on the family by squandering the "life" of the family, not through circumstances beyond his control (famine), but by wasting his life with prostitutes. This reference to "prostitutes" does not correspond with the description of the younger son's life earlier (Bailey 1992:122-124; Hultgren 2000:81; Forbes 2000:143). The narrator observed that the younger son scattered his property living wastefully (verse 13). The elder brother accuses him of immorality (verse 30). This accusation is tantamount to "negative labelling" in ancient cultures. Hultgren (2000:81) argues that even the word "prostitution" is too formal. By implication the younger son is being accused of having had sex with "gentile whores, pigs!"

Ironically, when the elder son should have protected his father's honour by denouncing his younger brother's request for the property to be divided, he was quiet. Now he speaks: but his complaint turns to a scornful attack directed, not against his younger brother, but against his father. When he addresses his father, he fails to name him "Father" (Green 1997:585). This is in stark contrast to the way the younger son addressed his father (see verses 12, 18, 21). The elder son then publicly, on the occasion of a banquet, accuses his father of showing favouritism - by failing to give him a goat to celebrate with his friends, yet slaughtering the fattened calf for the younger son.

What is vital for an understanding of this parable are the contrasting points of view which in typical Lukan style are repeatedly juxtaposed (cf Scott 1990:121):

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The elder son sees the younger son as

- this son of yours
- who squandered your property
- with prostitutes

The father sees the younger son as

- one who was dead and is alive
- one who was lost and has been found

The elder son sees himself as

- a faithful slave of the father
- never breaking a commandment

The audience (led along by Israelite tradition) most probably see the elder son as

- selfish and a self-righteous pretender (expecting his rejection)

The father, however, sees the elder son not as a faithful *slave* but as

- a companion (“always with me”)
- as a co-owner of the farm (“all that is mine is yours”)

As in his reaction to the younger son on his return, the father's response to his elder son is staggering and most unconventional (verse 31-32). The father does not reprimand his son, as the audience will have expected. Instead, he confirms that he inherits everything. Lovingly he calls him τέκνον, (child) which in the vocative always denotes affection (Scott 1990:121). Although the parable maintains a careful cultural view, the cultural titles are dismissed by the father in his behaviour towards his two sons, with whom he deals as children. The loving response to the elder son as “child” correlates with the embracing and kissing of

the younger son. Contrary to conventional Israelite expectations the father does not choose between the two. He embraces *both*. With regard to upholding his honour within the set rules of society, the father is a failure; but in showing mother-like compassion for his children, he is a success (Scott 1990:121).

Notably the parable is left open-ended. It closes with words of the father, the central figure in the parable. Nothing more is said about either son. Bailey (1992:190) has outlined, what he believes to be the way the storyteller wants the parable to end:

And the elder son embraced his father
and entered the house
and was reconciled to his brother
and to his father.
And the father celebrated together with his *two* sons.

But it belongs to the very nature of metaphor that the end is not spelled out. Whether the elder son goes in or stays outside, remains an open question, challenging the audience. Notably this challenge is repeated in the closing chapter of Luke's narrative. The narrator notes that Paul welcomed "all" (πάντες) who came to him (Ac 28:30).

6.4 The challenge of a God who does not choose between his sons

With the exception of Scott (1990) the importance of the two-sons motif in interpreting the parable has largely been overlooked. That does not mean that the parable does not draw on other features as well. But the use of the motif highlights the rich symbolism of the parable and accentuates its dynamism at all levels of interpretation. Central to an understanding of the parable is the question whether it supports or challenges, confirms or subverts the two-sons motif as it featured within conventional Israelite wisdom up to and including the first century.

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In 6.2.2 above we showed that within conventional Israelite wisdom the two-sons motif was used to explain why God chose Israel above other nations, even when Israel wandered from God's way. The answer given in the two-sons motif is: It has nothing to do with what Israel did; as with the younger son, God simply favoured Israel. Indeed the motif was used not only to explain Israel's *election*, but also the *rejection* of the other nations. Although the patriarchal narratives refrain from using exclusive language, such terms are definitely to be found in post-exilic Israelite literature, best illustrated by Malachi 1:2-3: God not only declares God's love for Jacob, the younger son (Israel), but also God's *hatred* of Esau, the elder son (the other nations). We described the use of the motif as the "grand narrative" of post-exilic Israel.

Paul's use of the motif in his letter to the Romans (9:1-18) and Galatians (4:21-23) constitutes an interesting "contra narrative", also referred to above (6.2.2). Whereas conventional Israelite wisdom used the motif to confirm the privileged position of Israel, Paul uses it to argue *against* the Israel of flesh so as to include the Gentiles in God's salvation. No longer is Israel of the flesh identified with the younger sons; the role falls to the Gentiles as the children of promise: "Now we, brethren, like Isaac [the younger son] are children of promise" (Gal 4:28). In doing so Paul has subverted the symbolic universe of Israel by reversing the two-sons motif. God's sovereign choice is confirmed, but it is not based on "works" (adherence to purity and other regulations), which formed an integral part of Israelite identification, but on mercy (cf Rom 9:12, 16). Paul engages in what Crossan (1973:5) in analysing the parables of Jesus has termed a "polar reversal" of roles. The Malachi maxim is turned upside down. The Gentiles are identified with Jacob (the younger son), who is loved, and Israel of the flesh is identified with Esau (the elder son), who is hated (cf Rom 9:13).

The central question for us is: How did Luke use the two-sons motif? There is little doubt that part of the scandal attaching to the parable derives from the reversal of roles. But then again Lukan ambiguity allows for choice - for a

number of different peoples being associated with the two sons, depending at what level and from whose point of view the parable is read.

Robert Funk (1996:192-194), reading the parable within the context of the historical Jesus, postulates that the younger son mirrors the life of *Jesus* as he was perceived by his opponents. The description of Jesus' opponents that he is a "glutton and a drunk" (Lk 7:34) correlates with the description of the younger son in the parable who "scattered his [father's] wealth in wild living" (Lk 15:13). In telling the parable, Jesus was, therefore, telling his own story. Although the audience's patience (that of Jesus' opponents) is tested to the limit, the younger son (Jesus) is nevertheless accepted by his father. Thomas Wright (1996:126-131) argues that the parable only makes sense as a profoundly subversive retelling of Israel's story. As such, the younger son does not only mirror the life of Jesus, but that of Israel itself. There is a marked resemblance between the description of the younger son who goes off in disgrace into a far country and then returns home to find his welcome being challenged by an elder brother, and the story of Israel's exile and restoration. Although the people had returned from exile, the great prophecies of restoration had at the time of Jesus not yet been fully realised. For Wright (1996:127), indeed, the subversiveness of the parable lies in the assertion of Jesus that the restoration of Israel is being fulfilled in his own ministry, without his opponents realising it. Jesus, the perceived outsider, is the insider.

It forms part of the Lukan ambiguity that these referents are not blocked. Indeed Luke himself in constructing his narrative allows for a number of different referents. At literary level, the immediate co-text of the parable, Luke leads us to make an association between the toll-collectors and sinners and the person of the younger son; and one between the Pharisees and scribes and the elder son. This association is provided by the setting of the parable in Luke 15:1-2. The Pharisees and scribes are indicted by Jesus' receptiveness of "toll-collectors" and "sinners" who have come to hear his word and with whom he shares table

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fellowship. Various diaphors accentuate the lost state of the younger son, intimating the life of toll-collectors and sinners. Being “joined to one of the citizens” recalls the deplorable act of toll-collectors enlisting in the service of Gentiles (Linnemann 1966:76). In response to the grumbling of the Pharisees and scribes, Jesus asserts the divine necessity of joyous responses to the recovery of the lost. His answer, based on the actions of the father, is however not only a self-defence of his table fellowship practice. The Pharisees and scribes are invited to find themselves represented in the elder son who refuses to join the feast. The claim of the elder son never to have disobeyed a command (ἐντολή) of the father reflects the seemingly responsible and obedient attitude of the Pharisees and scribes (see Lk 18:18-21; Hultgren 2000:81). But such Pharisees and scribes fail to identify with the redemptive purpose of God, the βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ. The roles of the two-sons are reversed: the apparent insiders (Pharisees and scribes) are outsiders and the outsiders (toll-collectors and sinners) are insiders.

Luke, however, has clearly used this story within his own larger story. As the focus shifts to the macro-text of Luke-Acts, still at literary level, the referents change again. An association is evoked between the younger son and “Gentile” believers, with the Israelites who oppose Israelite-Gentile table fellowship mirroring the attitude of the elder son. An interesting parallel exists between Luke 15 and Acts 15 (the council of Jerusalem) (Wright 1996:128). In both stories people are being welcomed in from beyond certain existing socially and religiously defined boundaries. In the parable (Lk 15) the “rebellious” younger son is welcomed home, with the elder son being challenged to join in the feast. In Acts 15, Gentiles are accepted into the community of believers, the Israelite believers challenged to engage in fellowship and ensure Israelite-Gentile commensality (cf Neyrey 1991b:382). Notably however, the role of the Israelite believers has now been reversed. Within the immediate literary setting of the parable, the Israelites (toll-collectors and sinners who have returned home) were identified with the younger son (outsiders who have become insiders). Now, however, the believing

Israelites, perceiving themselves as insiders, are placed in the role of the elder son (insiders who have become outsiders).

This ambiguity highlights Luke's unique use of the two-sons motif. Central to Luke's subversion is not the reversal of roles in one way or the other, but the *unity* of God's family and the all-inclusiveness of God's kingdom. Indeed, as Scott (1990:125) points out, the parable's scandal derives from its subversion of the two-sons motif to resolve between the chosen and the rejected. Luke is not engaged in a "polar reversal" of roles, whereby those initially elected are rejected, and those initially rejected are accepted. Both are accepted.

The dynamic of the parable lies in the tension it creates by the extensive use of diaphoric language, leading the audience in one direction only to shock it by the father's unconventional behaviour. The two-sons motif leads the audience to identify with the favourite younger son. Once it has identified with him, it is put under severe strain by a string of improbable events. Just when identification with the younger son reaches breaking point, the father enters the plot and accepts the younger son, even before he can show tangible proof of repentance. Despite his actions, he is not an outsider, but an insider. The audience then anticipates the elder son's rejection. As the audience sees it (contrary to conventional perceptions) he is the outsider, who does not enter the house and so shames his father. But again, the father does not reject him. He is not hated. The father neither banishes him - "I am always with you" - nor is his inheritance taken away from him or reduced in any way - "all that is mine is yours". To the dismay of the audience, the father does not decide between this two sons. He rejects no one, but chooses both. So it is that the focus shifts away from the two sons to the attitude and behaviour of the father. Here Luke's telling of the parable paves the way for a revised vision of God.

God therefore is not one who separates, but one who unites. He does not reject one for the other, but chooses both. The relationship between the two brothers is not to be determined by conventionalised interpretations of the Law

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and Israelite temple purity regulations, but by the father's view of both - a view elucidated by mercy, the very heart of the Torah. Although the word "mercy" does not feature explicitly in the parable itself, it constitutes the background to a father who is repeatedly shamed by his two sons, but nevertheless does not reject them. Thus it is that the world drawn by Luke in this parable correlates with the world drawn by him in telling the parable of "The Good Samaritan" (Lk 10:30-37). It was noted above (5.4) that in the parable of "The Good Samaritan" Luke juxtaposed the mercy of God with the Israelite view of God as a God who practises ethnocentricity, that is, as one who chooses one nation (Israel) and rejects the other (Gentiles). In and through the actions of the Samaritan, however, a view of God is fostered which (based on "mercy") is not exclusive but inclusive in nature. Both parables illustrate Luke's *universalism* (cf Duling & Perrin 1994:360-371). Boundaries between clean and unclean, insider and outsider, Israelite and Samaritan/Gentile, all epitomising elements in the conventional Israelite worldview, are broken down. The Kingdom of God is not something that decides between two parties but unites. Barton (2000:214) summarises: "It is a time not for dividing into parties antagonistic to one another, but for uniting in a new kind of solidarity that is grounded on the grace of God and sustained by ongoing practices of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation."

One such practice is table fellowship both with toll-collectors and sinners as well as with Gentiles. Attention has already been drawn to the association of Luke 15 with Acts 15. This association is important in determining the extratextual meaning of the parable, that is, the meaning for Luke's community. Wright (1996:128) focuses on the quotation from Amos 9:11-12 as the central passage in Acts 15. Amos foretells that Yahweh's return will result in the rebuilding of David's dwelling, in order that *all other people* may seek him, even *all the Gentiles*. This quote seems to legitimise the Gentile mission. Esler (1987:105), however, argues that "the phrase 'the mission to the Gentiles' is something of a misnomer", as the Gentile mission had already been sanctioned (cf Gl 2:7). The main issue

is not the "Gentile mission" as such but rather the Gentiles becoming part of the "Christian" communities, that is sharing in table fellowship. From a conventional Israelite point of view, Israelites could only eat with Gentiles at the price of denying their *ethnos* and faith (see 6.2.1 above). It was this objection that constituted a major stumbling block to the spread of "Christianity" in the Diaspora, causing uncertainty within Luke's community (Lk 1:4). Esler (1987:93-109) advances the thesis that there was a stage early on in the spread of Christianity through the Diaspora when such fellowship was permissible. However, at some time in the middle of the first century there was a Judean reaction against this practice, prompted by Peter's action in Antioch (Gl 2:11-14). Acts 11 and 15 indicate that the believers in Jerusalem were never reconciled to Israelites eating with Gentiles in the "Christian" community. Against this background, the Cornelius narrative and subsequent council of Jerusalem play a prominent role in Luke's narrative, both being recorded in great detail. In the light of criticism of Israelite-Gentile table fellowship, the role played by Peter in these narratives is of central importance. Indeed Israelite-Gentile table fellowship is traced back to Peter himself, who - prompted by the vision in Joppa - ate with a Gentile, Cornelius. That not Gentile mission, but table fellowship is the main bone of contention, is confirmed by the complaint raised against Peter by members of the church in Jerusalem: "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them" (Ac 11:3). Also in Acts 15 the central issue, although not mentioned explicitly, is that of table fellowship. Again Peter is the main spokesman. The principle result of the council is that a reduced list of prohibitions would be imposed on the Gentiles (Ac 15:19-20). Esler (1987:106) comments that this list represented "the core of a compromise agreement" reached between Israelite and Christian believers, with the Gentiles undertaking to adhere to these listed prohibitions, and the Israelites in return re-establishing table-fellowship (see also Neyrey 1991b:382). The *restoration* of table-fellowship, that is both brothers joining in the celebrations, seems vital for Luke in order to legitimate and promote the commensality among

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the believers in his community, which consisted of both Israelites and Gentiles. The parable of "A Man Had Two Sons" forms part of the symbolic universe created by Luke. It challenges conventional perceptions of fellowship that were rooted in Israelite ethnicity.

We opened this chapter by arguing that not one of the sons, but the *father* is the main character in the parable. The parable is about a man who had two sons. Both sons shame their father to a point at which identification with them become near impossible. The younger son is an outright scoundrel, who breaks both with his family and religion, declaring his father to be dead. The elder son lives, as it seems, in accordance with familial and communal regulations, "never having disobeyed your command", but nevertheless mirrors the younger son in shaming his father. As a result, conventional categories of insider and outsider are blurred. Between the two sons stands the father, who has love and compassion for both. Conventional perceptions of forgiveness and repentance, indeed of God himself, are turned upside down. There is no talk of retribution or restoration. There is no talk of one being elected, the other being rejected. The father's love for both sons is unconditional. The two sons represent in code the two opposition groups that characterise Luke's narrative, at all levels of reading, both intratextually and extratextually. Being open-ended it constitutes a challenge to its audience to "enter" the house, join in the celebrations, and accept the all-inclusiveness of God's Kingdom. The dynamism of the parable is enhanced by placing it within the setting of first-century Mediterranean table-fellowship and by drawing on the repertoire of the two-sons motif. The parable is a classical example of how story telling, metaphorical and subversive in nature, can be used to challenge conventional views of God. In doing so the parable works for reconciliation.

CHAPTER 7: THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

7.1 The Rich, the Poor, and the Law

The obvious opposites with which Luke works in this particular parable (Lk 16:19-31), are those of the “rich” and the “poor”. Luke’s interest in the plight of the poor, accentuated in Lukan redactions, has been explored extensively and need not be repeated here (see, *inter alia*, Donahue 1988:174-176; Forbes 2000:228-233). Exploration of the relationship between this recurrent theme and that of the Law (Torah), however, has been largely neglected.

The link itself is provided by a number of sayings that directly precede the parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus” (Lk 16:14-18). The sayings are introduced by a rebuke of the Pharisees as “money lovers” (verse 14). Although the Pharisees pride themselves as being just before men, they are, in fact, detestable in God’s sight, God knowing what is in their heart. This rebuke is followed by a reference to the era of the “Law and the prophets” - which extended to the time of John (the Baptist). From this time onwards the Kingdom of God is being preached (verse 16). However, the new “era” of the Kingdom leads not to an abolition of the Law - the demands of the Law have rather been heightened by the radical demands of the Kingdom (verse 17). The final saying on divorce serves to confirm and to substantiate both the radical nature and the abiding validity of the Law (cf Donahue 1988:173-174). That these sayings provide a link between the plight of the poor (who suffer at the hands of the “money lovers”) and the demands of the Law, is not a new idea and has been noted by other scholars (see, *inter alia*, Forbes 2000:181). However the dynamics of the link have not been explored sufficiently and need further investigation.

A clue to the dynamics involved is provided by the rather harsh description of the Pharisees as “money lovers”. Scholars have noted that this description of the Pharisees scarcely coincides with what is historically known of them at the time of Jesus (see Moxnes 1988:1-9; Forbes 2000:301). Unlike the Sadducees

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and many scribes who belonged to the upper classes, the Pharisees represented a popular movement not known for its wealth. Instead of being “money lovers”, many Pharisees lived in relative poverty. An example is Hillel, who was poor and generous and most alert to the dangers of wealth (Forbes 2000:301). Inevitably those scholars who accepted the phrase “money lovers” as a historical fact, have proceeded to gather historical evidence to support this accusation. In studying these texts, however, Moxnes (1988:5) draws attention to two important issues: first, in no instance can it be proven that the accusations of greed are directed against the Pharisees as a historical group; and second, the accusations directed at the Pharisees are invariably “polemics and elaborations of traditional motifs” and not historical facts. Consequently, the historical question, “Were the Pharisees ‘lovers of money’?” needs to be rephrased in terms of the literary question, “What motivated Luke’s reference to the Pharisees as ‘lovers of money’?”

This new line of questioning takes into account two important perspectives. The first view focuses on the word *φιλάργροι* (money lovers). Moxnes (1988:6) argues that in addition to Israelite material Luke also had Greek material as part of the background to this accusation. “Greed” (*φιλαργυρία*) is frequently found in Hellenistic lists of vices and is also the core of the well-known maxim, quoted in 1 Timothy 6:10: “For the love of money (*φιλαργυρία*) is the root of all evil.” The combination of this vice with that of love for honour is traced back to Plato. Plato (*Republica* I.347; cf Moxnes 1988:6) argued that the “lovers of money” are unfit to rule the state. This is an interesting remark to which we will return below. Especially striking, however, is Luke’s use of the word *φιλαργυρία* in conjunction with the word *δικαίω*. With reference to various Hellenistic sources, Moxnes (1988:6) postulates that the accusation levelled at the Pharisees (that they were “lovers of money” and that they tried to “justify themselves”) echoes a popular theme in Hellenistic polemics against “false teachers”. A true teacher is someone who does not covet money or honour. This theme is clearly taken up by the

followers of Jesus to provide their readers with an example of the *opposite* of the ideal teacher (see Ac 20:33-34; 1 Th 2:5-6; 1 Tm 6:5; 2 Tm 3:2; Tit 1:11). As such, the reference to the Pharisees as “lovers of money” prepares the reader of Luke 16 for the challenge between Jesus, the “ideal teacher”, and the Pharisees, the “false teachers”. This coincides with the construction of Luke’s narrative as a whole, which is based on the tension between opposites, where the two main opposition groups are Jesus and his witnesses and the Israelite leaders and those who adopt their point of view.

The second perspective focuses on the literary function of wealth and riches in Luke’s Gospel. With reference to Luke Johnson’s book, *The literary function of possessions*, Donahue (1998:172-173) notes that in Luke’s Gospel wealth and possessions are used both literally and metaphorically. On the one hand, Luke is concerned about those that are (literally) poor and the (literal) dangers of wealth. On the other hand, however, Luke speaks of wealth in the metaphorical sense as a symbol of “power and dominance”. It is the latter reference that is important in order to understand the dynamics between rich and poor in Luke 16. The “rich” in the society that Luke describes were not only wealthy, but also belonged to the urban élite and were distanced from the ordinary peasant villagers. Notably, not all who were rich belonged to the élite. Certain merchants, toll-collectors, and “foreigners” had much wealth but nevertheless did not enjoy the status of the élite and remained outsiders. “Rich” and “poor” are therefore imprecise categories with which to describe ancient societies. More appropriate for the first-century Mediterranean is a distinction between “élite” and “non-élite” (Moxnes 1988:164). The (rich) élite, both within the narrative and within the contextual world of Luke’s narrative, were those who had power and influence. It has been argued above that Pharisees at the time of Jesus hardly fit the description of the rich (élite). At the time of Jesus they were first and foremost a faction in Israel primarily concerned with observing ritual purity and trying to influence the rest of Israel to do the same. Extratextually, however, in the

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contextual world of Luke's narrative, the dominant power belonged to the Pharisees, who after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, reorganised the Israelites under their leadership (see 4.4.1 above). It was this "world" that Luke tried to influence when telling his story. Using the Pharisees as a *topos* for those who had power and dominance may seem to a modern historian as a distortion of historical facts, but it coincides with the tradition of historical writing in Luke's time (Moxnes 1988:162). In this way, Luke made his narrative relevant to his readers. Green (1997:599) argues along similar lines: "[Luke is] providing his own polemical evaluation of them [the Pharisees] in a narrative aside." To substitute "Pharisees" in Luke 16:14 with the (more wealthy) "Sadducees", and to assume that the rich man in the parable is a Sadducee rather than a Pharisee, as Manson (cf Herzog 1994:117) proposes, is a case of mistaking narrative characterisation for historical reality.

These reflections on Luke's (metaphorical) characterisation counter any thoughts that the parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus" (Lk 16:19-31) provides the reader with a mere *moral* reflection on "rich" and "poor". Moxnes (1988:169) writes:

It is relatively easy to read the narratives [of Luke] as exhortations to benevolence and generosity towards the poor. This is a reading that can give instant gratification to the affluent. It is much more difficult to read them as stories empowering the poor, bringing liberations from the bonds of ideological dependency upon the wealthy. Both in the community described by Luke and in today's society, the structures of domination and exploitation by the powerful are in place, but the Gospel offers a liberation from the world view that legitimizes them.

Within Israel, the ideological dependence of the "poor" (the weak and the

vulnerable) is intrinsically related to the interpretation and the application of the Law of God that is motivated and enforced by the “rich” (the teachers and those who have power and influence over others). This explains the reference to the Law of God, both in the setting to the parable (“the Law and the prophets”; verse 16) and in the parable itself (“Moses and the prophets”; verses 29 and 31). It is made apparent that conventional views are to be *challenged* not only by the juxtaposition of “Pharisees” (as the false teachers) and “Jesus” (as the ideal teacher), but also by the placing of the parable within the social dynamics of “challenge-and-response” (cf Malina 1993:34-37). Verse 16 is the Pharisees’ challenge to Jesus (“The Pharisees ... sneered at Jesus”). This challenge paves the way for Jesus’ counterchallenge in verses 15-31 (“You are the ones justifying yourself before men....” followed by the parable) (cf Green 1997:599). Central to this challenge is the Law of God.

The importance of the Law of God within Israelite society is emphasised by the similarities between the parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus” and that of “The Good Samaritan” (see chapter 5 above). These similarities have largely been overlooked by scholars, who have instead drawn attention to the more obvious similarities between the parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus” and “A Man Had Two Sons” (see chapter 6 above). These include “*hunger, feasting, father/son, and clothing as a sign of honour/wealth*” (see Forbes 2000:180). The settings in which these two parables are told are also similar, with the “murmuring” of the Pharisees in Luke 15:2 corresponding with their “sneering” in Luke 16:14. One of the similarities between “The Rich Man and Lazarus” and “The Good Samaritan” is the “sneering” of the Pharisees in Luke 16:14 that corresponds to the lawyer “testing” Jesus in Luke 10:25. In both parables (10:29 and 16:15), the challenger is described as “justifying” himself, indicating that he is defending himself against a conventional position. This defensive feature is accentuated by the explicit reference to the Law, both in Luke 10:26-28 (“What is written in the Law ...”), and in Luke 16:16 (“The Law and the prophets”). The similarities

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between the parables are less obvious, but once again characters represent “insiders” and “outsiders”. In Luke 15, the Priest/Levite (insider) is juxtaposed with the Samaritan (outsider). In Luke 16, the rich man (insider) is juxtaposed with the poor man (outsider). The choice of characters within these Lukan parables is clearly not arbitrary. They determine the focus of Jesus’ challenge. The challenge itself is in each case directed towards a worldview, based on the “Law of God”, that legitimises division and separateness within different realms of Israelite society.

These reflections provide the impetus to explore further both conventional Israelite worldviews concerning the “rich” and the “poor”, and the legitimisation of these worldviews by the ruling élite. The “grand narrative” on wealth and poverty at the time of Jesus can be summarised as follows: wealth was a sign of divine blessing and Torah obedience; poverty was a sign of disobedience and divine wrath. This view is the essence of what can be termed Israelite “prosperity teaching”. Forbes (2000:299-303; see also Schmidt 1987:40-97) gives a helpful survey of this development. Hebrew Scriptures are characterised by both positive teaching and negative teaching on wealth. Within the positive approach, wealth is seen as a blessing of God (Gn 24:35; Dt 28:1-13; Jb 42:10-18; Ps 122:3; Ec 3:13). More often than not these blessings are qualified by the conditional clause: “If you obey the Lord your God ...” (cf Dt 28:1-2). Within this strand of teaching, wealth is also characterised as a mark of wisdom (Pr 14:20), and generally as good, if free from sin (Sir 13:34; 31:8). Within the negative strand of teaching, warnings are sounded against the folly of storing wealth (Ps 39:6; Ez 28:4-5; Zep 1:18; Sir 5:8). Wealth is severely condemned when it has been gained unjustly (Pr 10:2; Sir 5:8), or when it undermines concern for the poor (Ps 10:2-4; Am 4:1-3; 6:1-7; Sir 13:4).

Both these strands of teaching are still evident in the writings of the Qumran community and subsequently in rabbinical writings. Forbes (2000:300-302) shows that in the Qumran community, the number of disparaging descriptions of wealth,

especially of the wealth of the community's wicked opponents (1QS 11.1-2; CD 8.4-7; 1QH 10.25; 1QpHab 8.9-12; 12.10) exceeds the number of positive descriptions. However, the exact opposite trend is found in the rabbinical writings, culminating in a definite strand of "prosperity teaching". Forbes (2000:302) cites among others the following examples:

Beauty and strength and riches and honour and wisdom and old age and grey hairs and children are comely to the righteous and comely to the world. (*m. Ab.* 6.8)

For poverty comes nor from a man's craft, nor riches from a man's craft, but all is according to *merit*. (*m. Qid. [Kidd.]* 4.14)

Rab on concluding his prayer added the following: May it be Thy will, O Lord our God, to grant us long life, a life of peace, a life of good, a life of blessing, a life of sustenance, a life of bodily vigour, a life in which there is not fear of sin, a life free from shame and confusion, a life of riches and honour, a life in which we may be filled with love of Torah and the fear of heaven, a life in which Thou shalt fulfil all the desires of our heart for good? (*b. Ber.* 16b)

What is notable in these quotations is the relationship that is created between riches (wealth) and a life of Torah obedience ("the righteous", "merit", "love of the Torah") leading to an implicit conclusion that poverty is the direct result of Torah disobedience. This mind-set is further established by the lack of passages (in contrast to Jesus' teachings) which praise the poor, and by the presence of a number of passages that clearly denounce poverty as a curse (*Exod. R.* 31.12; *b. Ned.* 64b; see also *b. Ket.* 50a; 67b; *y. Pe'ah* 15b; cf Forbes 2000:302). Although the rabbinical sources quoted by Forbes date from a post-Scriptural period, there

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is evidence in the Gospel narratives that this mind-set was firmly entrenched during the first century CE. Such evidence is, for example, provided by the dismayed response of Jesus' disciples to the "camel through the eye of a needle" pronouncement (Lk 18:26; Mk 10:31). The mind-set, as Forbes (2000:303) notes, seems to have been, "*If the rich (who we thought were blessed by God) cannot be saved, then who can?*" The striking division caused by this conventional first-century Israelite mind-set is significant for our purpose, and is the essence of Jesus' challenge.

An issue that has not yet been addressed is that of the legitimising of this mind-set. As already noted, ideological legitimisation in Israel was intrinsically bound to the interpretation of the Law. The complexity of legitimisation is compounded by the perception of "limited goods" in ancient societies (cf Malina 1993:90-116). Taken at face value, "prosperity teaching" and the "accumulation of wealth" are exclusive notions. The former justifies wealth as a divine gift from God, the latter condemns the accumulation of wealth. The exclusivity of these notions rests, of course, on the assumption that the accumulation of wealth occurs at the expense of another person. "Rightful" accumulation of wealth would have been such that it was publicly visible as a blessing from God, as would be the case with a plentiful harvest after good rains. When, however, the accumulation of wealth was not obvious to the public eye, legitimisation was needed to confirm that wealth was indeed the result of divine blessing.

The above remarks further clarify the dynamics of a society with limited goods. In such a society all goods were available in limited amounts and were already (justly) distributed. Therefore, when one person improved his social position, this improvement was inevitably seen to occur at the expense of another person. In the first-century Mediterranean world, no honourable person would, therefore, seek to increase his wealth. A person who increased his wealth was inevitably labelled "greedy", and would be branded a thief, as evidenced by a fourth-century proverb that says: "Every rich person is a thief or the heir of a thief"

(Malina 1993:104). Instead of increasing his wealth, a honourable person would endeavour to *maintain* his given social status.

Status was generally not acquired through hard work, but was derived rather from birth, with every person having the basic right to fulfill his or her inherited role (see Malina and Rohrbaugh 1992:309-311; Malina 1993:97). One way social status was preserved was by entering into a dyadic contract (see Malina 1993:100). Such a contract was based on an informal principle of reciprocity: "I do something for you and you do something for me in return!" This contract was either between colleagues (of equal social status), or between a patron and a client (of unequal social status). In both cases the contract involved no legal contractual obligation, nor was it enforceable by any authority, but was based solely on one's sense of honour and of shame (Malina 1993:28-62). In a patron-client contract the "rich" (an urban élite) could provide work and food for the "poor" (a villager or urban non-élite) in return for public praise. Although these contracts were not overtly initiated by one party, which would have been dishonourable behaviour, but either "just happened" or were brokered by a third party, villagers and urban non-élite believed that they had a "right" to these contracts. This belief was based on the right one had to maintain one's social status (given to one by God), which in turn included the right to adequate subsistence (Malina 1993:100). In view of the challenge posed by Jesus' parables, this is important. The point of conflict between "rich" and "poor" in first-century Palestine was neither status nor wealth. The chasm separating the élite from the non-élite caused little concern to the non-élite as long as they could interact with the élite in a patron-client relationship. It was only when the right to adequate subsistence was lost, that the non-élites would rebel. Such rebellion was not in order to gain greater status, but to regain a basic level of subsistence.

The basic right to adequate subsistence is reflected in numerous passages in the Hebrew Scriptures (cf Ex 22:25-27; Lv 19:9-10; Dt 14:28-29; Is 10:1-2; Ez 22:29; Am 2:6-8). These passages denounce the exploitation of the poor and the

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needy, that is, the failure to allow the poor to maintain their status and/or to maintain a basic level of subsistence. The term "poor" does not, strictly speaking, refer to those of low status, but to those who, as the result of some unfortunate event, such as the death of a spouse, famine, debt, living in a foreign country or physical accident, can no longer maintain their inherited status (cf Malina 1993:105-106).

In the light of the basic right to adequate subsistence, the question arises: How was poverty to the extent that a person was subjected to beggary justified in a society of limited goods, where subsistence was socially entrenched as a basic right? Most interpreters of the parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus" seek to answer the "what" question: *What* caused Lazarus to be a beggar? In describing the fate of the poor man in this parable, Herzog (1994:119), for example, proceeds to reconstruct a string of probable unfortunate events that could have led to Lazarus' misfortune. Of interest to us, however, is not the *cause* of his poverty, but the social and religious legitimisation of his poverty.

Although Herzog (1994) does not discuss this aspect in his exposition of "The Rich Man and Lazarus", he provides us with the necessary clues. In discussing the different classes within an agrarian society, Herzog (1994:58-59) highlights the important role played by priestly retainers in order to justify the emergent social order. The agrarian ruler who seized control had to have his rule institutionalised and legitimised. Central to this process of legitimisation were the priests who tended the temple, the religious institution of a particular society. It was their task to produce an ideology that would motivate people to pay tribute to the rulers so that the rulers could maintain their wealth. The priests, in turn, were exempt from paying state tribute and were allowed to maintain themselves by introducing their own forms of taxation. Despite high state taxation, priests introduced temple taxation and other forms of tribute, so as to share in the wealth redistributed through tribute. Needless to say, the purpose of taxation was not to provide social well-being but rather to enhance one's own status. Malina (1988:4)

writes: “As a rule patron-client societies are extensive and extractive; leadership is concerned with plundering rather than developing, taxation exists for the benefit of the élite, not for the common good.”

As already noted, the development of an appropriate ideology in Israel was directly and inseparably connected to the interpretation of the Torah (the “Law and the prophets”). With reference to Fernando Belo, Herzog (1994:94, 179-184) distinguishes two codes in the Torah, the “debt code” and the “purity code”. The debt code originated with the confession that all land belongs to God. Therefore, all people living and working on the land are “indebted” to God (Ex 19:15; Lv 25:23). The debt code was based on the principle of “extension” (Herzog 1994:94). The surplus produce generated by the land was to be “extended” and shared by all. The ideal of the debt code is expressed in Deuteronomy 15:4-5: the hope that there would be no poor in Israel if the principle of extension were observed. The more one received, the more one was to give. The principle of extension is, however, characterised by an inner tension: on the one hand, it serves to prevent the coveting of material possessions, but on the other hand it engenders the desire to own more. As such, the formulators of the Torah’s debt code recognised the importance and the right to sustained an adequate subsistence for all, but at the same time were not prepared to forfeit any of their privileges. In fact, as Herzog (1994:94) writes, by the first century they “were not only powerless to impede its momentum in the life of Israel but had become its allies and retainers” (Herzog 1994:94). This was done, as will be shown, by interpreting the debt code as a function of the purity code.

The purity code originated out of the concept of God’s holiness (see also 4.5.2 above). Because God is holy, God’s people were to strive to be holy as well. This striving towards holiness found its expression in a number of “purity regulations” advanced by the Pharisees. The basic principle of the purity code was that of “demarcation”. All spheres of life were “demarcated” into clean and unclean, pure or polluted, sacred and profane. These symbolic lines needed to

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be drawn to perceive “set-apartness”, to distinguish the insider from the outsider (Malina 1993:152). Uncleanliness could be contracted in many ways. Under the leadership of the Pharisees the purity codes were applied to all spheres of life. Persons could be rendered unclean because they had physical defects, were sick, had not followed proper slaughtering procedures, had eaten unclean or non-tithed food, and had failed to pay the tithe and other forms of temple taxation. Many peasants, already living at a subsistence level and facing heavy Roman taxation, could not meet the additional requirements of temple taxation (on tithes and taxes see Sanders 1992:146-169). Despite the fact that peasants were heavily taxed, temple authorities were not prepared to lessen the burden on the peasants. In fact, Pharisaic scribes applied the debt code (as they did the purity code) to *all* spheres of life, including the table and the household (Herzog 1994:183). Whereas however state taxation could be compelled, temple taxation needed to be motivated. This was done by negatively labelling the peasants who avoided temple tribute as enemies of the Torah. Peasants unable to meet the set requirements were ostracised, shunned, and vilified by the temple authorities. Herzog (1994:182) writes:

Unable to meet their tithing obligations they [the peasants] were depicted as unwilling to fulfill the requirements of the redemptive media. Once they had been labelled, their further exploitation and degradation were made easier; they were no longer the people of God, whose covenant with Yahweh resided in their patrimonial plot of land, but rebellious reprobates, whose refusal to pay their tithes threatened the well-being of the land.

In short, by failing to meet the debt code, peasants were declared unclean. Once unclean they remained forever in debt. Instead of being an institution of extension, the temple had become an institution of accumulation. Debt itself was

a form of impurity.

These analyses present a probable scenario by which to explain how the poor who failed to preserve their inherited status could degenerate to the social level of beggary and dispensability. Conversely, it shows how the rich could justifiably ignore the plight of the poor, since their state of impurity excluded them from temple society and disqualified them as objects of neighbourly love to whom the extension code applied. The parables of “The Good Samaritan”, “A Man Had Two Sons”, and “The Rich Man and Lazarus” present different scenarios but common to all is a conventional Israelite mind-set, underscored by a Pharisaic interpretation of the Torah, that distinguishes between insiders and outsiders and promotes and justifies separateness. It is a world that is challenged and turned upside down by the subversiveness of Luke’s metaphorical stories. Challenged in the parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus” is not wealth as such, but the ideology that professes wealth as a blessing of God despite the failure to show mercy to the poor and needy, the very core of God’s Law.

7.2 The Parable

The exposition of the parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus” will fall into two parts. The first part presents a reflection on common folklore concerning “rich” and “poor”, the second part is an analysis of the text in Luke 16:19-31.

7.2.1 Common folklore and the unity of the parable

Influential in the interpretation of “The Rich Man and Lazarus” (Lk 16:19-31) has been Greßmann’s (cf Grundmann 1978:325-236) study of Egyptian and Israelite folk-tales as possible sources of the parable. The oldest one is an Egyptian tale which will have found its way into Israelite folklore via Alexandrian Israelites (Jeremias [1963] 1984:123). The Egyptian tale is narrated by Si-Osiris who is reincarnated and sent by Osiris, the ruler of the realm of the dead (Amnte), to confute a powerful Ethiopian magician (see Scott 1990:156; Forbes 2000:182).

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The part of the tale that parallels the Lukan parable relates to a remark made by the father of Si-Osiris, who observes the loud wailing (a means of honouring the dead) and the magnificent decorations of a rich man's funeral procession, and by contrast, the humble burial of a poor man. His remark expresses the wish that he would also like to enjoy the fate of the rich man in the life to come. However, Si-Osiris conducts him through the halls of Amnte in order to convince him of his error. The conducted tour reveals a reversal of fortunes: The rich man is in torment while the poor man is clothed in the rich man's burial outfit. The reason given is that in each case the evil deeds had been weighed against the good deeds. In the case of the poor man it had been found that his good deeds were more numerous than his evil deeds, and vice versa for the rich man.

Greßmann (in Grundmann 1978:325-326; cf Scott 1990:156) identified seven Israelite stories all belonging to the same family tree as the Egyptian tale. The earliest and the most well-known version, recorded in the Palestinian Talmud, tells of two holy men and a village toll-collector (see Scott 1990:157 for a translation of the full story). When one of the holy men died, he was not properly mourned. When however the toll-collector died, his death was mourned by many. When the surviving holy man expresses his shock, the deceased holy man appears to him in a dream. The apparent unfairness of the events are explained to him. The failure to mourn the holy man's death properly (bringing shame on him and on his family) is traced back to a solitary (unintended) "error" committed by him (a blot in an otherwise faultless life). In contrast, the well mourned funeral of the toll-collector is explained by an event in which the toll-collector provided food for the poor after town councillors had turned down his invitation to a banquet (a friendship creating act in an otherwise unmeritorious life). In another dream, depicting the afterlife, the roles of the two men are shown to be reversed. Whereas the deceased holy man walks amongst the gardens, orchards, and fountains of water in Paradise, Ma'jan, the toll-collector, is seen with his tongue hanging out, unable to quench his thirst.

Scholars have without failure identified the “reversal of roles” in the afterlife as the common motif of this story tradition: Those who enjoy honour on earth (depicted by the glory of a funeral with many mourners) are punished in the afterlife; and those who suffer shame on earth (depicted by a humble funeral not well mourned) are exalted thereafter. But generally overlooked have been the reasons put forward for the reversal of roles. In both stories related above the reward in the afterlife is directly related to the person’s piety, that is, his good deeds. Notably in the Israelite story tradition, the person whose many good deeds outweigh his solitary error is depicted as a holy man, that is, a scribe (a functionary of the temple, well educated in the Torah, and scrupulous in adhering to its regulations). The story is thus not confined to a juxtaposition of the “rich” and the “poor” per se, but the “rich”, the “poor” and the “Law” (see 7.1 above). The underlying principle is: He who does what the “Law” says, even if he should be shamed in this life, will receive glory and just reward in the afterlife. That the faithful within Israel are rewarded in proportion to their piety was recognised as one of the core elements of conventional Israelite wisdom. This is further attested by a number of rabbinic parables and their commentaries, cited by Knowles (2000:301-302) in his exposition of the parable of “The Workers in the Vineyard” (Mt 20:1-16). Rabbi Tarfon (c 50-120 CE), a contemporary both of Matthew and Luke, writes: “If you have studied much in the Law, much reward will be given you; and faithful is the taskmaster who will pay you the reward of your labour” (*m. Ab.* 2.16; cf Knowles 2000:302). The same conviction is echoed by Rabbi Abika (second century CE): “The world is judged by grace, yet all is according to the excess of works” (*m. Ab.* 3.17; cf Knowles 2000:302). The reversals that do take place in the afterlife are therefore without fail directly related to piety, that is, adherence to the Law. This aspect is important in analysing the subversiveness of Luke’s metaphorical story.

There is no consensus among scholars whether or to what degree the parable in Luke’s Gospel made use of the common folklore motif discussed above.

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Recently various scholars have called its use into question. Forbes (2000:183), for example, draws attention to a number of *differences*: (1) The Rich Man and Lazarus are in some form of relationship with one another; (2) there is no emphasis on the difference in burials(!); (3) the good deeds/bad deeds theme is absent; and (4) there is no tour of the underworld. Although the differences may rightly question direct "dependency" on the folktales, they do not disqualify its use as a means to capture the audience's initial attention. Indeed if, as we have argued, Luke's stories are subversive in nature, differences in detail (also unexpected twists and turns) are to be expected. Hultgren (2000:111) pays no attention to the folklore owing to the late composition date of the known Israelite versions (all dated later than the New Testament). The parable is seen to be a creation in its own right, not a replica of any folktale. The similarities, however, can hardly be overlooked. And even if most Israelite versions are of a later date, the use of "a folkloric motif" remain probable. What is critical, however, is not the use of this folkloric motif as such, but the conventional mind-set reflected in these tales, with its "roots" dating back to an earlier period.

Much has been written on the division of the parable into two distinctive (and unrelated) parts. Indeed, the parable has often been read as two parables in one. Invariably this division is traced back to the folkloric material discussed above. Rudolf Bultmann ([1921] 1995:193, 213) distinguished between verses 19-26, based on the Egyptian and Israelite folktales relating the reversal of fortunes in the afterlife, and verses 17-31, which arose from an Israelite tradition forbidding to ask God for miracles (signs) to augment the Torah and the Prophets (cf Dt 30:11-14). Scholars have not always agreed with the specifics of Bultmann's argument (Herzog 1994:114-115). Whereas Bultmann ([1921] 1995:212-213) assigned both parts of the parable to "Jewish tradition", Crossan (1973:66-67) ascribed the second part of the parable to the "early church". Crossan's argument, in which he is closely followed by Scott (1990:142-143), is based on a number of affinities with the resurrection account of Jesus in Luke 24: (1) The recurring

theme of disbelief (Lk 16:30; 24:12, 25, 41), (2) the repeated reference to “Moses and the prophets” (Lk 16:29, 21; 24:27, 44), (3) the use of the verb ἀνίστημι in unison with “from the dead” (Lk 16:31; 24:26). Doing historical Jesus research, both Crossan (1973:66-67) and Scott (1990:146) therefore reject the second part of the parable as authentic Jesus material. Their analysis is restricted to part one (verses 16-26) which is seen to constitute the core parable. Jeremias ([1963] 1984:123) in turn had argued that the second part (verses 27-31) were added by Jesus as an epilogue to the folkloric material (verses 16-26). For Jeremias ([1963] 1984:123) the folkloric material is incidental, the true emphasis of the parable lying in the second part. The parable is therefore not about the rich man and Lazarus, but rather about the “six brothers” and the “challenge of the hour.”

The consequence of this approach is apparent. Having assumed the division of the parable into two parts, the focus falls either on one or the other part, each part expressing distinctive messages (cf Herzog 1994:115). Since our focus falls on the metaphorical stories in *Luke*, that is, as they have been transmitted by Luke, it is our endeavour to read the parable as a unit. This does not exclude the possibility that the two parts of the parable can be traced back to different sources. The structural and stylistic analysis of the parable by Crossan (1973:66-67) and Scott (1989:142-143) indicate that the second part may indeed have been a Lukan composition. As such, the second part of the parable provides the key to the way Luke intended the parable to be understood. There is, however, little doubt that Luke intended the two parts to be read together. Bultmann ([1921] 1995:193) who clearly distinguished two parts, notes that Luke in his introduction to the parable (the “sayings” in verses 14-18) clearly prepares the reader on the “punch line” of *both parts* of the parable. In order to gain access to “Luke’s story”, it is therefore imperative to read the entire narrative, verses 19-31, as a unit. Such a reading is further enhanced by at least two important factors, noted by Forbes (2000:182-183) - the latter of the two being a feature which we have repeatedly identified as characteristic of the Lukan metaphorical stories: (1) verses 27-31 provide the

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audience with a “justification” of the reversal of fortunes described in verses 19-26; and (2) verses 27-31 shift the focus away from a pure *description* of the afterlife to the earthly situation, enabling the parable to proceed with a *challenge* centred on an everyday issue.

7.2.2 Parable exposition

In typical Lukan style the parable proceeds with a description of opposites (verses 19-21):

A certain *man was rich*, and he put on purple and fine linen, making merry every day sumptuously.

A certain *poor man* by the name Lazarus has been placed at his gate, being full of sores and desiring to be fed from the scraps that fell from the table of the rich man.

The two main characters, the “rich man” and the “poor man” constitute the two extremes within an advanced agrarian society. Reference to a “gate” indicates that the setting is that of a preindustrial city, possibly, as will be argued below, a metaphorical reference to Jerusalem itself.

As already indicated above (see 7.1) an advanced agrarian society was in essence two-tiered, an upper class of élite and a lower class of non-élite (for a graphical representation see Lenski, Lenski & Nolan 1991:196; see also Herzog 1994:53-73; Stegemann & Stegemann 1997:74). The upper class constituted only between two to five percent of the population. It consisted of the ruler, the ruling class, retainers, and a few merchants. The lower class consisted of peasants, artisans, merchants, the lower members of the retainer class, the unclean and degraded, and at the very bottom the “expendables”. The wealth distribution between these two classes was enormous. All land, for example, was owned by the rich upper class, who however never themselves worked the land itself. The

land was rented out and worked by the peasants. As the main goal of the élite was to maximise the yield on their land in order to enrich themselves, exploitation of the peasants was pushed to the limit (see Herzog 1994:64-65). The inevitable result was that the rich became richer and the poor became poorer.

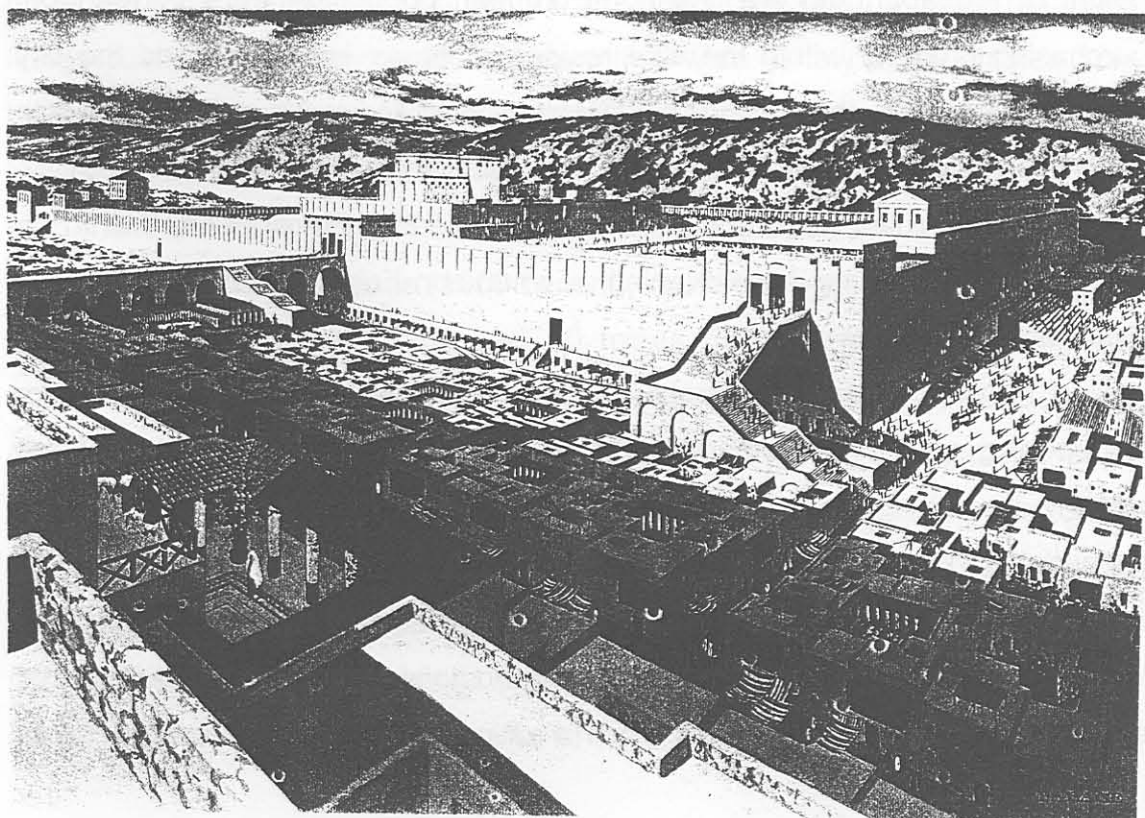
In their description of the lower class, Stegemann and Stegemann (1997:73-74, 88-92) distinguish between the relatively poor (πένητες) and the absolute poor (πτωχοί), the latter being the term used for the “poor man” in the parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus”. From an economic perspective the relatively poor are defined as those who on the basis of their property or income still managed to provide the necessary subsistence for themselves and their families. This group could vary from relatively poor to relatively rich. The absolute poor, however, were those who lived *below* the subsistence level. Stegemann and Stegemann (1997:91) write: “Sie haben Hunger und Durst, nur Fetzen am Leibe, sind ohne Unterkunft und Hoffnung. Für das Nötigste zum Leben sind sie auf die Hilfe anderer angewiesen: etwa durch Betteln.” Van Aarde (1996:953) also draws attention to the social distinction made between the πένητες as the “respectable poor” and the πτωχοί as the “unrespectable poor”. Although the distinction is based primarily on economic factors as defined above (see also Scheffler 1993:60-63), the designation of the πτωχοί as the “unrespectable poor” reveals an underlying dimension which extends beyond economic factors, namely that those belonging to this group constitute a “subculture” (Van Aarde 1996:953-954). The term “subculture” indicates a classification of a person below any recognised social category, culminating in forms of social labelling which deprives the said person any social identity. He or she is a “nobody”, the social identity of a nonperson, such as a dog or a pig.

In search of food, “the poor” were inevitably drawn to the large cities, where the élite lived. But just as society in general was split into two distinguishable parts, so were the large cities (cf Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:368-369; Malina 1993:90-94). The city centres, like that of Jerusalem, were dominated by the

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temple and the palace. Around the temple and the palace lived the élite, many of whose members held positions in the administrative and religious institutions. They were the ones who had power and influence over others. In Jerusalem, these included the priests and the scribes who were tasked with the fulfilment of the sacred Scriptures. With the rich living in and around the city centre, the rest of the population lived at the city's outer limits, the poorest frequently being walled-off. Beggars, prostitutes, people with other undesirable occupations, as well as the landless peasants who drifted to the cities in search of day-labouring opportunities, lived outside the city walls. Locked out during the night, they only gained access to the city during the day.

Crossan and Reed (2001:201) provide a reconstructed picture of the temple mount in Jerusalem, viewed from the Upper City, the living quarters of the élite (see picture below). It shows clearly how the Upper City was segregated from the Lower City - the Lower City extending up the Tyropean Valley between the Temple Mount and the Upper City. From the verandas of their mansions (see the



reconstruction of a wealthy priest's home in Jerusalem's Upper City in Crossan & Reed 2001:213), the Jerusalem élite had a perfect view of the temple, the peasantry living in the Lower City almost hidden from their view. The pilgrims entered the temple either through the "Double Gate" (to the south), or around the corner (to the west, opposite the Upper City) through a huge staircase that led to the esplanade above (Crossan & Reed 2001:201). A striking feature is the "causeway" (pictured in the background) which joined the Upper City of the elites to the temple mount. The causeway made it possible for the élite to enter the temple without passing through the Lower City (although a set of stairs also led from the Lower City to the Upper City - see map in Rosseau & Arav 1995:149). Not pictured in the Crossan and Reed's reconstructed image of Jerusalem are the city walls (see map below, page 320), beyond which the poorest, the πτωχοί and others lived, well "fenced off" from the élite.

Being a South African one cannot but notice a slight resemblance between the preindustrial city and that of many large cities in South Africa. During the height of the apartheid era, the non-European population were barred from purchasing property within the élite residential areas in and around the city centres. As a result, the outskirts of most cities, even today, are still cluttered with the townships of the poor. Although the poor could enter the cities during the day, apartheid laws ruled that the city sectors of the "rich" (Europeans) had to be vacated at a given time in the evening, at when non-Europeans had to return to their residential areas.

This description of a typical pre-industrial city provides the social script for the opening stanza of the parable (verses 19-21). The rich man is not just wealthy, he belongs to the urban élite. The poor man is a beggar, that is, an expendable. The "rich man" is not named, nor is his position in the élite revealed. For the interpretation of the parable, his actual position or identity is not important. He serves as a "code" for those who are rich and dominate. The rich man's social status is exemplified by his clothing and his eating habits. He is dressed in purple

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and fine linen. Purple and linen signify not only wealth but also royal power (Scott 1990:148). Both are mentioned in Revelations 18:12 as cargoes shipped by merchants around the Mediterranean. Clothes coloured with Tyrian purple dye, was a rarity and a striking luxury. Similarly the manufacturing of white linen was extremely time-consuming and costly (Green 1997:605). As a result, a white tunic under a purple robe, signified royalty. This dress code was often imitated by the rich (cf Jdg 8:26; Es 8:15). To demonstrate his royal claim, the revolutionary Simon bar Giora, for example, wore purple and fine linen (Stegemann & Stegemann 1997:80). Fine linen is also ascribed to royalty by Jesus. When asked to describe John (the Baptist), Jesus poses the rhetorical question: Do people expect to see somebody in the desert with fine linen? The answer given by him is that those who dress in fine clothes and live in luxury, live in palaces (cf Lk 7:24-25).

The verb ἐϋφραίνομαι is used by Luke in two other parables (12:19; 15:23, 24, 32) and means “to make a feast” (Scott 1990:149). Extravagant feasts or banquets were common among the rich (cf Green 1997:605). At such banquets it was customary to provide the guests with a wide variety of vegetables from beyond Israel's borders. Meat was restricted to the banquets of the very rich. Stegemann and Stegemann (1997:79-80) draw attention to an interesting tract from the Talmud, in which food regulations depend upon the citizen's wealth: Someone who had 10 minas (1000 denarii), could eat vegetables each day (in addition to his bread). If he had 50 minas (5000 denarii), he could eat approximately 450 grams of meat on the Sabbath. A person who had 1000 denarii could eat this amount each day. The feast of the rich man in the parable is not only sumptuous, but takes place “every day”, placing the man at the very top of the social scale. Needless to say, the rich man is potentially a patron, upon whom society at large is dependent (Scott 1990:149). The rich man's excessive richness, however, also call to mind the “extension code” of the Hebrew Scriptures, according to which surplus of the produce in Israel should be shared

by all.

The extravagance of the rich man (verse 19) is contrasted with the lowly state of Lazarus, the poor man (verses 20-21). This contrast is drawn as strongly as possible, and is further stressed by setting the descriptions in parallel:

rich man	dressed in purple and fine line (verse 19a)
poor man	full of sores (verse 20b)
rich man	making merry sumptuously (verse 19b)
poor man	longing to be satisfied from the things falling from the table (verse 21a)

Whereas the rich man's description places him at the top of the social scale, the poor man's description places him at the very bottom. He is a beggar (πτωχός), unable to care for himself, dependent on the support of the rich (Scott 1990:150; Herzog 1994:118-119). His helplessness is accentuated in verse 21b by the phrase that he "was laid" at the gate where the dogs came and licked his sores. The Greek verb ἐβέβλητο, the perfect passive of βάλλω, is often used to depict a person confined to a sickbed (Hultgren 2000:112; cf Mt 8:6, 14; Mk 7:30).

The poor man "was full of sores" (verse 20b). This phrase in itself does not suggest that he was leper, as lepers were confined to remote places outside the city walls (Lv 13:46). But he was, as the verb ἐλκόομαι indicates, "ulcerated" (Forbes 2000:186). According to Israel purity regulations, any skin disorder rendered a person unclean and as such not fit to offer sacrifice (Malina 1993:166; cf Lv 21:18-20). Thus it is that mention of the poor man's sores immediately evokes a sense of dissociation.

Although the rich man feasted sumptuously each day, the poor man waiting for the scraps from the rich man's table, remained unsatisfied (verse 21a). This is indicated by the present participle ἐπιθυμῶν and recalls a similar phrase describing the plight of the younger son in the parable of "A Man Had Two Sons"

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(cf Lk 15:16). Various commentators make reference to the practice of the rich of using loaves of bread as napkins, which after use were tossed out (cf Herzog 1994:118; Green 1997:606). Hultgren (2000:112) notes that no evidence has been provided for this use. If however this practice can be substantiated, it would provide just another form of conspicuous consumption that turned the necessities of life into throwaways for the rich (Herzog 1994:118). What we have here is a stark contrast between the sumptuous feasts of the rich man and the unsatisfied hunger of the poor man.

The dogs that came to lick the poor man's sores (verse 21b) have elicited a great range of comment. It is clear that this reference is not intended to raise feelings of compassion for the poor man, but rather to draw attention to a further abuse intensifying his deprivation. With regard to the identity of the dogs two possibilities are put forward (see Herzog 1994:118-119; Forbes 2000:187-188). They are either domestic animals belonging to the rich man or strays, "pariahlike mongrels that roamed the outskirts of town in search of refuse" (Green 1997:606). If they were domestic animals, the ironic point is being made that the dogs were allowed into the banquet hall after the guests had departed to eat the scraps, the poor man remaining *outside* unable to satisfy his hunger. If so, the poor man is pictured as less than a human being. More likely, however, is that the dogs were wild street animals. This would further underscore both the vulnerability of the poor man (not able to fend them) and his unclean and profane state. Being abandoned and exposed to scavenging dogs was gross indignity as evidenced by the words spoken to Ahab by Elijah: "Thus says the Lord: In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, dogs will also lick up your blood" (1 Ki 21:19; see also Ps 16:4; 22:16, 20; Jr 5:3; Phlp 3:2; Rv 22:15). In the mind-set of conventional Israelite wisdom, the description of the poor man's wounds being licked by stray dogs renders him unclean, an outcast through-and-through, unrighteous, one who belongs to the heathens, rejected by God.

Notably there is a "gate" that separates the two men (verse 20a). The gate

is used metaphorically to convey not only one, but a number of related images. The images feature at different levels of reading and fluctuate ambiguously from one meaning to the other. Each image however serves to further contrast the rich and the poor. First, the “gate” is a figure of speech denoting the urban élite. Within the large cities of the preindustrial world the houses of the rich were often walled. At night the gates were closed, to prevent the poor and other unwelcome intruders trespassing upon the space of the rich (cf (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:378). As such, the gate serves as a boundary marker, symbolising not only the urban élite as such, but also the social barrier that separated the élite from the poor (cf Scott 1990:150). Although living in relatively close proximity to one another, the gate kept the urban élite and the poor apart, furthering division and separateness.

As a metaphor, the gate also recalls the important theme of “judgement”, a theme central to this parable (cf Herzog 1994:121). The elders of Israel sat at the “gate” to adjudicate on the Torah (see Gn 22:15; 25:7; Am 5:10, 12, 15; Zch 8:16; cf De Vaux 1978:152-155). As such, the gate alludes not only to the entrance to an élite mansion, but also to that of a city. Although the difference is obvious, *both* references resonate in the parable. The gate recalls the harsh criticism in the Hebrew Scriptures directed at Israel’s leaders in the light of their continued abuse of and injustice to the poor. Most striking is Amos’ charge (Am 5:12, 15):

For I know your many transgressions,
and your sins are numerous -
you oppress the righteous; you take a bribe,
you push aside *the poor in the gate* ...

Hate evil and love good, and establish justice *in the gate*.

In this passage the gate is a symbol of Israelite injustice to the poor. Although the

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Israelite leaders were entrusted with adjudications on the Torah as the righteous will of God for his people, they were invariably more concerned with the advantages they themselves could gain. Hellmuth Frey (1965:109) comments:

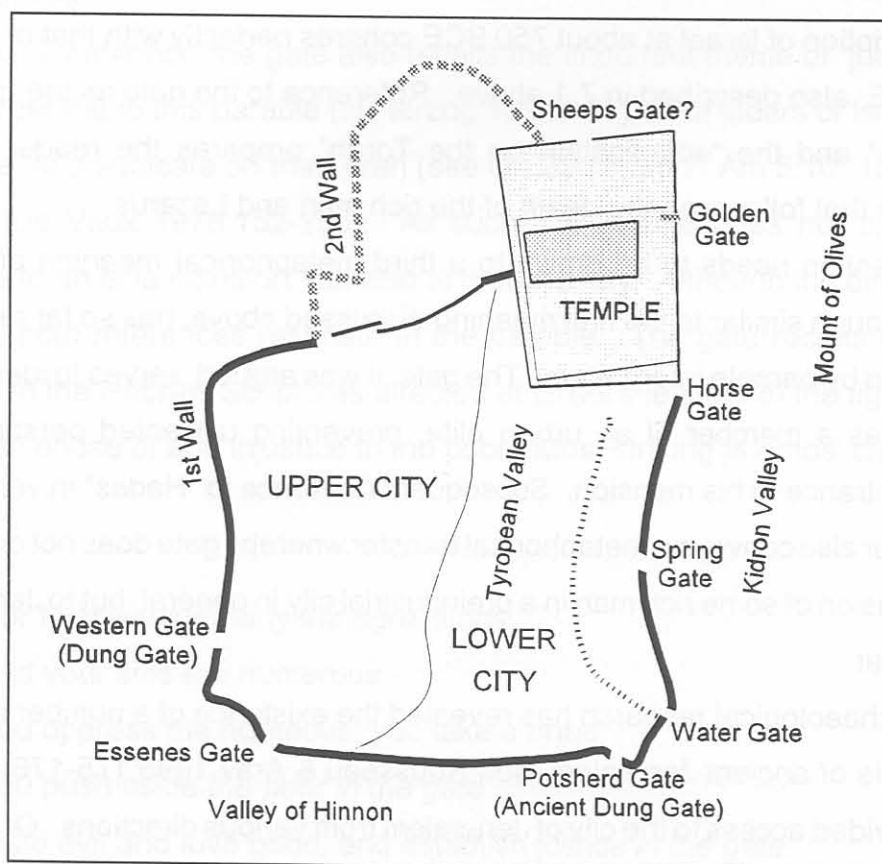
Das *schielen* auf den eigenen *Vorteil*, das sich Aufschließen für Bestechung aller Art und das *Schauen auf den Menschen treibt in den Schein* und *macht blind für die Wahrheit und das Recht* [...] Solche Bestimmtheit durch den Blick auf Menschen *zerreißt die Gemeinschaft* in Klassen, Welten und Gruppen; in solche, die *Macht* haben, auf der einen Seite, und die *Armen*, Geringen und Demütigen [...] auf der anderen Seite.

This description of Israel at about 750 BCE coheres perfectly with that of the first century CE, also described in 7.1 above. Reference to the gate as the “place of judgement” and the “adjudication on the Torah” prepares the reader for the judgement that follows on the death of the rich man and Lazarus.

Attention needs to be drawn to a third metaphorical meaning of “gate”, which although similar to the first meaning discussed above, has so far remained unexplored by parable interpreters. The gate, it was argued, serves to identify the rich man as a member of an urban élite, preventing unwanted persons from gaining entrance to his mansion. Subsequent reference to “Hades” in verses 23-26 however also conveys a metaphorical transfer whereby gate does not only refer to the mansion of some rich man in a preindustrial city in general, but to Jerusalem in particular.

Archaeological research has revealed the existence of a number of gates in the walls of ancient Jerusalem (see Rousseau & Arav 1995:175-176). These gates provided access to the city of Jerusalem from various directions. Of interest to us is the imagery and allusions associated with the “Dung Gate”. In the writings of the first-century no gate is referred to by this particular name. However, the

existence of an ancient “Dung Gate” in the south wall of Jerusalem is evidenced in the writings of Nehemiah (2:13; 3:13-14; 12:31). The name surfaces again during the Ottoman Period (1517-1918 CE). Suliman the Magnificent (1520-66) rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and set six gates in the wall (Murphy-O’Connor 1998:5, 13). One of the gates set in the Western Wall (originally only a postern, widened after the Second World War) carried the Arabic name Bab-elMagharbeth, the “Gate of the Moors”. The Jews however called it the “Dung Gate”, probably after the gate in the writings of Nehemiah (Murphy-O-Connor 1998:21). The map below (a simplified version of a plausible rendering of “Herodian Jerusalem”, in Rossaeu & Arav 1995:149) shows, among other, both “Dung Gates” (Western and Potsherd Gates) and the valleys in and around Jerusalem.



The western and southern gates provided access to the valley of Hinnon. The

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valley was also known as the "Valley of the Son of Hinnon", indicating that the land originally belonged to the family of Ben Hinnon. In Israelite times, the valley was the site of Canaanite rituals involving child sacrifice (cf Rousseau & Arav 1995:145). At a time when priests were sacrificing to Baal and Asherah in the temple of Jerusalem, Kings Ahaz and Mannaseh of Judah offered their sons to Canaanite gods at a place called Topheth in the valley (cf 2 Ki 16:3; 21:6; 2 Chr 28:3; 33:6). Some Israelites followed their example (cf 2 Ki 23:10; Jr 7:31). The sacrifices came to an end when King Josiah instituted reforms and destroyed all non-Yahweh shrines (2 Ki 23:4-15). In later times the valley was used as a crematorium for the corpses of criminals and unclean animals. Notably, with the valley running adjacent to the living quarters of the élite, it also became a city dump for burning refuse (Rousseau & Arav 1995:145). This explains why certain gates in this part of the Jerusalem city wall were given the name "Dung Gate": through these gates the "rubbish" was thrown out of the city and burnt. Beyond these gates (in the Valley of Hinnon) was the place of the unclean.

Knowledge of the burning of corpses and refuse in the Valley of Hinnon also explains the association this valley had with hell" (in Greek γέεννα). Rousseau and Arav (1995:145) note that with the Valley of Hinnon being used as a crematorium for the ungodly (signified by the "burning of corpses - see De Vaux 1978:57) it in due time became a "synonym" for hell. This is reflected in the similarity in announcement of the two words: *gêhinnon* (Valley of Hinnon) and *gehenna* (hell). Bietenhard (1983:712) notes that Israelite apocalyptic generally assumed that after the final judgement the Valley of Hinnon would become the place of torment for the wicked, associated with scorching fire (cf 1 En 27; 54; 56:3-4; 90:26-27).

In due time, therefore, γέεννα, (also when not directly associated with the Jerusalem Valley of Hinnon) began to refer to "hell" in general, and subsequently also began to assume the meaning of ᾗδης ("Hades"; in Hebrew שׁאֵל - "Sheol"). In the New Testament, the two terms, Gehenna and Hades, are largely used

distinctively, the former referring to a permanent place of torment *after* the final judgement, the latter an intermediate place for all the dead and a place of torment for sinners *before* the final judgement (cf Bietenhard 1983:713). Scholars have however also noted the fluidity of their meanings, the two words being used synonymously and interchangeably, especially in the rabbinic writings at the turn of the first century CE (cf Bietenhard 1983:712; Scott 1990:153; Forbes 2000:190-191). Both words thus assumed the meaning of the underworld and the place of torment for the wicked, whether intermediately or permanently. According to the Talmud, there was an entrance to this underworld in the Valley of Hinnon (*b. Erub.* 19a; Rossaeu & Arav 1995:145).

The metaphorical effect potentially inherent to the words “gate” and “Valley of Hinnon” (as Gehenna and/or Hades) on a first-century listener is immense. One can visualise the smoke rising from the valley beyond the city gates, a vivid image of Hades. The crematorium of the ungodly and the refuse dump of the élite, is seen as a “dumping site” of unrepentant sinners, which include the πτωχοί as the “unrespectable poor” and all those characterised by this “subculture”.

That a first-century parable listener will have been aware of the meaning attached to the Valley of Hinnon is highly probable. Although there is no surviving archeological evidence of a refuse burning site in the Valley of Hinnon in the first century (Rossaeu & Arav 1995:145), the association of Gehenna with fire in Matthew 5:22 and 18:9 indicates that its existence and its association with hell was generally known at that time. With the “gate of the rich man” possibly featuring as such a metaphor for Jerusalem, the above observations are important and further accentuate the contrast of the rich and poor. The gate places the poor man outside the walls of Jerusalem (the holy city of God) in the valley of the unclean and evil, where they deservedly suffer the fate of sinners. The “gate” is thus used epiphorically in this opening scene of the parable to illustrate conventional Israelite perceptions concerning the poor: They belong in the “Gehenna of fire”, that is, in hell.

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Unique to the parable is the naming of the poor man. The name itself is a shorted form of the Hebrew אֱלֵעֶזֶר, meaning "God helps". Various reasons have been given for this choice of name (see Forbes 2000:185-186). Noteworthy here is the connection made between the name Lazarus and the role played by Abraham, who features in the second half of the parable. According to Genesis 15:2 Abraham had a servant in his household called אֱלֵעֶזֶר (Eliezer), who might also be the servant who was sent by Abraham as his envoy to secure a wife for his son Isaac (Gn 24). Apart from its use in Genesis, Derrett (cited by Donahue 1988:169-170) shows that אֱלֵעֶזֶר became a well-known figure in the Haggadah. According to *Midrash Genesis* (cf Donahue 1988:170), Eliezer went about in disguise on this earth and reported to Abraham on how his children observed the Law, especially in regard to concerns for the poor. Although it is difficult to assess, whether (and if so to what degree) a parallel can be drawn between the parable and midrashic tradition, such a parallel cannot be discounted. Importantly, what we have here are both a connection with the Law and its concern for the poor and also the existence of a similar theme in the folkloric material (discussed above) concerning an envoy being sent from the dead. Purely at literary level, however, the naming of the poor man forms part of the continuing *contrast* drawn between himself and the rich man. Scott (1990:149) writes: "The first man has his richness; the poor man has only his name, Lazarus [...] one is full of possessions, and the other is empty except for a name, but the meaning of the name may well hold out a promise" (see also Green 1997:606). In both cases the name "Lazarus" prepares the audience for the reversal of fortunes that is about to occur.

The phrase ἐγένετο δέ (verse 22) introduces a decisive point in the parable. Both men die. The events immediately preceding their deaths are described in reverse order to their lives, possibly to highlight the reversal of their status in the life to come (Blomberg 1990:203). The reversal of status is conveyed by a number of epiphors (contrasts) with increasing tension as the

parable continues. The first epiphor is a juxtaposition of “poor man” and “Abraham’s bosom”. Contrary to conventional expectations the poor man is carried by angels into the bosom of Abraham. Reference to angels highlights the status of honour ascribed to the poor man. The Hebrews Scriptures mention two similar events, both featuring men highly revered. Enoch is taken up to heaven by God (Gn 5:24), and Elijah is taken up to heaven in a whirlwind by a chariot and horses of fire (2 Ki 2:11). From a historical perspective it is difficult to determine whether the expression “carried by angels” appeared in the original parable, as the expression is not found in rabbinic sources until 150 CE (Forbes 2000:188, footnote 37). Where used, however, the expression regularly depicts the fortune of the righteous (see Hultgren 2000:113, footnote 12).

The figure “Abraham’s bosom” is wide ranging and has generated a great deal of comment. Depending on the context in which it is used, it can refer to a child at a mother’s bosom, indicating a place of protection and security, or the place of highest honour at a banquet (Jn 13:23), or the place of rest for martyrs (cf Herzog 1994:121). The eschatological context of the parable, however, conveys the meaning of close fellowship with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets at the messianic banquet (cf Lk 13:28-29). This is, as noted by Forbes (2000:189), in stark contrast to verse 21: whereas the poor man was excluded from the rich man’s table, he is now the honoured guest at the messianic banquet.

In the light of conventional perceptions of the poor as being unrighteous, the description of Lazarus’ transport and final resting place is puzzling to say the least, imploring an explanation. The explanation is not given, but conventional perceptions would come forward with an answer similar to the one given by Si-Osiris in the Egyptian folks tale (see 7.2.1 above). If indeed Lazarus is righteous, the only plausible reason could be that taking Lazarus’ *entire life* into account, his good deeds must have outweighed his evil deeds. Any thought along these lines is however frustrated by the omission of a burial, suggesting that Lazarus could have suffered the same fate as many of the poor, dumped in the valley of Hinnon

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outside Jerusalem. Ancient Israelites were shaped by the belief that as long as the body existed, the soul existed as well and was like a shade over the body in the subterranean abode of Sheol (Hades) (De Vaux 1978:56). As long as the bones therefore existed, the soul would continue to feel what was done to the body. Non-burial, exposing the body to scavenger animals, for example wild dogs (verse 21), would therefore rob someone of his or her last honour and thus constitute the highest form of dishonour, tantamount to bearing a curse of God (cf Green 1997:607; 1 Ki 14:11; Jr 16:4; 22, 19; Ez 29:5). A proper burial on the other hand was an extended form of honour for the righteous, with great care being taken to lay a person to rest. That Lazarus is carried into the bosom of Abraham stands in stark contrast to his non-burial. Being rejected by man, he is accepted by God in the afterlife.

In contrast to Lazarus, the rich man enjoys a burial. That he is accorded a burial is important. It confirms his perceived righteousness and shows that the honour he enjoyed throughout his life is also extended to his death (Green 1997:607). Indeed, he experiences no misfortune that could be interpreted as an act of divine judgement. He enjoys both a prosperous life and an honourable burial. Grundmann (1978:328) summarises the importance of the burial with the following quote from the Ethiopian Enoch (103:5-6): "Selig sind die Sünder; sie haben all ihr Leben lang Gutes gesehen. Nun sind sie im Glück und Reichtum gestorben..., und ein Gericht wurde an ihnen nicht vollzogen." The quote expresses conventional perceptions that those who experience no misfortune in life and death (burial) will not be judged.

Whereas however the "burial" of the poor man constituted one narrative gap, the subsequent fate of the rich man after burial constitutes a second narrative gap. Scott's (1990:152) structural analysis of the parallelism of verse 22 highlights the two omissions:

the poor man	the rich man
died	died
(narrative gap)	was buried
carried away	(narrative gap)

Lazarus received no honourable burial (intimating his unrighteous status) ... but is carried away into the bosom of Abraham. The rich man was buried (confirming from a conventional Israelite point of view his righteous status) ... but the story does not immediately disclose his fortunes in the afterlife. This second narrative gap raises the audience's expectations and provides the necessary impetus for the continuation of the story.

Based on the fact that the parable does not explicitly refer to a proper funeral and an honourable burial for the rich man, some interpreters reject the contrast drawn above between the non-burial of the poor man and the burial of the rich man. It is argued that the contrast is between the poor man being "carried away" (honour), and the rich man who is simply "buried" (dishonour) (Hultgren 2000:113; Forbes 2000:188). However in the light of the importance attributed to burials in ancient societies, the burial of a rich man can hardly constitute the *negative* pole of a contrasting parallelism. Burial is inevitably a form of showing honour to a righteous person. It is the very burial of the rich man, followed abruptly by the narrative gap, that compounds the shock of the audience as the parable continues.

The narrative gap at the end of verse 22 is immediately filled in verse 23. It is not the poor man who appears in Hades, the place of torment and fire, but the rich man. If, as it was argued above, the gate of the rich man is used in the parable as a metaphor of Jerusalem with the Dung Gate leading into the valley of Hinnon, the initial epiphor of the opening scene (gate as an illustration of the poor in "hell") is used as a diaphor in verse 22 (the rich man is in "hell"). Based on conventional perceptions, the audience will have been surprised if not alarmed to

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find the poor man in the bosom of Abraham and not in Hades. But to find the rich man in Hades, is shocking. Up to this point no indication had been given that the rich man may suffer misfortune in the afterlife. That he is judged is contrary to all conventional expectations. Both his fortune during life as well as his burial on death suggesting an appearance in "paradise" where he would enjoy the fruits of his righteous life.

With the description of the rich man being "in torment", the contrast with the poor man, who is seen "in the bosom of Abraham" is restored. The division that characterised their life on earth continues in the afterlife, albeit in reverse order. Notably in verse 23 the name of the poor man is reintroduced for the first time since the opening scene (Scott 1990:153). After the initial introduction, Lazarus was only the "poor man" (nameless). In the afterlife the promise of his name as one whom "God helps" is realised.

It is evident that the parable draws upon common folkloric imagery of conditions after death, the inconsistencies of which have raised a number of questions. As already noted above, Hades is generally considered to be a place to which all the dead go but only remain for a short time (Ac 2:27, 31; Rv 20:13-14) prior to the final judgement (Rv 20:13). In verse 23 however Hades appears to be a permanent abode and place of torment, comparable to hell. Although the term Hades is used, the description is that of Gehenna, which calls to mind the valley of Hinnon (*gêhinnon*) outside Jerusalem where the poor and unrighteous were dumped after death and often burnt. That Hades is not simply an abode of the dead is also clear from the fact that the rich man is there, but not Lazarus, who is in Abraham's bosom. Although in close proximity to one another, the two places are sharply distinguished, first by the phrase ἀπὸ μακρόθεν, and secondly by the great χάσμα (verse 26) that separates the two. That the chasm is "fixed" (ἐστήρικται) indicates that the judgement is irreversible (as will be the case at the final judgement when the wicket will be confined to Gehenna forever). It is clearly not the intention of the parable to give a literal and precise description of the

intermediate state of the afterlife. More important than any “literal” descriptions are the “literary” contrasts. Lazarus enjoys the fulfilment of the promises made to the people of God, whereas the rich man is judged and suffers torment. At this stage the reason why the two men suffer different fates is not disclosed.

The rich man calls out to Abraham (verse 24). That he calls him *πάτερ* (verse 24) is significant and compounds the confusion. The term *πάτερ* evokes family solidarity (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:378). As a family member he has a claim to be heard. More important however is the conventional belief that being a descendant of Abraham was enough to save a person from eternal punishment. This view finds expression in Midrash Rabbah (*Gen. R.* 48.8; cf Forbes 2000:297): “R. Levi said, ‘In the Hereafter Abraham will sit at the entrance to Gehenna, and permit no circumcised Israelite to descend therein.’”

The scene of the rich man in torment despite being a descendant of Abraham reinforces the teaching of John (the Baptist), who advocated that having Abraham as a father counts for nothing (cf Lk 3:8). What counts is repentance (verse 30). The request of the rich man, however, shows no trace of repentance. He seeks alleviation of his pain. Herzog (1994:123) notes that the request of the rich man is delivered with two imperatives: show mercy and send Lazarus. The imperatives reflect the customary attitude of the *élite* in making demands and expecting obedience. The request of the rich man is hardly an effort to bridge the gulf separating him and Lazarus. The word *ἐλέησον* does however provide an ironical twist, highlighted, as noted by Green (1997:608), by the wordplay in the Greek text: “The one who now requests mercy (Greek: *ἔλεος*) at the hand of Lazarus seems never to have contemplated the merciful act of almsgiving (*ἐλεημοσύνη*) to benefit Lazarus.” The scene recalls two similar scenes in the parable of “The Good Samaritan” and “A Man Had Two Sons” (see Lk 10:33; 15:20), both of which demonstrated that “mercy” constitutes both the essence of the Torah as well as the central virtue of God (see chapter 5 and 6 above). Ironically the role of showing mercy falls to Lazarus, the poor man, conceived

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within conventional Israelite wisdom as being rejected by God. Lazarus dipping his finger in water, would of course not alleviate any pain or quench any thirst. But the imagery of the afterworld, running water (in paradise) and fire (in Hades), provides the literary tools to portray the contrast of fortunes (Scott 1990:154). Sumptuous meals during the rich man's life are now contrasted with a drop of water.

That the rich man's appeal is addressed to "Abraham" may have raised expectations among the audience of an imminent change in fortune for the rich man. Abraham is a model of hospitality to strangers (cf Gn 18:1-15). Scott (1990:153-154) shows that in rabbinic literature Abraham's virtue of hospitality is portrayed as even exceeding that of Job's. Rabbinic conclusion is based on the fact that Abraham, in contrast to Job, who only fed those who were accustomed to enough food, also fed strangers, that is the poor, and the needy. The request of the rich man is ironical and stands in stark contrast to the model of Abraham's hospitality. He was as wealthy as Abraham, but lacked his generosity (Wright, S I 2000:231). Not once did he open his gate to alleviate Lazarus' sufferings.

Abraham's response is not unkind (verse 25). It confirms kinship (τέκνον). But the request is nevertheless denied. On the surface, the reason for the denial seems to be based on economic prosperity: the rich man having enjoyed the good things on earth, suffers in the afterlife. Conversely, the poor man who suffered on earth is comforted in the afterlife. Simply being rich is however not the issue. Abraham himself was rich. The reversal can therefore not be based on social inequality. Forbes (2000:192-132) contests that the rich man's fate is directly related to his *relationship* with Lazarus. The word μνήσθητι (verse 25) recalls not only the contrast of a rich and a poor man in the opening scene, but also the reference to a "gate" that separated them (verse 20). The gate becomes the basis of reflection in verse 26.

As the gate separated the rich man from the poor man in the opening scene, now a great chasm prevents the poor man from being sent to the rich man

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ancient literature of someone returning from the dead to reveal his or her own fate or the fate of others in the next world (cf Green 1997:609; Hultgren 2000:114). However, what is uncommon is the *refusal* of the request (verses 29-31). The refusal will have shocked the audience. Central to an understanding of the parable is the reason given by Abraham for the refusal: "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them" (verse 29). Although the previous verse indicates the realisation of the rich man that he should have shown concern for Lazarus, epitomised in his efforts to prevent his brothers from suffering the same fate as himself, the connection with the Torah is not made. This connection is made by Abraham. But instead of clarifying the refusal, it rather compounds the confusion. The Torah and the prophets constitute the core of the rich man's religion. His honour will have centred around Torah obedience, confirmed by the blessings he enjoyed in life. Herzog (1994:124) however poses the crucial question: "But *whose* Torah?" The question implies a contrast in Torah understanding which constitutes the backdrop to the parable. To which Torah does the phrase "Moses and the prophets" refer? Herzog (1994:124-125) elaborates:

The Torah of the prophets or the Torah of the priests and scribes?

The Torah that proclaimed, "There will, however, be no one in need among you, because the Lord is sure to bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a possession to occupy, if only you will obey the Lord your God by diligently observing this entire commandment that I command you today" (Deut. 15:4-5), or the Torah that declared that the people must not make themselves unclean by any forbidden practices, "You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy" (Lev.20:26)? The Torah of the debt code with its sabbatical and jubilee provisions or the Torah of the purity code with its classifications into clean and unclean [...]? The Torah that

protected the poor or the Torah that blamed and condemned the poor?

That the poor man in this parable is not contrasted with a “priest” or a “scribe” does not invalidate the contrasts drawn by Herzog above. From a literary perspective it makes sense to contrast Lazarus, the poor man, with a rich counterpart, not with a priest or with a scribe. But priests, scribes and the rich all formed part of the same tier of a two-tiered agrarian society. Indeed, the priests and scribes served as retainers who provided the rich with the necessary ideology both to protect and justify their presumptuous life style.

The wording of Abraham’s answer in verse 29 indicates that failure on the part of the rich man to show concern for the poor cannot be traced back to insufficient Torah information, but to an unwillingness to “listen”. The rich man’s request is denied, because his brothers should “listen” to Moses and the prophets. Any hidden accusation of unfair treatment towards himself in Hades is thereby also rebuffed, as, by implication, he should have listened as well. Green (1997:609) notes: “‘Hearing’ has a prominent role in Luke-Acts, where it either entails belief or is a necessary precursor to faith or repentance.” The insistence on “listening” recalls the repeated warnings of Jesus: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Lk 8:8; 14:35). Ironically the “poor” (toll-collectors and sinners) gather to hear Jesus (Lk 15:1); the “rich” (the Israelite leaders) on the other hand, although being circumcised in the flesh, have “uncircumcised hearts and ears” (Ac 7:51).

The rich man continues to plead and argue his case: “No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead should go to them, they will repent” (verse 30). Ironically the rich man has again failed to “listen” and has clearly missed the point. By implication, he continues to argue that the witness of the Torah is insufficient and needs to be supplemented by an additional witness from the dead. Granting his request, would concede this very point (Herzog 1994:125).

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The repeated and intensified request of the rich man to send an envoy from the dead is paralleled by an equally intensified denial: "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded even if one from the dead should rise" (verse 31). The use of the word ἀναστῆ has drawn much comment. It provides a shift from a "message" from the dead, to a "miracle" of resurrection. Whereas the rich man's request is confined to Lazarus appearing as a messenger from the dead, Abraham's denial indicates that not even a miracle of resurrection would sway those with "uncircumcised hearts and ears". As such, the denial rejects the use of signs to augment the Torah. The rejection of signs however hardly features as the main point of the parable (cf Herzog 1994:114). It is subordinate to the more important theme of Torah adequacy. The Torah does not need to be supplemented, be it by additional information from the dead (verse 29), or by the miracle of a resurrection of the dead (verse 31). Furthermore, based on the use of the word ἀνίστημι, scholars have noted the allusion to the later resurrection account of Jesus in Luke 24 (cf Crossan 1973:66-67). This allusion will hardly have been missed by the Lukan reader. A resurrection from the dead did occur. The continued unbelief by many Israelites served as a vindication of Abraham's words. Grundmann (1978:333) proposes that this verse suggests why the resurrection appearances of Jesus were confined to his disciples.

Although the end of the parable provides a number of allusions, it serves at literary level not only as an intensification of the rejection of the rich man's request, but also as an intensified appeal to the parable's audience to "listen" to the Torah. The Torah does not justify apartness and division whereby the rich become richer and the poor poorer. In essence the Torah promotes "mercy" (the very appeal of the rich man in Hades to Abraham). It is a mercy that leads to the opening of the "gate" separating the rich from the poor. But will the audience listen? Although the fate of the rich man in Hades seems to be sealed, the parable is not closed. It challenges the audience to act differently, not in contrast but in accordance with the Torah.

7.3 The challenge of a God who looks beyond “social class”

We have argued repeatedly that it forms part of Luke’s literary style to juxtapose opposites, both at macro as well as micro level; and that the juxtaposition of these opposites serves the goal of challenging the audience to see reality and God differently. This literary style of Luke finds confirmation in the parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus”. “Rich” and “poor” are opposites and constitute exclusive entities on the social map of ancient Israel. Being opposites means that Luke uses them diaphorically to create a “tensive metaphor”. That the story contains opposites does not in itself create the tension. The tension is created when contrary to conventional expectations the subsequent fortunes of the two characters after death are reversed, thereby placing the world of conventional Israel upside down.

The reversal of fortunes is generally recognised by interpreters of this parable. Less obvious is the *focus* of the challenge. The focus is largely determined by the approach adopted by the interpreter, and whether he or she views the parable as a unit or as consisting primarily of two distinctive part. If the focus falls on the second part (verses 27-31) the role played by Lazarus is minimised - and indeed the social difference between the two main characters becomes a secondary feature of minimal importance to the parable. Jeremias ([1963] 1984:125) writes:

Da der erste Teil an einem bekannten Erzählungsstoff anknüpft, liegt der Ton auf dem Neuen, das Jesus diesem hinzufügt, auf dem Epilog. Wie allen anderen doppelgipfligen Gleichnisse hat also auch das unsere “Achtergewicht”. Das heißt: Jesus will nicht zu dem Problem reich und arm Stellung nehmen, er will auch nicht Belehrung über das Leben nach dem Tod geben, sondern er erzählt das Gleichnis, um Menschen, die dem Reichen und seinen Brüdern gleichen, vor dem drohenden Verhängnis zu warnen. Der arme Lazarus ist also nur eine Nebengestalt, eine Kontrastfigur.

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That the story-teller should make use of folkloric material portraying two characters from the extremes of the social scale, without both characters contributing significantly to the impact of the parable, is most unlikely. With Jeremias' focus falling on the second part of the parable, he and other scholars who follow his lead, disqualify the theme "rich-and-poor" and find the point of the parable in its polemic against signs. Jeremias ([1963] 1984:125) proposes the solution: "Denn wer sich dem Wort Gottes nicht beugt, wird auch nicht durch ein Mirakel zur Umkehr gerufen werden."

As noted above (7.2.1) most historical Jesus scholars have in turn eliminated the second part of the parable as authentic. Their interpretation is therefore restricted to the first part of the parable (verses 16-26). As such, however, it becomes exceedingly difficult to grasp the *challenge* of the parable. This is apparent in Crossan's analysis. Crossan (1973:68) discounts the belief that Jesus in telling this parable was interested in an "admonition on the dangers of wealth - which the folktales had already done admirably - but in the reversal of human situation in which the Kingdom's disruptive advent could be metaphorically portrayed and linguistically made present." Seemingly the challenge, if any, is confined to the knowledge that in the Kingdom of God human situations are reversed, based on either the fate or the fortune that someone suffered or enjoyed on earth. For Scott (1990:158-159) the challenge lies in passing through the "gate". The gate is provided by the Kingdom of God. But, in an endeavour to avoid any "moral" implications, the gate is interpreted as grace. "Grace is the gate" which disappears when God helps Lazarus.

The greatest shortcoming of these interpretations is that the parable tends to degenerate into an abstract issue, specific to none of the figures who inhabit the narrative world, be it that of the original Jesus or that of the Lukan community. Critical for an understanding of the parable is that the story narrates not abstract

social types but representatives of two “social classes”, very real to the audience of the first-century Mediterranean world.

Historical Jesus and subsequent approaches have however provided many useful clues and have refocused parable interpretation on the contrast between wealth and poverty, the rich and the poor, and the subversion of conventional worldviews. With the focus on the discrepancies between rich and poor most interpreters stress the “dangers” that accompany wealth and see the challenge of the parable in overcoming these dangers. Great concern is shown to disclose that wealth in itself is not the issue. The rich man is not condemned to Hades because he is rich, nor is the poor rewarded with a place in Abraham’s bosom because he is poor. The rich man’s fate is rather the result of his callous lovelessness and impious self-indulgence, with Lazarus’ fortune in the afterlife the result of his implicit piety and the faithful and uncomplaining acceptance of his plight (cf Blomberg 1990:205-206). Invariably the danger of wealth is seen in the failure of the rich man to “see” the poor man. Donahue (1988:171) writes: “... one of the prime dangers of wealth is that it causes ‘blindness’.” The text of the parable however focuses not on the failure of the rich man to “see” Lazarus (whom he seems to know), but on the failure of the rich to “listen” to Moses and the prophets (verse 29).

It is only when the two parts of the parable are read as a unity that the full metaphorical thrust of the parable within the narrative and contextual worlds of Luke-Acts becomes apparent. The description of social classes and the unexpected reversal of fortunes in the first part of the parable sets the scene for the exhortation to read Moses and the prophets in the second part (Herzog 1994:129). But the exhortation is not an epiphoric addition, that, is an illustration of the general truth already conveyed in the first part of the parable, but is itself *diaphoric* in nature and compounds the confusion. The confusion is compounded by the reference to the Torah (Moses and the Prophets). The Torah which apparently mandated and justified the rich man’s callous behaviour to the poor

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man, becomes the very source of his condemnation. This insight is attributed mainly to the work done by William Herzog (1994). The rich man and Lazarus not only refer to wealth and poverty respectively, but represent, as noted above, two "social classes", the urban élite (who had power and influence over others) and the very poor and desperate (generally perceived as expendables). The very existence of the πτωχοί (the absolute poor) within a society governed by the worldview that every person had the "right to subsistence", indicates exploitation and, within Israel, a failure to adhere to the principle of extension in the debt code. Reference to "Moses and the prophets" reveals the shocking (diaphoric) truth that the rich (urban élite) did not only live at the expense of the poor, but twisted Torah and Temple to serve their ends (Herzog 1994:128). Hospitality and almsgiving had been reinterpreted from the perspective of Israelite purity codes, thereby reinforcing the segregation of two tiers within society, the wealthy (clean) and the poor (unclean).

Blomberg (1990:206) already registered the subversiveness of the parable by noting: "The parable overturns conventional Jewish wisdom which saw the rich as blessed by God and the poor as punished for their wickedness." But he failed to note the parody played by the Law of God. Any (dominant) worldview (the grand-narrative of society) needs to be legitimised. Herzog (1994:129) writes:

One powerful source of legitimation resides in how an ultimate ordering of things is used to justify current human arrangements. In the political sphere of first-century Palestine, this entailed the use of some form of the mandate of heaven, and in the social sphere, the use of the afterlife to justify the inequities of human life. Portraying the age to come as a confirmation of the present age provided potent support for a two-tiered society, the blessed wealthy in control and the cursed poor suffering from the consequences of their sin.

The “mandate from heaven” is none other than “Moses and the prophets”.

Israelite “prosperity teaching” advocated: to be rich is a sign of God’s blessing; to be poor a sign of God’s wrath (cf Forbes 2000:195). The rich man in the parable was seemingly surrounded with signs of God’s abundant blessing. After death, he should have been in Abraham’s bosom. By contrast Lazarus should have been in Hades (in hell). The unexpected reversal of fortunes in the parable constitutes a contra-narrative which subverts the “ideology” that “social class” is an indicator of divine blessing. Once this perception had been sprung, the question of Torah-interpretation imposes itself. If indeed, “social class” is no longer an indicator of divine blessing, how could the scribes in Jerusalem conclude the opposite?

It is in this context, as Herzog (1994:130) notes, that the figure of Abraham, the patriarch of Israel, plays a critical role. In some ways the depiction of the rich man in the parable, parallels that of Abraham. Like the rich man, Abraham was also rich (Gn 13:2) and enjoyed a burial with honour (Gn 25:7-11). This parallelism indicates that the rich man is most likely to be identified as a “child of Abraham”. But in contrast to the rich man of our parable, Abraham was the model of hospitality and generosity (Gn 18:1-15). Furthermore, Abraham refused to accept the king of Sodom’s offer to keep the goods he had recovered in battle because of his desire to have his wealth known as a sign of God’s favour (Gn 14:13-24; Herzog 1994:130). This is in stark contrast to the depiction of the Pharisees as “money lovers” in Luke 16:14. Reference to Abraham indicates that the Law of God cannot be used to justify a gate that shuts the door on the poor (see also Forbes 2000:195-196). The charge of the prophet Amos (5:12-15, quoted above) that the Israelite leaders - instead of establishing justice - “push aside the poor in the gate”, resounds in the background. The gate as a metaphor of Israelite justice should not lead to a marginalisation of the needy, but to the breaking down and crossing of erected barriers.

There is little doubt that Abraham was a figure of great value to those

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whose task it was to legitimise the social order of the day. But by using Abraham as an advocate of the desperately poor, the shock effect of the parable is increased. For a man who presumed to name Abraham as his "father", this rich man, as well as his brothers, should heed the Scriptures, "Moses and the prophets" (cf Green 1997:610).

At literary level, within Luke's narrative world the rich man and Lazarus are elements of the continuing tension of the two main opposition groups in Luke's narrative, that of the Israelite leaders and that of Jesus and his witnesses. Looking at "social classes", Jesus (a peasant) and those with whom he associated and shared table-fellowship (toll-collectors and sinners), belonged to the poor (the unclean and powerless). The Israelite leaders, as strict adherers of the Law, belonged to the rich (the clean and those who had power and influence). This is the world that is subverted by the father-figure of Abraham who adjudicates for the poor. The subversion is the result of the creation of an alternate symbolic universe in which "social class" does not determine one's status before God.

Extratextually, in the contextual world of Luke's narrative, this parable could be referring to the "rich" and "poor" within Luke's community. Esler (1987:183-200) puts forward convincing arguments that Luke's community encompassed individuals from the top and the bottom of society (see also Forbes 2000:228-233). The literary style of Luke, in particular the Prologue (Lk 1:1-4) indicates that Luke himself came from the upper segment of society. Furthermore, there is a focus in Luke's narrative on a number of converts of elevated status (cf Lk 7:1-10; 8:3; Ac 8:26-39; 10:1-47; 13:1, 7, 12). The priority accorded the utterly destitute in the scheme of salvation within Luke's narrative hardly needs mentioning. It constitutes the core of Jesus' inaugural preaching in Nazareth (Lk 4:16-30), but already begins earlier in the Magnificat (cf Lk 1:52-53). Luke's affinity for the poor is especially prominent in the redactional passages of Luke, the most obvious example being "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" in Luke 14:21 in place of the "good and the bad" in Jesus' parable of the Wedding Banquet as told

in Matthew 22:10. In Acts 4:32-35 Luke puts forward what to him seems to be the ideal of a community in which “social classes” do not lead to barriers and other forms of exclusivity. Possessions are no longer perceived to belong to oneself: everything is shared. The result of the successful implementation of almsgiving is that “there were no needy ones among them” (Ac 4:34). The importance of almsgiving is further accentuated in Acts 6:1-4 with the election of seven helpers so that the Hellenistic widows would not be overlooked in the daily distribution of food (διακονία). The contrast between “Hellenistic” widows and “Hebrew” widows in this passage could further reflect on Luke’s community, since the tensions there resulted not only from the disparities between rich and poor but also from Israelite opposition to the “extension of goods” to the (unclean) Gentile followers of Jesus. Such an action, assisting *all* widows, would contribute to satisfying the need of the Gospel message for legitimisation (see 4.4.3 above).

Although most scholars agree that Luke shares a real concern for the impoverished (cf Green 1997:610; Forbes 2000:196; Hultgren 2000:115), we see the primary goal of Luke in telling his metaphorical stories, including the parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus”, not as promoting social welfare, but as his attempt to create an alternate symbolic universe in which conventional barriers that justify segregation and exploitation are broken down. Better living conditions for the poor will be the *result* of a radically changed worldview. Although this alternate worldview challenges conventional Israelite perceptions, the intended goal is not an alienation of the Israelites but rather reconciliation. Again, as with the parable of “The Good Samaritan”, this reconciliation is achieved by reference to the Law of God, which is not rejected, but rather interpreted in such a way as to reveal the very core of God’s heart, which is in essence “mercy”, extended to all regardless of nationality or “social class”. In the parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus” the priority of the Law is enhanced by the use of “Abraham”. Although Abraham is enlisted as an advocate of the desperately poor, he nevertheless remains the father of *all* the children of Israel, both those of the very top strata of society as

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well as those of the very lowest.

In our exposition of the parable of "The Good Samaritan" we indicated that Luke's use of a Samaritan is two-fold: on the one hand, the Samaritan provides Luke with a diaphor to shock his audience out of their comfort zone; on the other hand, however, the Samaritan provides Luke with the perfect "hinge" for the inclusion of Gentiles in God's salvation. The question that needs to be considered further is whether the use of the term *πτωχός* (referring to the unrespectable poor *within* Israel) in the parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus" plays a similar role to the "Samaritan" in the parable of "The Good Samaritan". It has been argued that the *πτωχός* constituted a subculture, whose members were characterised as "nonpersons" (Van Aarde 1996:953-954). On the conventional Israelite "map" of people, ordered in a hierarchy from most holy to least holy (see 4.5.2 above), the (Israelite) "nonperson" would, therefore, be placed on the same level, or even below, the level of the "most unholy" Gentile (the non-Israelite). In contrast to most Gentiles, however, the Israelite "nonperson" did not live far away, but just outside the "gate".

Mention must be made of the striking and most appropriate chapter heading of Scott's (1990:141) exposition of this parable: "Good fences make good neighbors." Conventional Israelite wisdom, fervently endorsed by the Israelite leaders through their interpretation of the Torah, erected fences not only on the borders of Israel, but also *within* Israel. These fences ensured "good neighbourliness", but they also caused division, and indeed not only Israelite-Gentile division but Israelite-Israelite division, leading to a divided Israel. In this parable it seems as though Luke impresses upon his community a symbolic universe in which not only Israelites and Gentiles are reconciled, but Israelites and Israelites. Mission and the work of reconciliation begin not beyond the borders, but in close proximity of one's own home: in front of the "gate".

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Mapping the road travelled

The impetus for this study arose from a conviction that the unique features of Luke's narrative world most likely yield clues on how to handle conflict and work for reconciliation. The method of investigation, however, was to be neither exclusively inductive or deductive, but abductive. That is, we intended to engage in a constant dialogue with the text as we proceeded to read Luke's narrative. Theses were to be developed and put forward. These were in turn to be scrutinised by a continuing back-and-forth movement in which passages read and knowledge gained were to be juxtaposed with new passages. The hope was that out of this reading a picture would emerge which, within the parameters of scientific research, would contribute to help solve some of the puzzles we encounter as we read Luke's narrative, and at the same time inspire new dialogue. At social and political levels the hope was that the knowledge gained would provide encouraging insight into the manner how to view and handle the conflicts that characterise every society.

The study was inspired by new perceptions concerning the concept metaphor, accentuating the aptness of metaphor to challenge and subvert fixed perceptions of reality. This insight on metaphor was based on a radical revision of traditional perceptions of metaphor. Metaphor is not merely ornamental, illustrative of knowledge already gained, but is also *creative* of knowledge. The creative power of metaphor lies primarily in the tension it creates when not similarities (epiphor), but dissimilarities (diaphor) are juxtaposed. Such a juxtaposition sparks new thought. This new thought, which in essence leads to a new way of looking at reality, is essential when peoples or a society are in engaged in conflict and strife. Past studies on the sociology of knowledge, and indeed the study of metaphor itself, have stressed how peoples are governed by particular worldviews. Conflict indeed reveals contrasting and exclusive

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worldviews. An awareness of worldviews which are implicitly articulated in texts is therefore imperative in the process of conflict resolution. These aspects were explored and confirmed.

In this study metaphor was used as a “model”, that is, as a “lens” to look at different aspects of our research. The use of a model in itself implies that the study was not to be governed by deductive argumentation that pretends to provide a whole or conclusive picture on the research topic. The study was rather an effort to look at the topic of research from a particular point of view, and provide new language with which to describe, or re-describe, the phenomena that constitute the subject of research.

The metaphor was in the past applied to Jesus' parables primarily by historical Jesus scholars. The awareness raised of the subversive nature of Jesus' parables is a tribute to their work. It has revitalised parable research. Despite the recent critiques of some scholars, we concluded that Jesus' parables are indeed metaphorical in nature, challenging conventional worldviews. However, scholars have in the past largely failed to apply the notion of metaphor to the parables in the form in which they have been imported or recreated in the Gospel narratives. Some historical Jesus scholars have advocated that in their Gospel setting the parables have lost their essential metaphorical character, that is, they no longer function as metaphors. Based on the conviction that the reasons for this view are not compelling, we turned our attention to Luke's narrative.

The very choice of studying the parables in Luke's narrative was based on past research which had indicated Luke's affinity for the juxtaposing of opposites. This was explored in depth, both at literary and contextual levels. Indeed, it became clear that the juxtaposition of opposites and the ensuing unexpected reversal of fortune form part of Luke's literary style. Furthermore, exploration of Luke's contextual world revealed a world marked by strife and conflict. Importantly, however, our reading indicated that in an exploration of the

juxtaposition of opposites, attention should not fall exclusively on people or groups of people, but rather on the worldviews that characterise these people. Juxtaposed in Luke's narrative are contrasting points of view. These views were described as conventional Israelite wisdom and the alternative wisdom of Jesus' Kingdom teaching. The former is inherently particularistic and exclusive, the latter universalistic and inclusive. The former reflects a worldview in which God's holiness is interpreted in terms of purity regulations and is characterised by group-differentiation and divisions. In the latter, God's holiness is interpreted in terms of his mercy and is characterised by the inclusiveness of God's family. Conventional exclusive boundaries are extended to include everyone. In the drawing of the new boundaries we recognised Luke's endeavour to work for reconciliation. The reversal of roles and fortune were not to lead to a new form of exclusivity, but were to function as "metaphor" to create a revised and inclusive vision of God. In God's kingdom "all" are welcome.

In the closing chapters our attention fell on three parables that are peculiar to Luke. The exposition of the parables confirmed Luke's affinity for the juxtaposition of opposites within a background of tension. In each parable different and socially and religiously exclusive characters are used. A pious Levite/priest is juxtaposed with a hated Samaritan, a rebellious younger son with an apparently obedient elder son, a sumptuously rich man with a desperately poor man. In each case the juxtaposition reflects the conventional dichotomy between "insiders" and "outsiders", those "loved by God" and "those hated by God". It is intrinsically related to a Pharisaic interpretation of the Law of God and forms the basis of conventional Israelite wisdom. But this conventional view is continually juxtaposed with an alternative view in which the clearly defined boundaries indicating "who is in" and "who is out" are confused by the drawing of a new map.

The characters within the parables play a subordinate role to the worldviews articulated by them. The characters serve to define the focal point of the challenge, be it the division between nations (The Good Samaritan), or that

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between family members (A Man Had Two Sons), or that caused by "social classes" (The Rich Man and Lazarus). Invariably, the parables being metaphors, the challenge is not one-dimensional, but multidimensional and can impact on various facets of human life. Similarly, the references evoked by the characters in the parables are not restrictive to any one particular entity in a direct one-to-one relationship, but are often ambiguous and/or multi-referential. This constitutes the very essence of metaphor and makes it so apt for introduction in different contexts. Our focus in this study however fell on the challenge that the Lukan metaphorical stories posed to a conventional worldview, implicitly articulated by each and every text. Because of this focus, we refrained from closely defining the precise composition of the group who constituted the Lukan community. That can be the focus of another study. This study is not about a particular group of people contrasted with another group of people, but about deeply imbedded worldviews which become most visible when people of different worldviews are challenged by the emergence of a new social order.

There is little doubt that Luke contributed greatly to defining the symbolic universe of this new order. He did so by juxtaposing contrasting worlds, challenging his audience to see reality differently. It is a world in which God's mercy rules, traditional divisions are broken down, and conventional boundaries are crossed. It is a world "turned upside down" through the realisation that this world, for many so foreign and seemingly unattractive, is the "Kingdom of God" that has dawned in our midst. It is the world in which God and humankind are reconciled with one another.

8.2 Concluding remarks

In the introduction (chapter 1) reference was made to South Africa, the country in which I live. It is a country which today, eight years after the new political dispensation appeared, still struggles with numerous inner and outer struggles and conflicts. The struggles can in part be traced back to a worldview in which

group-differentiation and division were the order of the day. It was a world of exclusivity and particularity. But a new dispensation is not necessarily the result of a new vision of reality. Without a new and a revised vision, the new dispensation may be restricted to a “power exchange” and a “polar reversal” of fortunes. Former insiders become outsiders, and outsiders become insiders: “Transformation”, however, will in essence not have been achieved. The present conflicts in South Africa are an indication of a society engaged in the struggles attendant on all change, the abandonment of old systems and the acceptance of new ones. This study creates an awareness of divergent worldviews and maintains that the best way to work for reconciliation is the telling of stories, be it real-life stories, or fictional stories based on the everydayness of life. For a new vision to emerge, contrasting stories need to be juxtaposed. In the Lukan manner, the story I would like to tell, is that of a God who has mercy on all, who crosses any conventional boundaries that define the identity specific to an ethnic group or a “social class”, and creates a world, a family, in which divergent people find their identity in God who loves them all.

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