TO ALL NATIONS: AN EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE

PARABLES OF THE LORD IN LUKE

An Abstract

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation provides students of the New Testament and missions a biblical foundation for missions as revealed in the Gospel of Luke, and especially that foundation revealed in the parables found in this gospel. The study first examines the Gospel of Luke and the theme of universal missions found within it. Next, the history and theory of parable research and interpretation are examined. From this point the parables of the double and triple traditions are compared and contrasted in order to determine if Luke reveals his theme of universal missions in these parables.

Ultimately, this study focuses on an exegetical analysis of the parables unique to Luke. A methodology for determining the missionary nature of a given parable is developed and the fifteen parables unique to Luke's gospel are examined accordingly. Through this exegetical analysis, it is determined that 53% of the parables unique to Luke are direct invitations for Jesus' audience to join him in his universal mission. Another 27% of the parables, though not direct invitations to join this mission, support the idea of a universal mission. Together, a total of 80% of the parables found only in Luke support the idea of a universal mission. When added to the ten Lukan parables with Markan and Matthean counterparts, this total is increased to 84%.

It is concluded that Luke, who is writing to a Gentile audience and is himself a Gentile product of the church's missions, is very much concerned with providing his readers a
foundation for a universal mission. He relates this foundation through the recurrent concept of missions found within the pivotal missiological themes and texts of his gospel. However, his greatest argument for the necessity of a universal mission comes from the lips of Jesus. This is most evident within the genre of parable. Parable, then, serves as a contextualized form of Jesus' mission imperative and is an invitation for Jesus' auditors to join in that mission.

The dissertation spans the fields of biblical theology, New Testament criticism, and missiology. Sources used for this study come from all three areas, including works which focus specifically on parable interpretation.
To Chrissy
This paper represents the marriage of my two loves, biblical theology and missions. This marriage is truly an interesting symbiotic relationship. The *raison d' être* of theology is learning more about a God who, despite the covenant breaking of humanity, continually and patiently offers his creation a hand of reconciliation. The *raison d' être* of missions is sharing this message with a lost and dying world. Missions and theology, therefore, are intricately entwined and cannot be removed from one another. I am convinced that missions is the very heartbeat of the Lord and therefore occupies a primary place in Scripture. Luke, I believe, felt much the same way. Not only did he write about missions, he lived it. This study is an exercise in excavating what lies just beneath the surface of much of Luke's gospel and the parables contained therein. It is a message of love and hope for all nations, peoples, and strata of society. It is the message of missions in which all true disciples are called to join.

Concerning matters of style, this dissertation has followed the sixth edition of Kate L. Turabian's. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.* It was produced on an IBM 386DX computer using Lotus AmiPro 3.0 for Windows.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my father, W. Ralph Mann. He truly understands the primacy of missions for the church. Expressing true Christian discipleship, love for the lost, and what is best of the American entrepreneurial spirit, he founded the Mission Possible Foundation twenty-five years ago to reach those behind the dark veil of the
Iron Curtain. Today this parachurch ministry assists in building the church and expanding God's kingdom in eleven nations and three continents. Untold thousands are now kingdom citizens because of the visionary leadership of my father.

I would also like to express gratitude to Professor Thomas D. Lea who served as mentor and friend during my years in the doctoral program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. While serving as my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Lea went home to be with the Lord. He, too, understood the primacy of missions and exemplified this in his life, teaching, and leadership. His assistance and encouragement are greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Christine, to whom this study is dedicated. Thank you for your love, patience, support, encouragement, and friendship. "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all (Prov. 31:29)."

Soli Deo Gloria.

James A. Mann
CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................. iii
PREFACE .................................................................................. ix
ABBREVIATIONS ......................................................................... xiii

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................ 1
   The Research Problem
   Research Methodology
   Relevant Definitions
   Limitations of the Investigation

2. THE GOSPEL OF LUKE ......................................................... 20
   Preliminary Concerns
   The Missionary/Universal Nature of the Gospel
   Conclusions

3. THE PARABLES OF JESUS: A GENERAL OVERVIEW ............. 40
   Studying the Parables
   Defining the Parables
   Interpreting the Parables
   Conclusions

4. THE SYNOPTIC PARABLES OF JESUS: A COMPARISON OF THE
   PARABLES IN LUKE WITH THOSE IN MATTHEW AND MARK .... 59
   Scope of the Investigation
   An Analysis of the Parables in the Double Tradition
   xi
**ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Anchor Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAGD</td>
<td>Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDBG</td>
<td>The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BECNT</td>
<td>Baker Evangelical Commentary on the New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJRL</td>
<td>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EKK</td>
<td><em>Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMQ</td>
<td>Evangelical Missions Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ</td>
<td>The Evangelical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Expository Times</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETL</td>
<td><em>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSNT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEK</td>
<td><em>Kritisch-Exegetischen Kommentar</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>Mission Frontiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASB</td>
<td>New American Standard Bible</td>
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<td>Code</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICNT</td>
<td>The New International Commentary on the New Testament</td>
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<td>NIV</td>
<td>New International Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCBC</td>
<td>New Century Bible Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NovT</td>
<td>Novum Testamentum</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTS</td>
<td>New Testament Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZM</td>
<td>Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft</td>
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<tr>
<td>pars.</td>
<td>parallel passages in the Synoptic Gospels</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td>Revised Standard Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDNT</td>
<td>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</td>
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<td>TDOT</td>
<td>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>TR</td>
<td>Theological Review</td>
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<td>TrinJ</td>
<td>Trinity Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>TS</td>
<td>Theological Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>WBC</td>
<td>Word Biblical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZNTW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die neuestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZTK</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</td>
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Research Problem

After an illustrious and successful career in missions, the eminent missionary C. T. Studd spent the final years of his life in failing health, under the watchcare of others. One morning he was found on the floor in his room. Worried, the young man who was checking on him rushed in to see if the missionary was ill. Seeing that Studd was in no danger, the young man assumed the former missionary was in prayer for his beloved Africa. Instead, he was poring over the Holy Scriptures. When asked what he was doing, the missionary statesman replied, “I am looking for more commands of the Lord to obey.”

This illustration reveals the symbiotic nature of missiology and exegesis while underscoring the need for a solid biblical foundation for missions. Evangelical Christians are a missionary people because we are people of the Book, and the Bible requires missions of all those who claim to adhere to it.

The twentieth century has seen the emergence of the study of missions from its former discussion as one of many biblical themes to a field which now stands on its own academic merits. However, though missiology has advanced by quantum leaps in the past several decades, there is still much work to be done in the area of biblical foundations for missions. That is what this dissertation seeks to provide.
This is not to say that no work has been done recently in the area of discovering and communicating a biblical foundation for missions. Missiologists, while certainly accepting the missionary thread that runs throughout the tapestry of the Bible, tend to proffer a biblical foundation for mission by reciting the overt missionary mandates of Jesus and the historical precedent of the missionary activity of the Apostle Paul. Such works tend to provide the church with "missionary digests" by examining chosen passages which suit the church's missiological practice. Theologians, on the other hand, divorce themselves from current missionary practice and tend to examine the missionary strain found in Scripture systematically.

Johannes Blauw's seminal work on this topic, *The Missionary Nature of the Church: A Survey of the Biblical Theology of Mission*, is an excellent example of the latter. More recently, the Roman Catholic scholars Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller have also undertaken this same task. These works serve as handbooks which can provide much needed biblical foundations for students of world missions and can also provide a much needed

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misiological perspective for students of biblical theology. Examining the missionary thread throughout the entire biblical witness, however, has its limitations. Because these studies engage the entire scope of the Old and New Testaments, the missionary mandate of the Bible becomes anecdotal. One is left with the conclusion that the concept of missions is in fact important to the overarching message of Scripture, but its ultimate position is blurred by its myriad of expressions.

David J. Bosch, the prominent late missiologist, claimed that biblical scholars examining missions often work with little understanding of missions theory, and missiologists work from "a poor grounding in biblical theology." For missiology to continue to prosper as it has in the last few decades, the chasm between biblical theology and the study of missions must be bridged. Such work would not only fortify the fields of biblical theology and missiology, but ultimately it is the church, providing both missionary candidates and funding for missions, which would receive the most benefit.

Groundbreaking work has already begun. Andreas Köstenberger's work on the prominence of missions in the Gospel of John has revealed, among other things, that the evangelist was very much concerned with providing for his community a model and basis for

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missions found in the life and teaching of Christ. He has shown that missions and exegesis are intricately related.

Missions flows directly from theology, and exegesis must necessarily precede theology. Since different biblical authors vary in their terminology and theology, "it becomes important to speak of John's or Matthew's mission concept before tying the various strands of biblical teaching on mission together." This dissertation will therefore attempt to bridge the gap described above by providing exegesis in the Gospel of Luke, particularly in the parables contained in the Third Gospel, as a means of uncovering the underlying missionary theme of this document.

It is necessary at this point to note three significant pericopes in this Gospel which give rise to the methodology laid out below. The first is Luke 1:1-4, where Luke sets out his purpose for writing the Gospel: "to write an orderly account" of the success of the church: "the things which have been accomplished among us." This passage serves to connect the Jewish beginnings of the gospel to its ultimate destination in Gentile Rome. This destination is

"Ibid., 1.

7 These passages will be examined in greater detail in chapter 2.

reached in volume two of Luke's narrative (i.e. Acts). Thus, Luke's is a missionary gospel from the outset.

The second passage is found in Luke 24:45-49. Here Jesus specifically commands the missions of the disciples to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem. Again, Luke connects his readers to the Acts of the Apostles and the disciples' obedience to this missionary mandate.

The final pericope, and the most significant for this investigation, is found in Luke 4:14-30. In this account, unique to Luke, Jesus is shown teaching on the nature of the kingdom in a somewhat formalized setting in the Nazareth synagogue. His message to the religious leaders was inclusiveness. The kingdom of God, which the Spirit had anointed Jesus to introduce, was one which had no human boundaries. Not only were those on the fringe of society welcomed (the poor, captives, blind, and oppressed), but the Gentiles as well (note the references to Elijah's and Elisha's ministries among the Gentiles). This was a significant turning point in Jesus' ministry for Luke. Jesus' message of a universal kingdom was rejected by the religious leaders and taken to the people. It was at this point in his ministry that Jesus began to teach in parables.

The message remained the same, the openness of the kingdom to "outsiders," but the medium of the message changed. Jesus contextualized the message in a way that would be understood by the common man: the parable. Through the parables Luke shows that universal mission was not an afterthought of the Lord, but was at the forefront of his plans. Luke was convinced of the primacy of this mission both from Jesus' "Nazareth manifesto" and

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9 Elsewhere Jesus is shown as teaching in the synagogues in Luke 4:43-44 and Matthew 4:23.
from his parables: invitations for the Jews to join in that universal mission. By exegetically examining the parables in the Gospel of Luke, this investigation will seek to determine the role of the parables in Luke's emphasis on a universal mission.

The title of this work, "To All Nations: An Exegetical Analysis of the Parables of the Lord in Luke," reflects the emphasis on a universal kingdom in Luke. The phrase "to all nations" is taken from Jesus' missionary mandate of Luke 24:47. Being a Gentile himself,1⁹ living in a Gentile-Christian environment, having participated in the Gentile mission with the apostle Paul, and most likely writing to a Gentile, Luke is very much concerned with the continuing mission to the Gentiles. Writing several years after the apostolic decree of Jerusalem (Acts 15), Luke shows that the Jewish/Gentile question had been solved theologically for some years. However, there was still an undercurrent in the church which suggested that the Gentiles were admitted into the kingdom only because the Jews had passed on the opportunity. Luke is concerned with showing his readers that Jesus offered acceptance to Gentiles and other outsiders throughout his earthly ministry. This is not to say that Luke shows a kingdom open to Gentiles over/against or instead of the Jews. Thus, the open kingdom implied in the title connotes a kingdom which accepts those of faith, transcending genealogical lines. The overt command of the Lord is tied to the more subtle missionary teaching found in the parables described in the subtitle.

The subtitle, "An Exegetical Analysis of the Parables of the Lord in Luke," is descriptive of the methodology proposed herein. This dissertation will attempt to show the open nature of the kingdom in Luke by examining Jesus' teaching found in the parables. This examination will attempt to discover the role the parables played in Jesus' call for a universal mission. The dissertation, therefore, is a New Testament dissertation with elements of application in the field of missiology.

**Research Methodology**

This paper centers on the emphasis found in the Gospel of Luke upon mission among the Gentiles and outcasts of Jewish society. It will be necessary first to establish the Gentile origins and milieu of the Gospel. This Gentile origin will show that Luke was concerned with the mission of Jesus among the nations. To buttress this assertion, it will be necessary to illustrate further the missionary/universal nature of the Gospel by examining characteristics peculiar to Luke's Gospel. From this study, it should be possible to draw some overarching conclusions as to Luke's missiology and the source of his concern for the Gentile/universal mission.

If, in fact, it can be established that Luke is concerned with a universal kingdom, open to both Jews and Gentiles, the question remains how this message is expressed in his Gospel. Working from the hypothesis described above, that Jesus first took his universal message to the religious establishment of his day, and that this message was rejected (Luke 4:14-30), the dissertation will examine the parables of the Lord. In fact, Jesus is shown on several occasions teaching in the synagogues of the Jews.\(^\text{11}\) Almost none of his teaching, with the

above exception, is recorded. If Luke 4 provides an exemplar of Jesus' synagogue teaching, it can be assumed that the nature of this synagogue teaching certainly concerned the kingdom of God and most likely its openness to all of humanity.

As this teaching was never codified and included in the theology of the religious establishment, but summarily rejected in these "formalized" settings, attempt will be made to show that parables provided the conduit for Jesus' teaching. Jesus took this message to those who would listen and put it into a medium which would be understood by the common man. This "contextualized theology" found in the parables provides the reader of Luke's Gospel the crystallization and summation of Jesus' understanding of inclusiveness toward the nations. This was an integral part of "the secrets of the kingdom of God" which the parables are meant to reveal. For Luke, Jesus' parables also served a twofold purpose. Jesus' parables served: 1) to show the theological reality of God's desire to reconcile all humanity unto himself; and 2) to invite God's chosen people, the Jews, to join in this mission. The parables were therefore quite significant to Luke as he includes more than any other gospel writer.

Chapter 2 will briefly examine some of the preliminary elements necessary for studying the Gospel of Luke. Of interest for this study are questions of authorship, recipient(s), date and provenance, and purpose. This introductory survey will launch further examination into Luke's missiology. Aspects of the missionary/universal nature of the Gospel will be examined in hopes of determining the source of Luke's concern for a universal mission.

It is the goal of chapter 2 to open the door to an exegetical/missiological examination of the parables of Jesus. Luke viewed Jesus' emphasis on an open kingdom and universal

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mission through the lens of his own Gentile background, community, and missions experience. He communicates this message of the Lord in his Gospel by describing the ministry of Jesus in universal terms. However, the missionary message becomes more prominent in the contingencies of Jesus' ministry. These historical realities of Jesus' ministry (his rejection at Nazareth, the many contexts in which he taught, the questions he faced from disciples and skeptics) act as a prism which refracts into the many parables Jesus taught. Many of these serve as invitations for the Jews to join the universal mission. A concluding section will summarize and interpret the data presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3 will discuss parables in general. This chapter will provide an overarching framework for the exegetical section of this dissertation. Relevant issues in parable research will be discussed and synthesized, especially those relating to the hermeneutics of parable interpretation. A concluding section will summarize and interpret the data presented in this chapter.

The dissertation will then examine the parables exegetically in an attempt to determine if in fact they are in concord with the twofold purpose described above. For this to occur, it

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14 That is: 1) to show the theological reality of God's desire to reconcile all humanity unto himself; and 2) to invite God's chosen people, the Jews, to join in this mission.
will be necessary first to examine the parables found in the double and triple traditions of the Synoptics.

Chapter 4 will begin the investigation into the parables of Jesus found in Luke. This chapter will compare Luke's parables with Matthew's and Mark's. Although this dissertation will focus primarily on the parables unique to Luke's Gospel, comparing his with the other synoptists' parables will provide valuable information for this study. The twofold goal of this chapter is first, to see how Luke handles and interprets Jesus' parables and second, to determine if Luke casts the parables of the double and triple traditions in a missiological hue. The chapter is subdivided into three sections. Section one will outline the scope of these comparisons. This will be done by asking three major questions of these parables. First, are there elements pertaining to the inclusiveness of the kingdom found in Luke but missing in Matthew and/or Mark? Second, does Luke omit elements which might not support his message of inclusivity? Third, what is the difference, if any, in the contexts of these parables? Section two will compare the parables of the double tradition, those found in Matthew and Luke. Section three will compare the parables of the triple tradition, those found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Sections two and three will have summaries of the data from the comparisons, and a concluding section will summarize and interpret the data presented in the entire chapter.

Chapter 5 provides the bulk of this work and is concerned with the parables unique to Luke. Through exegetical examination, it will be necessary to investigate the missionary nature of the Lukan parables. For this to occur, a methodology must be devised for

\[15\] A more complete description of this methodology can be found in chapter 4.
determining what makes a parable missions-oriented in nature. The methodology proposed herein will seek to show that a parable is either: 1) inclusive and a direct invitation for the Jews to join in the universal mission; 2) inclusive and supportive of a universal mission while not a direct invitation to join in the mission; or 3) non-missions related.

A parable that is inclusive and a direct invitation to join in Jesus' mission would include one or more of the following elements: The specific mention of Gentiles/outsiders joining or entering the kingdom of God; a replacement motif in which people once blessed are replaced by others normally viewed as outsiders; a lost and found motif; and/or a negative reference to the Jewish religious leadership.

A parable that is supportive of a mission to the nations, while not serving as a direct invitation to join that mission, would include one or more of the following elements: Emphasis on the activity of belief (that is anyone who hears and believes, with no mention of genealogical background, can enter the kingdom); a small to large motif in which the kingdom is shown as expanding; an emphasis on good works or faithfulness with what one has received; and/or emphasis on an end time universal reward or judgment. It is necessary at this point to note that such elements found in Jesus' parables do not specifically call for a universal mission, but are supportive of such a mission in that they support universality in general. If it can be shown that the universal mission is one of Luke's major themes, then these parables can be viewed as supporting the theme of a universal mission among the nations.

Parables which are unrelated to missions are found throughout the Gospel. Such parables speak of the worth of the kingdom, signs of the consummation and preparedness for that event, prayer, money/covetousness, and the cost of discipleship. These parables simply

\[16\] This methodology is outlined more fully in chapter 5.
show that Jesus, and Luke by his inclusion of these parables, was concerned with other
elements of faith outside the scope of missions.

A concluding chapter summarizes and interprets the data uncovered in this
dissertation. Application will be made in the fields of New Testament scholarship and
missiology. Final application will be made in the area of a biblical foundation for missions.

The dissertation contains three appendices which chronicle some of the work done in
this investigation. Appendix 1. "The Parables of Jesus." presents the reader with a reference
list of the parables of Jesus found in the Synoptic Gospels. Appendix 2, "The Missionary
Nature of the Lukan Parables," charts the parables in Luke following the interpretive grid
outlined in chapter five. Appendix 3, "A Comparison of the Missionary Nature of the
Synoptic Parables," is a comparison of the missionary nature of the Synoptic parables where
the same interpretive grid applied to the parables in Luke is used for Matthew and Mark. The
data is represented in a comparative list.

Relevant Definitions

Open lines of communication are needed for an investigation attempting to span two
fields of study to succeed. For this dissertation, it will be necessary for some measure of
dialogue between the fields of New Testament/biblical studies and missiology. It seems
appropriate, therefore, to begin with some definitions which will prove significant for this
study.
Mission and Missions

Although the words are often used interchangeably, there is a distinction between the terms mission and missions. Mission is to be viewed in terms of the missio Dei: God's mission of reconciling humanity unto himself. Missions, on the other hand, is the missiones ecclesiae: the missions activities of the church. Here the church acts as instruments for participation in God's ultimate mission of reconciliation. This understanding properly places mission in the context of the Trinity and missions in the context of ecclesiology and soteriology.

Parable

Most simply defined, a parable is an extended or expanded simile. Whereas a simile contains one main verb, a formal comparison (using "like" or "as"), and a literal use of words, a parable contains many past tense verbs which take the form of a story. A. B. Mickelsen notes eight major characteristics of parables: 1) plurality of verbs in the past tense; 2) formal comparison; 3) words used literally; 4) one chief point of comparison; 5) particular example or a specific occurrence; 6) imagery kept distinct from the thing signified; 7) story true to the facts and experiences of life; and 8) explained by telling what the imagery stands for in light of the main points of the story.

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17 This point was first articulated by Karl Barth, "Die Theologie und die Mission in der Gegenwart" in Theologische Fragen und Antworten, vol. 3 (Zürich: Evangelisten Verlag, 1957), 100-26.


19 A. Berkeley Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1963), 213.
These example stories.\textsuperscript{20} are quite similar to other extended figures of speech. Parables, like allegories, invariably illustrate moral or religious lessons. However, allegories differ from parables in that allegories are extended metaphors,\textsuperscript{21} wherein elements of the story carry ethical or spiritual meaning.\textsuperscript{22} Parables differ from similitudes in only two characteristics. Similitudes carry present tense verbage and do not describe specific occurrences, but customary habits or timeless truths.\textsuperscript{23}

For the purpose of this study, "parables" will be limited to illustrations, extended similes or similitudes, and example stories. Also included are sayings which, though not fitting the description "extended," are specifically designated as parables by the text of Luke. A superscript "P" in appendix 1 denotes the latter. Lukan similes and similitudes, usually containing ως or a form of ὑπότετος in the introductory formula, are considered comparisons and are denoted by a superscript "C" in appendix 1.

\textsuperscript{20} Hence, the German \textit{Gleichniserzählung}.

\textsuperscript{21} Metaphors contain one verb, a direct comparison, and use words figuratively.

\textsuperscript{22} Duncan S. Ferguson, \textit{Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction} (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986), 91. Allegories should be differentiated from allegorical interpretations of parables which seek to find "hidden meanings" within the elements of the example story. See chapter 3 for a more in-depth discussion of the allegorical nature of the parables.

\textsuperscript{23} Mickelsen, 213. As parables and similitudes are almost identical, they are rarely differentiated. Though this investigation centers on "parables," the scope will include similitudes. The distinctions between these figures of speech can be seen most clearly in examples. An example of a \textit{simile} is found in Isaiah 53:7 (cf. Acts 8:32), "... like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb..." A \textit{similitude} is found in the account of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7). A \textit{parable} is found in this same context with the parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32). An \textit{allegory} can be found in John 10:1-16, "I am the door of the sheep... (John 10:7)." A \textit{metaphor} is found John 1:29, "Behold, the Lamb of God."
Contextualized Theology

Contextualization of the gospel is defined by R. Winter and S. Hawthorne as "examining the Gospel in the light of the respondent world view and then adapting the message, encoding it in such a way that it can become meaningful to respondents," or "presenting the gospel in forms that are appropriate to the local culture and society." Although other terms can be used to describe this communication theory, contextualization is the most comprehensive. Describing parables as contextualized theology simply emphasizes the fact that Jesus taught kingdom (supracultural) principles as the context dictated with the goal of "connecting" with the hearer.

Invitation

An element of the thesis of this investigation is that many of Jesus' parables contained in the Gospel of Luke serve as "invitations" for the Jews to join in Jesus' universal mission. Invitation, in this context, refers to a proposition or suggestion. It is something which is

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25 D. Hesselgrave offers other terms such as accommodation, adaptation, indigenization, and inculturation. *Vid.* David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 82.

26 J. O. Buswell shows that contextualization can be seen to include elements of inculturation, indigenization, and ethnotheology where supracultural truths are placed within the realm of the hearer's "system": "linguistic idiom . . . concepts of priority, sequence, time, space, elements of order, customs of validation and assertion, styles of emphasis and expression." *Vid.* James Oliver Buswell, III, "Contextualization: Theory, Tradition and Method," in *Theology and Mission*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 98.
proposed to another for consideration. This may be achieved either implicitly, by example, or explicitly, by statement.

Nations

As the title of this work suggests, "nation(s)" is a significant term in dealing with the missiological scope of the Gospel of Luke. At a paper delivered to the Lausanne Congress of World Evangelization in 1974, Ralph Winter began to expand the mission community's--and New Testament scholars'--conception of this key term:

I'm afraid that all our exultation about the fact that every country of the world has been penetrated has allowed many to suppose that every culture has by now been penetrated. This misunderstanding is a malady so widespread that it deserves a special name. Let us call it "people blindness," that is, blindness to the existence of separate peoples within countries...

No longer was the mandate to reach the nations to be seen as a call only to reach man-made geo-political structures. The mission community began to see its task as reaching people groups.

This understanding is very much in harmony with the New Testament usage of the term *ethnos*, as John Piper illustrates in his study of this word. The singular usage of


28 A people group is defined by the 1982 Lausanne Strategy Working Group as "a significantly large grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, etc. or combination of these... [which is] the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance." Vid. Ralph Winter, "Unreached Peoples: Recent Developments in the Concept," in Mission Frontiers (MF) (August-September 1989), 12.

εἰκόνας never refers to an individual, but to a "people group" such as the Jews. The plural εἶδη, however, often refers to a people group but sometimes refers to Gentile individuals.

In the eighteen occurrences of the phrase πάντα τὰ εἴδη, only one refers to Gentile individuals, nine refer to people groups, and the remaining eight may also refer to people groups. The majority of references to εἴδη in the New Testament follow the Old Testament άνα as a technical term for Gentiles as distinct from the Jews.

What is clear from this brief study is that these New Testament authors, and the Lord in his command to go to πάντα τὰ εἴδη, were less concerned with geo-political boundaries.

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30 Cf. Matt. 24:7; Acts 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 5:9. But note well that reading the modern understanding of "people group" back into the NT text is a hermeneutical fallacy. For instance, Matt. 24:7 speaks of the rising up of εἴδη εἰς εἴδη καὶ βασιλεία εἰς βασιλείαν. This instance is clearly a reference to geo-political "nations."


32 Matt. 25:32.


34 Matt. 24:9, 14; 28:19; Luke 12:30; 24:47; Acts 14:16; 2 Tim. 4:17; Rom. 1:5.


36 Although there was no differentiation early on, the Hebrews began to use the plural נָּא (LXX εἴδη) as a technical term for Gentiles over/against the singular נָא for themselves as the holy, or chosen, people. Vid. ibid., 364-65. Such interpretation of εἴδη is in keeping with the LXX translation of "א as which often carries the connotation of "foreigners," that is, anyone outside of the Jewish race. Vid. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, William Gesenius, The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDBG) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1979), 156.
than they were with the constituent parts of these nations. Therefore, "nations" is a universal
term and does not necessarily refer to earthly kingdoms, but Gentile peoples as a whole.\textsuperscript{37}

\textbf{Universal}

The term "universal" is a key term for understanding the missions emphasis put forth
by the Third Gospel. First, \textit{universal} should be differentiated from the term \textit{Universalism},
which is the basic understanding that all of humanity will ultimately be saved through God's
gracious intervention. Rather, as it is used in this investigation, \textit{universal} speaks of the scope
of Jesus' and the church's mission(s) and not the end result of the mission(s). Here, the term
describes the ability of a concept or idea to be embraced and expressed by all cultures and all
peoples.\textsuperscript{38} It is descriptive of Jesus' mandate that the message be taken to "all nations."

\textbf{Limitations of the Investigation}

This dissertation will cover a number of different areas pertaining to biblical theology
and scholarship; directed study in the Gospel of Luke, directed study of the parables, and
missiology. However, the emphasis in this study is on exegesis of the parables found in Luke,
especially those unique to the Third Gospel. Therefore, new forays into into background
questions of Luke and parable research will not be made. Rather, these studies will set the
stage for the exegesis found in this investigation. Similarly, evaluation of parables found in

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Vid.} Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker, \textit{A
Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BAGD)}

\textsuperscript{38} Senior and Stuhlmueller, 2.
the double and triple traditions will be brief and is included in the investigation in order to
 CHAPTER 2

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Preliminary Concerns

Before examining Luke’s parables in depth, it is first necessary to understand as much as possible about the author himself and the Gospel which bears his name. Who was the author traditionally known as Luke? To whom did he write? When and from where did he write? What was his purpose in writing? Finding answers to these questions will open doors for further study into the author’s missiology.

Authorship and Background of the Gospel

The author of the Third Gospel does not identify himself within his text. In his opening passage (1:1-4) the author simply states that he intends to "compile a narrative" based upon accounts, and possibly previous narratives, from eyewitnesses and "ministers of the word." It is clear, therefore, that the author was not an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus and that he came to faith later. That he claims to have "followed all things closely" in order to produce "an orderly account," suggests that he wished to be taken seriously as both a

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historian and theologian.  

In order to determine authorship of the Third Gospel, it is necessary to examine both the external and internal evidence. Strong external evidence from the second century reveals that, by this time in church history, tradition had been established that Luke was the author of the Third Gospel. It is also clear that the gospel attributed to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles were viewed by the church as having common authorship.

Several internal elements suggest that the Gospel of Luke and Acts were written by the same author:  

1) Both were dedicated to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1);  
2) Acts refers to "the first book" (Acts 1:1) which is naturally understood as the preceding Gospel;  
3) there

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4 Guthrie states that the lack of hesitation in admitting Acts into the canon of NT writings was due to its "close association with the Gospel of Luke." Vid. Guthrie, 115.

5 Ibid.
are strong similarities in style and language between the two; 4) they share common interests; and 5) Acts seems to be a continuation of the gospel account.

If the author of the Gospel is in fact the author of Acts as the evidence suggests, one must look to the latter for clues to the author's identity. The second element of internal evidence, then, is found in Acts, specifically in the "we" passages of the latter half of the book. These passages (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16) speak of the Apostle Paul's ministry in the first person plural and suggest that the author was a companion of Paul. Of the possible candidates, only Luke is given attention in church tradition as the author of these two volumes.

It is therefore the most logical conclusion, based on the external and internal evidence, that Luke was the author of the Third Gospel and Acts. This evidence, though conclusive as to who wrote the gospel, gives little information about Luke himself.

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6 Bruce gives the following examples: 1) catholic sympathies; 2) interest in Gentiles; 3) prominence given to women; 4) similar apologetic tendencies; 5) Judean resurrection appearances; and 6) Jesus' appearance before Herod Antipas (not mentioned elsewhere in the NT). *Vid.* F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2d ed. (London: Tyndale, 1952), 2.


suggested by a majority of commentators\textsuperscript{10} that Luke was a Gentile and a physician.\textsuperscript{11}

Concerning his racial background, there is good evidence to suggest that Luke was a Gentile. First, in Acts 1:19 Luke mentions the field at which Judas hanged himself, noting that it became a well known place to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and "was called in their language" Akeldama. Second, Luke has a penchant for mentioning Hellenistic locales. Third, as is central to the thesis of this dissertation, Luke is very much concerned with Gentiles. Fourth, Luke has an excellent command of Greek language and style. Finally, and pivotal in the debate concerning Luke's racial background, he is described as one of Paul's co-workers who was not one of the "men of the circumcision (Col. 4:10-11, 14)."

Despite these characteristics, some scholars contend Luke was a Jew.\textsuperscript{12} For instance, Ellis bases his arguments on Luke's extensive knowledge of the Old Testament, his use of the Palestinian language, and an interpretation of Colossians 4:10-11 which describes not a racial,


\textsuperscript{11} The tradition that Luke was a doctor is not significant for this study, though it is interesting. He is described by Paul in Col. 4:14 as "Luke the beloved physician." The case was made by W. K. Hobart in 1882 that the language found in Luke and Acts was replete with technical medical terminology. \textit{Vid.} W. K. Hobart, \textit{The Medical Language of St. Luke} (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954). However, subsequent work by Cadbury has shown that Luke's medical language was no more technical than that found in other literature of the same period. \textit{Vid.} H. J. Cadbury, \textit{The Making of Luke-Acts} (New York: MacMillan Company, 1927). One is therefore left to determine Luke's occupation based upon Paul's statement in Col. 4:14. Hobart's work, then, becomes corroborating evidence to this fact (which is also found extensively in church tradition).

\textsuperscript{12} Ellis (himself included in this list) lists B. Reicke, W. F. Albright, A. Schlatter, E. C. Selwyn, and B. S. Easton. \textit{Vid.} Ellis, 52.
but ritual distinction. In other words, that Luke was not "of the circumcision" does not reveal his Gentile heritage but his Hellenistic leanings.\(^{13}\)

Fitzmeyer argues that Luke was a non-Jewish Semite based on (1) church tradition placing him in Antioch of Syria, (2) the shortened Greek form of his Latin name, and (3) the Colossians text.\(^{14}\) Though it is not clear if Luke had a Semitic cultural background or had religious contact with Judaism before his conversion to Christianity, it does seem evident that he was a Gentile.\(^{15}\) Therefore, the author of the Third Gospel (and Acts) was a non-Jewish, Gentile (possibly Syrian or Greco-Roman) companion of Paul named Luke who was most likely a physician by trade.

\section*{Recipient(s) of the Gospel}

Both Luke (1:3) and Acts (1:1) are dedicated to Theophilus. Little is known about this man, though much has been proffered by way of hypothesis. It can be surmised from Luke's appellation \textit{kprato} in Luke 1:3 that he was someone with a higher official or social position than the author.\(^{16}\) There is a possibility, therefore, that Theophilus was a Roman

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \(^{13}\) Ibid., 52-53. Ellis notes that the circumcision party can mean different things in different contexts: Jews (Rom. 4:12), Jewish Christians, and Judaizers (Gal. 2:12), although the latter would not fit in this Colossians passage. It seems here that Paul is describing Jewish co-workers. Bock notes that Ellis' reading of Col. 4:10-11 is not a natural one. \textit{Vid.} Bock, \textit{Luke Vol. 1}, 6.
  
  
  \item \(^{15}\) So Bock, \textit{Luke Vol. 1}, 6-7. Ellis' objections (Luke's knowledge of the OT and Palestinian language) can be answered by Fitzmeyer's proposal. Also, one must take into account the possibility that Luke, as a careful researcher, studied these fields in the compilation of his narrative (he was sure to have received some OT instruction as a co-worker and fellow traveler with Paul).
  
  \item \(^{16}\) Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, \textit{Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament} (Grand
official who had recently become a Christian or who was investigating the faith. Luke 1:3-4 suggests that Theophilus had already received some instruction in the faith and that Luke was writing in order to fill the gaps left in his teaching. It was not uncommon in the first century for authors to dedicate their works to wealthy patrons who would in turn see to the publication and dissemination of that work. If this is the case with Luke's two volume dedication to Theophilus, Luke very well may have had a larger Gentile audience in mind as he wrote the narratives.

Date and Provenance of Writing the Gospel

The majority of scholars place the date of Luke's Gospel in one of two time periods: 1) between A.D. 60-65; and 2) A.D. 70-90. Those holding to a later date point to Luke's more specific account of the fall of Jerusalem (21:20-24; cf. Matt. 24:15-28; Mark 13:14-23), arguing that it is more descriptive because Luke wrote after the fact. Proponents of a later date also point to the "late theological climate" of Luke. Three major factors suggest the

17 Other conjectures at this point abound. T. Zahn suggests because the address "most excellent Theophilus" in Luke becomes simply "Theophilus" in Acts that the addressee had become a Christian between the penning of the two volumes. Vide Theodore Zahn, Das Evangelium des Lucas (Leipzig: Deichert, 1913), 56-59. B. H. Streeter believes Theophilus --meaning "(be)loved by God" or "lover of God" (BAGD, 358)--is a possible pseudonym for Titus Flavius Clemens who was "heir-presumptive" of Emperor Domitian. Vide B. H. Streeter, The Four Gospels (London: MacMillan, 1924), 539.

18 Geldenhuys, 54.

19 Ellis, 55.

20 But Ellis notes such reasoning disallows the predictive prophecy of Jesus in Luke 21:20-24, which itself (following Dodd) is composed of OT phraseology. Similarly, Ellis states, "It is difficult to say whether Luke's theology, specifically his eschatology and his
The Gospel should be dated between A.D. 60-65. First, Luke (in his Gospel and Acts) mentions no event after A.D. 63. Most notable in their omission are the destruction of Jerusalem, the martyrdom of James, and the execution of Paul. These significant events, had they occurred before writing, would certainly have been included in Luke's history. Second, the abrupt ending of Acts suggests that his writing ended concomitantly with the event being described, that is, Paul's imprisonment in Rome. Had Luke known of the outcome of Paul's pending trial, it would seem that this would have been included. Finally, one must wonder if the positive picture of Rome which Luke paints in Acts could be written during or after Nero's savage persecution of Christians in A.D. 64. It seems, therefore, that the Gospel was written between A.D. 60-65, before Luke's second volume, and before the persecution of the church which surfaced during the reign of Nero.


23 The destination of the document is even less clear. It seems, though, based on the recipient (Theophilus) and the translation of names found in the Gospel (e.g. 6:15; 23:33) that it was written for an audience outside of Palestine. Vid. Ellis, 62.
Purpose for Writing the Gospel

The most logical point from which to begin a discussion of the purpose of Luke's Gospel is the author's own purpose statement of 1:1-4. Following this programmatic statement, T. D. Lea notes that Luke has three major purposes: 1) to write an accurate history of the beginning of Christianity; 2) to write in order; and 3) to provide readers with a basis for their Christian faith. So much is stated explicitly in the text of Luke. However, for years scholars have sought to find a purpose behind this purpose.

P. F. Esler argues that the Gospel is an "exercise in the legitimation of a sectarian movement, as a sophisticated attempt to explain and justify Christianity to the members of his [Luke's] community at a time when they were exposed to social and political pressures which were making their allegiance waver." Others, such as Mattill, see the two-volume work as a justification for the apostle Paul, even suggesting Luke wrote to provide a defense

\[\text{Lea, 150-51.}\]

\[\text{F. Bovon claims that Luke wrote a historical monographie reminiscent of Jewish histories. This genre was employed in OT writings as well as in Hellenistic historiographie. Vid. F. Bovon, Das Evangelium nach Lukas, 1 Teilband Lk 1,1-9,50, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (EKK), ed. J. Blank, R. Schnackenburg, E. Schweizer, and U. Wilckens (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1978), 19.}\]

\[\text{Lea notes that this order is not always chronological. "Orderly" should therefore be taken to mean that Luke wrote to be thorough in his account, probably to complete incomplete accounts in circulation. Vid. Lea, 151.}\]

\[\text{For a list of eleven such theories see Bock, Luke Vol. 1, 14.}\]

\[\text{P. F. Esler, Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology (Cambridge: University Press, 1987), 222. Esler places significance on the emphatically placed } \text{δοκάλειν} \text{ in 1:4 and translates it as "assurance" or "reassurance." He is certainly correct in his assertion that there were significant sociological, religious, and political issues at stake in the Christian community of Luke's day. However, he assumes a late date for the Gospel and discredits Luke as a historian (in the sense of relaying actual facts). He states that Luke "re-presents" traditions so as to erect a "symbolic universe"}\]
brief for Paul's upcoming trial.\textsuperscript{39}

Whatever Luke's overarching purpose, it seems evident that it included within its framework the Gentile mission. This is shown in the fact that the prologue of Luke is tied to Acts, specifically Acts 1:8.\textsuperscript{30} As the fruitful Gentile mission (i.e. that which was "accomplished among us," 1:1) is significant to Luke, he sets out to show the reason for its fruitfulness: the appearance of the Messiah and his rejection by the Jews within the realm of salvation history.\textsuperscript{31} But as will be shown in the next section, Luke intended to do more than simply describe the beginning of the mission to the Gentiles. He wrote to justify this mission theologically. He shows, by the universal nature of his Gospel, that the kingdom was intended to include Gentiles and others from the beginning and would be closed by their evangelization.\textsuperscript{32} Luke's Gospel, then, is a document which at once describes the historical beginnings of the Christian community and promotes the universal/Gentile mission. This is done by providing historical and theological justification for the community's inclusion of Gentiles and outsiders, all the while encouraging those in the community (Jew and Gentile alike) with a basis for their belief.

in order to give meaning and justification to his community (222).

\textsuperscript{39}Matil\lring, 349-50. However, material which would be relevant to Paul's trial appears first in Acts 7, making the Gospel of Luke largely irrelevant to such a defense brief. Filbeck, 165-67, suggests that Luke wrote to defend Paul's interpretation of the Scriptures concerning the Gentile mission.

\textsuperscript{30}See the discussion of Luke 1:1-4 below for details.

\textsuperscript{31}Ellis, 61.

\textsuperscript{32}Luke expected the consummation of the kingdom to come speedily (18:8) but not immediately (19:11; 21:9). Important to God's plan was the evangelization of the nations which, through his promotion of the Gentile mission, Luke sought to expedite (cf. Matt. 24:14).
The Missionary/Universal Nature of the Gospel

From the study thus far, it seems certain that Luke was concerned with the Gentile's place within the kingdom of God. Therefore, it is a fundamental element of this study that Luke wrote his Gospel in universal terms, precisely because he viewed the gospel inclusively. The universal (and therefore missionary) nature of the gospel is evident throughout Luke's account. Three pivotal passages reveal this understanding: his prologue in which he establishes the purpose for writing (1:1-4); Jesus' inaugural ministry sermon in 4:14-30; and Luke's Great Commission which serves as the final bookend for the Gospel (24:45-49). The universal/missionary nature of the Gospel is further demonstrated through the many universal theological themes found throughout the narrative.

Scriptural Passages

Luke 1:1-4

Luke's brief prologue is vital for understanding the missionary nature of the Gospel. It is a statement which is at once forward and backward-looking. As a prologue to his Gospel, these four verses are forward-looking. They set the stage for the historical account which they precede. However, the missiological significance of the prologue is found in the retrospective construction of the statement. Luke sets out his purpose to write an orderly account of the things "which have been [already] accomplished among us (1:1)." Theref ore, he is looking back on the life of Christ from the vantage point of the success of the church.

33 The phrase πεπληρωμένων ἐν ἡμῖν is a perfect passive participial phrase and should carry the connotation of something having been accomplished (cf. NASB). Vid. Rienecker and Rogers, 137.
Luke is in fact a product of the church's success. He is a second or third generation Christian and uses as his sources for this narrative both eyewitnesses (the disciples and others) and ministers of the word (Paul). By referencing the accomplishments of the church in the first verse of his Gospel, Luke reveals the missionary nature of the narrative. His retrospective prologue ties the Gospel to his second volume, Acts, and specifically to the purpose statement of Acts I:8. In other words, Luke sets out in his Gospel to show the beginnings of the success of the church which reaches its ultimate fulfillment with the arrival of the gospel message to Gentile Rome.

Luke 4:14-30

The Gospels record two separate accounts of rejections of Jesus in Nazareth. The differences between Luke 4:14-30 and a similar Nazarene rejection in Matthew 13:53-58 and Mark 6:1-6 suggest the descriptions of two events. This first rejection of Jesus in Nazareth


35 The first major difference is context. Matthew and Mark place the rejection at the climax of the Galilean ministry, while Luke records a rejection in Nazareth as the preface to Jesus' public ministry. The second major difference is the amount of detail included in Luke's account but not found in Matthew and Mark. Thirdly, the conclusions of the accounts stand in stark contrast to one another. While Jesus is shown continuing his ministry in Matthew and Mark (albeit without "many mighty works"), Luke's account ends violently.

It is argued that perhaps Luke has a source which goes beyond that of Matthew and Mark and has expanded the pericope for theological purposes. So Hugh Anderson, "Broadening Horizons: The Rejection at Nazareth Pericope of Luke 4:16-30 in Light of Recent Critical Trends," *Interpretation* 18 no. 3 (1964) 260. Thus, the aphorism concerning a prophet's honor is included in all three accounts. However, such argumentation does not take into account a teacher using "a good line" in several different settings. Similarly, Luke's placement of the rejection so far out of context would call into question his credibility as a historian. *Vid.* F. C. Baur, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Deichert, 1866-7), 108ff. Luke may not have been the scientific researcher and chronicler (to modern
by the synagogue congregation and religious leaders serves as the jumping off point for Jesus' ministry in Luke.

Several facts concerning this pericope are significant for the study of the missiology of Luke. The first is Jesus' choice of text and the claim of its fulfillment. Luke pays careful attention to the detail that Jesus chose a specific passage from which to speak. He describes Jesus standing, opening the book, and finding the words of Isaiah 61:1-2. The context of the Isaiah passage is Messianic, describing the mass conversion of Gentiles (60:4-14) and the prosperity of the Messianic kingdom (60:15-22).

That Jesus applied this Messianic passage to himself certainly drew the ire of his hearers. However, they were perhaps more appalled that Jesus ended the passage where he standards) Robertson suggests. *Vid.* A. T. Robertson, *Luke the Historian in Light of Research* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), 42ff. (Note Luke's mention of Jesus' previous ministry in Capernaum--a place he has yet to visit in Luke, Luke 4:23). However, enough differences in these accounts exist to suggest the rejection in Luke precedes that of Matthew and Mark: "It is perfectly natural that after a long interval he should give the Nazarenes another opportunity to hear his teaching, and to witness miracles, which he would not work for them when demanded, but now [in a second visit to Nazareth] voluntarily works in a few cases, so far as their now wonderful unbelief left it appropriate." *Vid.* A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* (New York: Harper and Row, 1922), 77.


*Vid.* Luke 4:21. Luke provides his readers with three responses to this Messianic declaration: 1) the audience "spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth;" 2) their question, "Is this not Joseph's son?;" and 3) Jesus' response, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician heal yourself.'" It is somewhat difficult to reconcile these three statements as the first seems positive, while statements two and three are decidedly negative (tying this "Messiah" to a common laborer showed open contempt and Jesus' caustic proverb implies the people's hostility towards him). Anderson, 268, 272. Following B. Violet, "Zum rechten Verständnis der Nazareth-Perikope,"
did. After quoting Isaiah 61:1, Jesus ended his reading with the statements ἀποστείλαι
tεθραυσμένους ἐν ὁφέσει (= Isa. 58:6) and κηρύξαι ἐνιαυτῶν κυρίου δεκτῶν (= Isa.
61:2). Ending the passage here, Jesus omitted the significant statement of judgment found in
Isaiah. This statement of judgment, in the Messianic context of Isaiah, was interpreted by
first century Jews as a promised future judgment upon the Gentiles. By stopping his reading
short of this statement, Jesus essentially preached a Messianic kingdom which did not include
retribution to Israel's enemies.

Zeitschrift für die neutestamentlich Wissenschaft (ZNTW) 37 (1938): 251-71, Jeremias
suggests that a better interpretation of the enraptured wonder of verse 22 is found in a
translation from the original Aramaic: "And they all testified against him, and were aghast at
the words of grace which came from his mouth." Vid. J. Jeremias, Jesus' Promise to the
correct in this interpretation, all three responses recorded in Luke were negative.

38 So Jeremias, Jesus' Promise, 44ff.

39 It is suggested that Luke inserted Isa. 58:6 for "the day of vengeance" statement
because it neither suited the occasion nor the evangelist's purpose. So Anderson, 269 and A.
52-53. However, the argument could be made that it was Jesus who inserted this statement
for the same reasons.

40 That is, "and the day of vengeance of our God (Isa. 61:2)."

41 Anderson, 269.

42 J. M. Ford argues convincingly that Palestine in the first century was a "seething
cauldron" of revolutionaries and apocalyptic thinkers. To them, Isa. 61 described the jubilary
return of Israel's homeland and liberation from her powerful Roman oppressors. This
corresponded to Qumran's (11 Q Melchizedek) changing of the Jubilee from social to
apocalyptic realms. Vid. J. Massyngbaerde Ford, My Enemy is my Guest: Jesus and Violence
in Luke (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1984), 1-12, 57-59. This fact reveals the significance of
Jesus' omission of a call for vengeance. In fact, the elimination of vengeance (or rather its
supersession by forgiveness) is a significant minor theme in Luke's gospel. See, for instance,
Jesus' response to the disciples concerning a Samaritan rejection (9:51-56) and his response to
the Romans' execution of some Galileans (13:1-5). Vid. Scot McKnight, "Gentiles," in
Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, eds. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers
The second significant missiological fact is Jesus' illustrations of the ministries of Elijah and Elisha. In both illustrations, the great Jewish prophets are shown ministering to Gentiles, Elijah to the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-24) and Elisha to Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings 5:1-14). The significance of these illustrations cannot be overlooked. Through them, Jesus (and Luke by his inclusion of the examples) instructed his hearers on the universal application of the gospel of the kingdom (and the universal character of Jesus' Messiahship) and called into question the congregation's ethics of election:

What he communicated to them, *inter alia*, was that God was not only the God of Israel but also, and equally, the God of the Gentiles. He reminded them of the fact that the prophet Elijah had bestowed God's favor upon a Gentile woman in Sidon and that Elisha had healed only one leper, Naaman, a Syrian. God was, therefore, not irrevocably bound to Israel.

That this message was understood is shown by Luke's next statement: "When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath (4:28)."

The Nazareth pericope is pivotal in investigating Jesus' conception of a universal kingdom/Gentile mission. The kingdom was one where wrath and retribution were displaced by the merciful concept of Jubilee, and one where God's Jubilee was open to those outside of the Jewish fold. This kingdom was now at hand, ushered-in by the Spirit-anointed Messiah (4:18, 21).

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Luke 24:45-49

Luke 24:45-49 makes explicit what is implicit in the two passages examined above, namely that the kingdom of God was meant to include the Gentiles from the beginning. Three facts need to be noted in particular. First, Jesus gives the disciples a programmatic explanation of the Christian mission in verses 47-48, including the fact that the message is to be proclaimed "to all nations." Second, Luke does not present Jesus' "Great Commission" in the form of a mandate, as does Matthew. Instead, Luke relays Jesus' commission "in the form of a fact and a promise," again tying the Gospel to Acts and the purpose statement of Acts 1:8. Finally, Luke shows that power to preach this kingdom message to the nations would come from the same Spirit which anointed Jesus inaugurate it in the first place (Luke 4:18).

Theological Themes

Jesus' Universal Implications

As a historian, Luke is bound by the historical/geographical boundaries of Jesus' earthly ministry. However, this does not preclude his describing these events in a manner which reveals their universal significance. Both Mary in her Magnificat (1:48) and Zechariah in his Benedictus (1:79) seemed to have an idea of the universal implications surrounding the birth of Jesus and his predecessor John. Jesus' birth was a blessing universal in scope according to the angels (2:14) and Simeon (2:30-32). John the Baptist, quoting Isaiah, also

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45 Note that although Luke is concerned with the place of Gentiles in the kingdom, he does not neglect the fact that salvation came through a Jew and was to be preached to the Gentiles by the Jews. Both here (24:47) and in Acts (1:8), the Christian mission is shown as beginning in Jerusalem.

46 Bosch, Transforming Mission, 91.
proclaimed the universal implications of Jesus and his ministry (3:6). Tied to this theme is Luke's method of chronology. The seemingly insignificant birth of this Jewish boy is set on the stage of world rulers, Caesar Augustus and his governor Quirinius (2:1-2). Caesar Tiberius' rule served as the backdrop for the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

Jesus' Acceptance of Outsiders

Another theme prominent in Luke which reveals the universal nature of the kingdom is Jesus' acceptance of outsiders—those without Jewish heritage or outcasts in the Jewish society. This is shown early in the Gospel at the annunciation of Jesus' birth to the lowly shepherds (2:8-20). It is shown elsewhere as Jesus befriends tax collectors and sinners (5:27-32; 15:1-2; et al.) and reaches out to lepers (5:12-15). Jesus' association with women is given prominence in Luke (8:2-3; 10:38-42; 23:49) as is his emphasis on preaching to the poor (4:18; 16:19-31; 18:18-27). Gentiles, such as the centurion (7:1-10), and Samaritans (10:30-37; 17:11-19) are often portrayed by Luke in a favorable light. Even on the cross, the Lukan Jesus accepts penitent outsiders (23:39-43).


Although it is not altogether clear from where Luke inherited his concern for the Gentile/universal mission found within the pages of his Gospel, it does seem there are at least

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47 Senior and Stuhlmueller, 260.

48 Although Matthew also includes this pericope (8:5-13), McKnight notes that Luke dramatizes the piety of the centurion (similar to what he does for Cornelius, Acts 10:2, 22), giving a favorable description of one unacceptable by Jewish standards (cf. 5:27; 7:11-17, 36-50; 15:11-32; 19:2-10). *Vid.* McKnight, 263.

Luke's interest in the mission to the nations must certainly begin with himself. He was a Gentile and a product of the Gentile mission. This fact served as a lens through which Luke viewed the events he researched for the Gospel. Therefore, he included events which were important to Gentile Christians. He showed Gentiles in a more positive light than was normative in the Jewish populus from which the Christian community emerged. He probably asked questions other evangelists did not ask, simply because he wrote from a Gentile's perspective. He was well aware that Gentiles were to be accepted into the community of faith (Acts 15), but he wished to show that this acceptance was no mere theological concession. Rather, it was mandated by the Lord through his ministry and teaching on the earth. Faith opened the kingdom to Luke, and he wished to show that he was not a second-class kingdom citizen. As a Gentile once forbidden, but now accepted, he viewed the mission to the Gentiles as vital.

Second, Luke must have gained great insight into the necessity of the Gentile mission from his missionary activity with Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (vid. Gal. 1:15-16). Their partnership in ministry, therefore, is significant. Certainly Paul discussed with Luke the fine details of the Old Testament foundations for mission and the role of law among the heathen,
Though they had different means of expressing it. Paul justified his mission to those without the Law on internal grounds.

However,


Ultimately, Luke was influenced by the Jesus tradition available to him. Luke carefully investigated the history he wrote, consulting both eyewitnesses and servants of the word. He

49 E. Haenchen summarizes Paul's view of the Law: 1) it leads to sin, not God; 2) it makes one put faith in God and not one's own righteousness; 3) it leads some to unbelief; and 4) Christ is the end of the Law for all who believe. Vid. D. E. Haenchen, Die Apostelgeschichte, Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar (KEK), ed. H. A. W. Meyer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959), 99-100.

50 Ibid., 100. Author's translation: "Luke has no doubt in his understanding of the legitimacy of the Law-free Gentile mission: for him it is evident. But he cannot justify it on inner grounds as does Paul. Therefore he must seize a justification 'from outside': God has willed it." Based upon this apparent discrepancy between Paul and Luke, one might conclude, as does Haenchen, that the author of Luke-Acts was no co-worker of Paul (103). However, the two viewpoints expressed by Paul and Luke do not negate one another. In fact, they are complementary: God's plan of Gentile evangelization included both "inner" and "outer" justifications.

most likely had documents before him which he consulted. So in one sense, Luke was a
historian, accurately recording events as they took place. But in another sense, Luke was a
true theologian. He had theological purposes in recording the events in the manner he did and
including events omitted by other evangelists. His was a history driven by theology. In the
end it was Jesus himself who provided the greatest impetus for the universal mission, for it
was Jesus who told the parables of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37) and the Great Banquet
(14:16-24). It was Jesus who made the statements in 4:25-27 and 24:47. As Jesus' life and
ministry demanded mission to the nations, Luke was happy to record it.

**Conclusions**

Several conclusions can be reached from this introductory foray into the Third Gospel.
The Gospel was written by Luke, who also wrote a second volume known as the Acts of the
Apostles. Luke was a Gentile (possibly Syrian or Greco-Roman) and probably a physician.
He dedicated his two-volume work to Theophilus, a man of high standing in society (possibly
a Roman official) who could see to its publication and dissemination. He wrote during Paul's
imprisonment in Rome (A.D. 62-63) for the purpose of providing an account of the historical
beginnings of the Christian community and promoting its universal mission. He did this by
giving theological and historical justification for the community's inclusion of Gentiles, while
encouraging those in the community (Jew and Gentile alike) with a basis for their belief.

Luke makes evident the missionary and universal nature of his Gospel through several
key passages and through reoccurring themes. His prologue (1:1-4) ties the Gospel to the
preaching an inclusive kingdom to the synagogue congregation in Nazareth (4:14-30), only to be rejected by the religious establishment. Finally, Luke records Jesus' words that the gospel is to be preached "to all nations (24:45-49)." Through many asides, Luke consistently emphasizes the universal implications of the life of Jesus. Jesus' acceptance of outsiders—those without Jewish heritage or outcasts within Jewish society—is shown throughout the Gospel. When isolated, these passages and themes show only anecdotally God's plan to include the Gentiles and outsiders in his kingdom. However, taken together they provide a tightly interwoven fabric underlying the entire message of the Third Gospel.

That Luke is concerned with the universal mission should not be surprising. As a second or third generation Christian with Gentile heritage, Luke views himself as a product of the Gentile mission. He moved from being a product to a proponent and joined Paul on several of his missionary journeys. It was here that Luke formulated his own understanding of the importance of reaching the nations with the gospel. However, rather than expressing this missiology in Jewish theologumenon, as does Paul, Luke expresses it historically through an account of the life and ministry of Christ (and subsequently the church). For Luke, it was Jesus who established and demanded mission among the nations.
CHAPTER 3

THE PARABLES OF JESUS: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

Having thus examined the Gospel of Luke, and having modestly concluded that Luke was concerned with Jesus' and the church's universal mission, this author sees it as necessary to examine in more detail how he communicated this message. In pivotal passages and in recurring theological themes, Luke underscores Jesus' universal significance. As important as these two elements are, however, they serve mainly to create a stage for Jesus' ministry.

Luke's primary argument for the legitimacy and promotion of the Gentile/universal mission comes from the lips of Jesus. Jesus is shown consistently placing before the Jews the ideas of universality and inclusiveness. Jesus invites his hearers to adopt these concepts into their theology and understanding of the kingdom. Jesus expresses these ideas through his parables.

Before evaluating these parables as recorded by Luke, it is first necessary to establish some hermeneutical parameters for reading the parables. Such will be the goal of this chapter. First, a brief sketch of the history and current state of parable research will be made in order to lay a foundation. Second, the term "parable" will be defined. Third, a viable interpretive method will be derived from the above data.
Studying the Parables

C. W. Hedrick describes the history of parabolic interpretation as having passed through five distinct stages. Stage one was the original oral expression by Jesus. As the parables were often given without explanation, there was no authoritative canon for parable interpretation. Jesus' auditors understood (or misunderstood) the parables through their own frames of reference, based on the historical context. Hedrick notes that much concerning this stage is lost to modern New Testament scholarship.

The second stage of parable interpretation involves the emerging church which adopted, re-performed, and orally interpreted the parables. Eventually, such interpretations were written, often excised from their original historical contexts, and viewed as speaking specifically to these early Christian communities. The interpretive method of the day was allegory.

The idea underlying this interpretive approach was that Scripture has several levels of meaning which the reader must seek beyond the immediate/literal sense. A strong proponent of allegorical interpretation was Augustine who stated:

But the ambiguities and figurative words require no little care and industry. For at the outset you must be very careful lest you take figurative expressions literally. What the Apostle says pertains to this problem: "For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth." That is, when that which is said figuratively is taken as though it were literal, it is understood carnally. Nor can anything more appropriately be called the death of the soul than that condition in which the thing which distinguishes us from beasts, which is the understanding, is subjected to the flesh in pursuit of the letter. He who follows the letter

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1 C. W. Hedrick, *Parables as Poetic Fiction: The Creative Voice of Jesus* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), ix-x. This section follows the outline of Hedrick's five stages.

2 Ibid., ix.

takes figurative expressions as though they were literal and does not refer the things signified to anything else.

This method of interpretation is understandable, given that the parables of the sower and the wheat and the tares are given allegorical interpretations by Jesus. Allegorical interpretation remained the primary interpretive approach to the parables throughout the nineteenth century.

The year 1910 served as the beginning point for the third major phase of parable interpretation. This was the year in which Adolf Jülicher published the pivotal work Die Gleichnisreden Jesu. The tome, in large part, was a reaction against the prevailing allegorical interpretation of parables. Jülicher argued that parables were meant to communicate one point, contrary to the popular polyvalent interpretations of allegorists. Parables reflected real

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4 St. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, III.9, quoted in Stephen L. Wailes, *Medieval Allegories of Jesus’ Parables* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 9. Perhaps two well known allegorical interpretations of Jesus' parables best exemplify this method. The first is Augustine's interpretation of the good Samaritan in which each element is given theological significance: the wounded man (Adam); Jerusalem (the heavenly city); Jericho (the moon symbolizing human mortality); the robbers (the devil); the priest and Levite (the priesthood and the ministry of the OT); the good Samaritan (Jesus), etc. The second is Gregory the Great's interpretation of the barren fig tree in which the three times the owner came seeking fruit represent God's great movements in human history (before the Law, the giving of the Law, and Christ). *Vid.* Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Parable," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 591.


life and historical (though fictional) circumstances. Interpreters should therefore seek the one point made by each of these stories. This point could be found by finding the broadest ethical generalization possible implied by the parable. Thus, in determining the main point of the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), Jülicher claims, "müssen wir für seine weiteste Anwendung eintreten: auf Treue in allem, was Gott uns anvertraut hat." Similarly, the point of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) is simply to induce "Freude an einem Leben im Leiden, Furcht vor dem Genussleben."

C. H. Dodd, in his work *The Parables of the Kingdom*, inaugurated the fourth phase of parable interpretation. He took Jülicher's method one step further. Dodd accepted Jülicher's contention that parables were rooted in history and not to be read allegorically. However, he was not content with the "pure generalization" offered by Jülicher's approach.

For Dodd, the key to interpreting the parables was found in the idea of the kingdom of God. Following form criticism, Dodd sought to find the *Sitz im Leben* of the parables. It was necessary, in his estimation, "to remove a parable from its setting in the life and thought of the Church, as represented in the Gospels, and make an attempt to reconstruct its original setting.

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"Jülicher, 2:481. Author's translation, "we must adopt its widest application: faithfulness in everything God has entrusted to us."

10 Ibid., 2:638. Author's translation, "joy in the life of suffering, fear for the life of pleasure."


12 Ibid., 24.
in the life of Jesus. In the end, the parables fit into two distinct categories: parables of crisis and parables of growth. Both categories reveal Jesus' parables as expressions of the eschatologically realized kingdom of God.

Joachim Jeremias follows Dodd in this fourth phase of parable interpretation with his publication of 1947. Like his predecessors Julicher and Dodd, Jeremias was convinced that the Gospel parables contained one main point. Therefore, parable interpretation involved finding this tertium comparationis (central comparison), the fulcrum on which the meaning of the parable turned. Like Dodd, Jeremias suggested that the parables must be seen in the Sitz im Leben of the historical Jesus and not of the early church, where fanciful allegorizations were added. Finding the "definite historical setting" and removing these accretions would reveal the "authentic voice" of Jesus. Also following Dodd, Jeremias saw the parables as

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13 Ibid., 111.

14 These are parables which refer to the second advent of Christ and encourage preparedness for his return (e.g., Matt. 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-46). Ibid. ibid., 154-74.

15 This cluster of parables refers to the kingdom as present on the earth in a "germ" status and allows for an indefinite period of development before the consummation (e.g., Mark 4:26-29). Ibid. ibid., 175-94.

16 Ibid. 206-10.


18 Herzog, 10.


20 Ibid., 22.
eschatological. Though Jeremias viewed the parables as revolving in some measure around
the kingdom of God, he expanded Dodd's schema to include nine theological themes relating
to Jesus' settings in life.

The fifth and final stage of parable interpretation, according to Hedrick, is existential.
This approach, proffered by D. Via and G. V. Jones suggests that parables can be
interpreted, as with works of art, apart from their historical contexts. The key for
understanding the parables lies with the modern reader. The parables are aesthetic works said

21 However, Dodd's realized eschatology is shown by Jeremias as an eschatology in the
process of realization. Vid. Snodgrass, 592.

22 These categories are: 1) now is the day of salvation; 2) God's mercy for sinners; 3) the
great assurance; 4) the imminence of catastrophe; 5) it may be too late; 6) the challenge of the
hour; 7) realized discipleship; 8) the Via Dolorosa and exaltation of the Son of Man; and 9)
the consummation.

23 Another possibility for interpreting parables promoted by Blomberg will be examined
later in this chapter. Other recent developments in parable interpretation deserve mention,
though falling outside of the parameters of these "five phases." Structural analyses of the
parables have begun since the 1970s. Vid. J. D. Crossan, In Parables (New York: Harper and
Row, 1973); Daniel Patte, Semiology and Parables: Exploration of the Possibilities Offered
by Structuralism for Exegesis (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1976); Jacques Geninasca, Signs
1978). Kenneth Bailey has recently examined the parables from a rhetorical/literary
standpoint. K. E. Bailey, Poet and Peasant: A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables in
Lucan Parables, Their Culture and Style (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980). Most
recently, the social sciences and comparisons of Jesus' parables with those of the rabbis have
influenced parable interpretation. Vid. Bernard B. Scott, Hear Then the Parable: A
Commentary on the Parables of Jesus (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989); Brad H. Young,
Jesus and His Jewish Parables: Rediscovering the Roots of Jesus' Teaching (New York:

24 Dan O. Via, The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension (Philadelphia:
Fortress Press, 1967); G. V. Jones, The Art and Truth of the Parables: A Study in Their
to contain an understanding of human existence which calls for decision. Therefore, parables address the present context with meaning which may not have been intended by the author.

**Defining the Parables**

**Terminology**

The word παραβολή (parabole) appears in the Synoptic Gospels a total of forty-eight times. There are two distinct meanings of this term in the New Testament. The first is that of "type" or "figure." This meaning is found in Hebrews 9:9 where the Levitical sacrifices are described as "symbolic for the present age." The second, and more common usage, is found in the Synoptic Gospels. Here the term most often denotes the characteristic form of Jesus' teaching which is the focus of this investigation.

The Greek *parabole* has a range of meanings within this synoptic context. It can denote a proverb (Luke 4:23), a riddle (Mark 3:23), a comparison (Mark 13:33), a contrast (Luke 18:1-8), and simple (Luke 13:6-9) or complex (Matt. 22:1-14) stories. The noun *parabole* is apparently derived from the verb παραβάλλω (paraballo) meaning "to compare."
or "to set beside or parallel with."\textsuperscript{31}

This wide range of meanings is due to its Hebrew counterpart, \textit{םָּשַׁל} (\textit{masal}), which is translated 28 of 39 times in the LXX as \textit{parabole}.\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Mašal} is used in the Old Testament to describe a proverbial saying (1 Sam. 10:12), a byword (Ps. 44:14), figurative prophetic discourse (Num. 23:7, 18), a similitude or parable (Ezek. 17:2), poetry (Num. 21:27-30), or sentences of ethical wisdom (Prov. 10:1).\textsuperscript{33} The word is most likely derived from the Akkadian root \textit{masalu} meaning "to resemble" or "to be like."\textsuperscript{34} Apparently, \textit{mešalim} originated as proverbial statements which described a figurative comparison between two things. Over years of development, they eventually became the artistic poetic sayings which are the parables.\textsuperscript{35}

\textbf{Jesus and Rabbinic Parables}

The parables of Jesus obviously do not fit all of the categories listed above. As

\textsuperscript{31} H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, comps., \textit{A Greek-English Lexicon} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 1304. A parabola, for example, is a curve formed by the intersection of a cone by a plane parallel to its side.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{BDBG}, 605. Old Testament verses given with English references.


\textsuperscript{35} \textit{TDOT}, 67.
described in chapter 1, Jesus' parables were illustrations, extended similes or similitudes, and example stories used in the course of his teaching. He was not the first to utilize this teaching method. There are both striking differences and similarities between Jesus' parables and those of the rabbis (approximately 2,000 rabbinic parables have been collected to date).

Jesus' parables differed from those of the rabbis in that rabbinic parables were most often used as a method of exegesis. Rabbinic parables are found in exegetical contexts (such as midrash) and derived their authority from the fact that they helped elucidate Scripture. Exegesis was their raison d'être. As one rabbi stated, "Do not treat the mašal lightly. For by means of the mašal a person is able to understand the whole of the Torah." 

Jesus' parables, however, are not found within the context of his exegesis of Scripture. Their authority came not from the texts they explained but from the message contained therein. It was this ad hoc characteristic which most set Jesus' parables apart from

36 See chapter 1, pp. 13-14.

37 Vid. D. Flusser, Die rabbinischen Gleichnisse und der Gleichniserzähler Jesus; 1 Teil: Das Wesen der Gleichnisse (Bern: Peter Lang, 1981); Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, 49.


39 Shir Hashirim Rabbah 1:8. Quoted in ibid.

40 The apparent exception to this rule is found in Luke 10:25-37 where Jesus "exegetes" Deut. 6:5. Yet even on this occasion, the parable of the good Samaritan is prompted by further questioning of Jesus' audience and not on his previous exegesis.

41 It could also be added here that rabbis' teaching in parables also sought authority by citing other, well known rabbis. Though there was creativity among rabbis, many rabbinic parables begin with a phrase similar to the one found in the parable of "The Spoiled Son" (from the text of the Pesikta): "R. Levi said . . . ." Quoted in Young, 86. Jesus seems to be his own authority in the Synoptic Gospels.
his rabbinic counterparts. In Jülicher's estimation, the artificial, forced, pedantic, and
classroom-like parables of the rabbis paled in comparison to the vivid and lifelike parables of
Jesus. Jesus' parables, he claimed, were as fresh as the air of the Galilean mountains.

There were similarities, however, in Jesus' and rabbinic parables. The rabbis used
mešalim as rhetorical devices, in the forms of narratives, to draw parallels between a fictional
tale and a concrete situation at hand. The parables were told orally without explanation, and
the audience was assumed to be able to draw the proper conclusions. When the parables were
conveyed in written form, additional information was given to provide the new audience with
necessary data for interpretation. The parables of the rabbis actively sought interpretive
responses from their audiences.

The same holds true for the parables of Jesus. He told parables at specific points in
history as his context warranted. They were oral and usually given without explanation. They
related to the context or topic of teaching, thus drawing parallels between fiction and real life.
Jesus' parables had moral points to make, thus drawing the auditor into the story and soliciting
a response like those of his Jewish counterparts. It can be argued as to what extent there
were additions to Jesus' parables once they were transferred to the written page (vid. Dodd
and Jeremias). However, it is clear that the synoptists provided at least some additional
information for readers to understand better Jesus' parables.

42 Jülicher, 1:169-73.
43 Ibid., 1:173.
44 Stern, 58-59.
provides the reader with the proper context for understanding the story, "One sabbath when
he went to dine at the house of a ruler . . . he told a parable to those who were invited, when
One final similarity between gospel parables and those of the rabbis is noted by Jeremias. This is the introductory formula preceding written parables. Most often, these parables will begin in one of two forms. A parable may begin with a noun in the nominative case, that is, with no introductory formula: "A certain creditor had two debtors... (Luke 7:41). A second form in which parables appear begins with the dative case. Most rabbinic parables begin with the words, "A parable: like a..." This is actually an abbreviated form of the more detailed formula: "(I will tell you) a parable. (What shall the matter be compared with? It is the case with it as with) a...".

The Purpose of Jesus' Parables

Jesus taught extensively in parabolic fashion. They were often given without explanation because they were designed to explain more difficult concepts by means of comparison to familiar illustrations. In this sense parables were statements of contextualized theology for Jesus' audience. Jesus was God's messenger whose proclamation to the people was that they seize the hour (Luke 12:54-56) and make the necessary decisions associated with how they chose the places of honor (14:1, 7).

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48 Ibid. Mark 4:33.

49 But note Mark 4:34 where Jesus gave further instruction to his disciples possibly because, as those who would continue his mission, they needed more intense training.
with this seizure (Luke 17:26-30)."

On the surface, the idea that Jesus' parables were meant to be understood by his audience seems contradictory to Jesus' claim in Mark 4:11-12.

And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; so that (ταυτα) they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand; lest they should turn again, and be forgiven."

However, this enigmatic statement (which seems to indicate that Jesus does not want the parables to be understood) must be read in its context. In Mark 3, the evangelist describes a great division among the Jews. The chapter ends with only a small group emerging as Jesus' true kindred (3:31-35). This small group remains for Jesus' parabolic teaching (4:10) and hears the above statement. The conclusion of the statement is a quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10, the locus classicus for describing the Jews' hardness of heart.

Jesus is concerned with the hearing and response to his parables (hearing is mentioned thirteen times in Mark 4). It seems that his point is simple: understanding the parable presupposes a willingness to follow Jesus in his thinking.

At this point we come up against an unmistakable frontier, the more so as Jesus' ideas on the coming kingdom and the nature of God were quite different from those current in Judaism. The parable may fail if there is no spiritual power to grasp its heart or if the revelation of God which it contains is rejected.\(^{52}\)

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\(^{50}\) TDNT, 756.


\(^{52}\) TDNT, 756.
The conclusion of the statement, then, does not express Jesus' desire that his hearers not be forgiven. Rather, it is simply a blunt statement of the inevitable: Some would hear his parables and make the appropriate response, others would reject the message because of their hardness of heart.\textsuperscript{53}

**Interpreting the Parables**

Having briefly analyzed the history of parabolic interpretation and having examined the nature of Jesus' parables, this author deems it necessary to reach some conclusions as to how these parables should be read. This is the final necessary step before proceeding further into the missiological nature of Luke's parables.

The majority consensus of scholars, described above and found in the pivotal works of Julicher, Dodd, and Jeremias, contains three cardinal articles of acceptance.\textsuperscript{54} First, the allegorical interpretation of parables by the early church was incorrect because it necessarily divorced the parable from its original *Sitz im Leben*. Even when a parable is interpreted by the Lord allegorically, it is considered either a redactional gloss to the text\textsuperscript{55} or a rare exception\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{53}Snodgrass, 597.

\textsuperscript{54}It should be noted again that the three of these authors do not agree on every aspect of parable interpretation. However, all three seem to accept the following statements.

\textsuperscript{55}Cf. Wrede's idea of the Messianic secret where Jesus is shown by the evangelists as concealing his Messianic identity from the public. Such an understanding would help explain the enigmatic parabolic sayings of Jesus. The later evangelists, then, show Jesus hiding his identity from the public in the parables, but revealing it to his disciples in allegorical interpretations to those parables. This is especially true with reference to Mark 4:12. *Vid.* William Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1901).

to parable interpretation (not to be followed by modern interpreters). Second, and closely following the first, allegorical aspects of the parables are deemed inauthentic to the original, oral pronouncement. 57 Third, whether making broad ethical points (Jülicher) or describing some aspect of the kingdom of God (Dodd and Jeremias), parables make one main point.

Diverging from the consensus and giving what he deems a "minority report" on parable interpretation, Craig L. Blomberg proposes a middle ground. 58 Arguing from three basic lines of reasoning, Blomberg asserts that the parables are authentic, allegorical, and make more than one point.

His first argument for this middle ground of parable interpretation concerns their origins. One must look to the true background of allegorical interpretation of the parables to make informed decisions on its appropriateness. Jülicher saw this background as Aristotelian. However, Blomberg argues that the mešalim are the true background for interpreting Jesus' parables allegorically. These, he claims, were often allegorical in nature and allowed for a mixture of parable and allegory. 59 Similarly, Blomberg shows that even in Greek rhetoric, especially in the works of Quintilian, mixed forms (that is, stories containing literal and allegorical elements) were common. 60


58 Vid. Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, and Craig L. Blomberg, "Interpreting the Parables of Jesus: Where are We and Where Do We Go from Here?" CBO 53 (1991): 50-78. The following citations from Blomberg will note the pages of his work and the major sources from which he draws.


60 Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, 37-39; cf. Denis Buzy, Introduction aux paraboles évangéliques (Paris: Gebalda, 1912), 170-81; and Maxime Hermaniuk, La
Blomberg's second argument concerns the authenticity of the parables. Wrede's Messianic secret does not adequately explain allegorical interpretations of the parables as there is nothing "explicitly Christological in the teaching of the parables." Instead, their mysteriousness seems to concern the hearts of the hearers: Once the parable is understood conceptually, will the hearer put the lesson into practice? Similarly, evidence does not suggest that allegorical elements were added to Jesus' parables by later generations. Rather than expand oral tradition allegorically, it seems there was a greater tendency to abbreviate it. It follows, then, that the parabolic tradition of Jesus (and the allegorical elements within it) are more authentic than supposed by Julicher, Dodd, and Jeremias.

Blomberg's third argument concerns a general misunderstanding of allegory. First, the consensus is that allegory was a weak form of rhetoric avoided by skilled teachers. However, work done in the area of rabbinic tradition and the example of Quintilian show that this is not necessarily true. Second, M. Boucher has conclusively shown that any narrative with both literal and metaphorical meaning is an allegory. In other words, allegory is simply a


61 Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, 40.

62 See the discussion above on the purpose of the parables.

63 Ibid. 41; cf. Vincent Taylor, The Formation of the Gospel Tradition (London: Macmillan, 1933), 202-09. Blomberg notes J. A. Baird, "A Pragmatic Approach to Parable Exegesis: Some New Evidence on Mark 4:11, 33-34," JBL 76 (1957): 201-07, in which Baird shows that two-thirds of the explanations Jesus gives to his parables are to his disciples. Such restraint in making his teaching clearer to some than others, it is argued, was not likely the product of a later Christian tradition with a penchant for allegory.

64 Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, 41-42.

65 The common (mis)conception is that each element of an allegory must be a point of comparison.
metaphor extended in narrative form. A parable, then, "may be an allegory even if its constituent elements do not involve separate metaphors, so long as the overall point of the parable transcends its literal meaning (e.g., the story is about the kingdom of God rather than just, say, farming, fishing, or banqueting)." Third, one must differentiate between "allegory" and "allegorizing." Concluding that a narrative is allegorical does not necessarily impose an allegorical interpretation upon a passage that was never meant to contain a second level of meaning. The key is noting that there are mixed forms present within the parables and determining which elements (if any) point to a second level of meaning. Fourth, "atypical" or extraordinary elements found in the parables (e.g., the enormous size of the mustard plant, Mark 4:32) should not be seen as signs of inauthenticity, but were common means of expressing truths hyperbolically. Finally, it should be recognized that parables are "proportional analogies" where certain elements are being compared to spiritual realities in

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58 Even Dodd cannot avoid allegory. In his frequently cited interpretation of the wicked husbandmen (Dodd, 124-32; cf. Matthew Black, "The Parables as Allegory," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library [BJRL]* 42 [1960]: 273-87; and Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 43), he concludes that the vineyard stands for Israel, the tenants for Jewish leaders, the servants for the prophets, and the son for Jesus.


the form of analogy with respect to specific characteristics. Blomberg gives the example of
the parable of the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-7): The parable compares God to his elect as the
judge to the woman with respect to the fact of vindication despite its apparent delay.71

Following scholars from the "minority report" such as Blomberg, Boucher, Kauck, and
Sider, one should see the parables as allegories. An evaluation of the origins, authenticity, and
literary nature of allegory all support such a finding. Blomberg notes that even those who
reject the term still concede that certain stock symbols of Jesus' parables stand for elements of
a secondary nature which his audience would have understood.72 However, Jülicher, Dodd,
and Jeremias have rightly shown that allegorizing the parables must remain in the
hermeneutics of past generations.

If the parables, as suggested, are indeed allegories or mixed forms, can they be seen as
making only one point? E. Baasland notes that reducing parables to a single point of thought
ignores better hermeneutical and methodological principles and ignores the poetical and
narrative structures evidenced within the text.73 In the same vein, K. E. Bailey argues that
parables contain three basic elements: contact points or referents for the listener (which can be
referred to as symbols), a call for response, and the theological motifs which press the listener

view of Jesus represented by the father. Eta Linnemann, *Gleichnisse Jesu: Einführung und
and Peasant*, 25.


72 Ibid., 47.

73 Ernst Baasland, "Zum Beispiel der Beispielerzählungen," *Novum Testamentum (NovT)*
28 no. 3 (1986): 217.
to this response.\textsuperscript{74} Though he disavows the term "allegory,"\textsuperscript{75} he nonetheless describes a "theological cluster" of points for each parable. This multiplicity of points, he suggests, calls for one response.\textsuperscript{76} Blomberg also contends that parables make more than one point\textsuperscript{77} and the key "lies in recognizing what a small handful of characters, actions or symbols stand for and fitting the rest of the story in with them."\textsuperscript{78} He suggests that the number of main points corresponds to the number of main characters and the nature of the relationships among those characters.\textsuperscript{79}

\textbf{Conclusions}

In Jesus' parable of the lost son, the questions raised in this chapter come to a head. Whom does the prodigal's older brother represent? Does this character "stand for" the Pharisees? And whom does the father in the story represent? Should he be seen as a picture of God? What point does the parable make? Is it the fatherly hesed of God for his children, the reality of his forgiveness of prodigals, or the fact that the Pharisees took an open stance against this acceptance? Cannot one deem all of these points valid?

\textsuperscript{74} Bailey, \textit{Poet and Peasant}, 38.

\textsuperscript{75} At this point he seems to follow Jülicher's understanding of the concept.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 37-43.

\textsuperscript{77} The majority of parables, he asserts, make exactly three main points. \textit{Vid.} Blomberg, \textit{Interpreting the Parables}, 21.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 55.

\textsuperscript{79} Blomberg, "Interpreting the Parables of Jesus," 62.
Such are the questions one confronts when reading the parables. For years these parables were read completely allegorically. Eventually Julicher swung the pendulum in the other direction. The wholesale allegorizing of the past, with its esoteric interpretation and lack of hermeneutical controls, was discarded. The parables were once again read in the context of the *Sitz im Leben Jesu*.

But the parables must also be examined within the milieu of Jesus' time. Jesus did not create, in the parable, a new literary genre. Jesus borrowed this teaching tool, with its rich history, from the rabbis. However, Jesus used the parables for different ends. He did not use the parables to exegete the Torah. He told parables to elicit a response from his hearers: Those who accepted his point of view would follow, those who refused to accept it would move further from the truth.

Though the modern interpreter must still grapple with the original context of parable, the meaning of the parables can still be found. Technically, parables are allegories or mixed forms in which natural, earthly elements symbolize heavenly elements. By examining the context, the characters, and their relationships as portrayed in the parables, the task of the interpreter becomes that of finding the meaning or meanings of Jesus' parables.
CHAPTER 4

THE SYNOPTIC PARABLES OF JESUS: A COMPARISON OF THE PARABLES IN LUKE WITH THOSE IN MATTHEW AND MARK

Chapter 4 will begin the investigation into the parables of Jesus found in Luke. This chapter will compare Luke's parables with Matthew's and Mark's. Although this dissertation focuses primarily on the parables unique to Luke's Gospel, comparing his with the other synoptists' parables should provide valuable information for this study.

There are two overarching goals for this chapter. First, comparing the parables in Luke, Matthew, and Mark should reveal how Luke handles and interprets Jesus' parables. Second, this examination may help determine if Luke casts the parables of the double and triple traditions in a missiological hue.

The chapter is subdivided into three sections. Section one will outline the scope of these comparisons. Section two will compare the parables of the double tradition, those found in Matthew and Luke. Section three will compare the parables of the triple tradition, those found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Sections two and three will have summaries of the data from the comparisons, and a concluding section will summarize and interpret the data presented in the entire chapter.
Scope of the Investigation

This chapter will not provide an in-depth exegetical analysis of the parables of the double and triple traditions. Instead, a comparison will be achieved by asking three major questions of these parables. First, are there elements pertaining to the inclusiveness of the kingdom found in Luke but missing in Matthew and or Mark? For instance, the two short parables of the new patch and new wine are found in all three Synoptic Gospels. All are very similar in content, wording, and placement in the context of Jesus' ministry. However, the account in Luke ends with the statement, "And no one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, 'The old is good.' " Why is this statement of Jesus only recorded by Luke? Does it correspond to Luke's understanding of missions to societal outcasts and Gentiles? In other words, does the statement refer to the difficulty involved with the adherents of the old Jewish religion in accepting Jesus' newly inaugurated forms? Elements such as this, peculiar to Luke, may reveal his missionary bent.

There is a second question which should be asked of these parables. Does Luke omit elements found in Matthew or Mark which might not support his message of inclusivity? A possible example may be found in the parable of the wicked husbandmen of the triple tradition. The description of the vineyard in both Matthew and Mark is more detailed than Luke. Matthew tells his readers that the vineyard owner "set a hedge around

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2 So Geldenhuys, 197.

it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower before letting it out to the wicked tenants.

Does this description by Matthew and Mark describe God's special care for his vineyard, Israel? If so, then Luke's omission of Jesus' statement could be seen as shifting the focus from past events to present and future ones: the destruction of the wicked tenants and the giving of the vineyard to others.

Finally, a third question will conclude this investigation. What is the difference, if any, in the contexts of these parables? An example may be seen in the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants related by Matthew and Luke. The context found in Matthew is that of the Olivet Discourse, where Jesus is shown speaking only to the twelve (Matt. 24:1). Luke relates this parable as Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem speaking to a multitude of "many thousands (Luke 12:1)." Both accounts give an injunction to vigilance and describe an eschaton wherein hierarchies of status are nullified, but Luke's wider audience makes the parable much more universalistic.

It is by no means suggested that there are striking differences in each of the parables to be examined, or that Luke reveals his missiological goals in each case. Thus, one would be

Matt. 21:33.


hard pressed to prove Luke's missionary desires only by means of these comparisons. The evidence found, however, will serve as corroborating evidence of Luke's missiology already uncovered in this work. The two should provide a solid foundation from which to launch an investigation into the parables unique to Luke.

An Analysis of the Parables in the Double Tradition

The Two Builders, Luke 6:47-49 (Matthew 7:24-27)

There is little difference in the contexts of these two accounts. It appears at the close of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, where Jesus is shown teaching his disciples and the crowd in Galilee. Luke likewise places the parable in Jesus' Galilean ministry as he taught his disciples and the multitude on "a level place." Both accounts place the parable immediately preceding the healing of the Centurion's servant. The literary structure of Luke's version of the parable suggests that his is the original, and that Matthew followed him as a source.⁹

Though the wording in both parables is very similar, there are some distinctions. Luke describes the wise builder as "digging deep" into the earth in order to reach the bedrock which lies several feet under the Palestinian soil.¹⁰ Matthew characterizes the two

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builders as "wise" and "foolish," while Luke leaves this simple judgment to the hearers.

Matthew's description of the storm which struck both houses is full of detail, and he notes that the wise man's house stood because it had been "founded on the rock (7:25)."11 In Luke, the house is simply "well built (6:48)."

The most glaring difference, however, is found in Matthew's introduction to the parable (7:21-23). This pronouncement by the Lord is necessary in Matthew to provide an adequate context for understanding the parable. Not everyone who calls Jesus "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom. Though their houses may look sturdy, they are built upon the sand. Luke omits this opening comment simply because it is not needed in his context. In 6:37-39 Jesus claims his followers should reject judgment and that the disciple must be like the teacher (6:40).12 Therefore, the foundation of religion must not be the judgment which pours from the mouths of hypocrites (6:43-45). These would call Jesus "Lord, Lord" and continue to reject his teaching.13 Rather, the solid foundation upon which religion must be built is hearing and doing what Jesus taught.

Missiologically speaking, there is no difference between these two parables. Both are universal in scope, noting that "every one" (regardless of race, religion, or gender) who hears and follows or hears and does not follow Jesus will face similar outcomes in life. The one

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11 Cf. Deut. 32:4; Ps. 18:2, 31 where God is pictured as a "rock" and Isa. 28:16 in which the Messiah is described as a "cornerstone" and "sure foundation."

12 Matthew's placement of the parable also follows teaching on judgment (7:1-6), but the two are separated by discourses on prayer (7:7-12) and discerning false prophets (7:15-20).

13 This statement (Luke 6:46) must be viewed proleptically, since to this point in Luke's Gospel Jesus has been called "Lord" only twice (Peter in 5:8 and the leper in 5:12). In other words, Luke anticipates nominal affirmation of Jesus' lordship at some future point. Vid. Green, 280.
who obediently responds to Jesus' gospel will withstand the final judgment. The one who refuses to follow Jesus in discipleship will face destruction and "great ruin."\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{(Matthew 24:45-51)}

There are several differences in the accounts of the faithful and unfaithful servants in Matthew and Luke. The greatest of these is the difference in contexts of the parables. Matthew places the parable within the Olivet Discourse, where Jesus is shown speaking to the twelve (Matt. 24:1). After discussing the course of the age (1-14), the coming tribulation (15-28), the advent of the Son of man (29-31), and the parable of the fig tree (32-35), Jesus begins his discussion of the need for watchfulness.

Luke, on the other hand, relates this parable as Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem speaking to the disciples (12:1, 4, 22) and a multitude of "many thousands (12:1)." Jesus' teaching in Luke 12 is conversational. After eating with a Pharisee (11:37-54) Jesus warns the crowd about the leaven of this group (12:1-12). Prompted by a question from the multitude (12:13), Jesus relates the parable of the rich fool (12:13-21) and teaches on trust and anxiety (12:22-34). At this point Jesus turns the discussion to preparedness for the Son of man's coming (12:35-40) which includes the parable of the servants. It is significant that Luke relates Peter's\textsuperscript{15} question of verse 41: "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?" In


\textsuperscript{15}Peter often stands as the representative disciple in the Gospels (cf. Luke 8:45 and Mark 5:31). It seems that such is the case in this situation. However, Ellis suggests that Peter may represent Christian elders who were failing in their roles as stewards of the church (cf. 1 Pet. 5:2-3). \textit{Vid.} Ellis, 181. This brings to point questions concerning which parable represents the original spoken context. Both seem to fit in their respective contexts. However, Ellis asserts that Matthew gives the correct context and Luke has (accurately)
other words, is the exhortation to vigilance for the disciples, the crowd, or the scribes and Pharisees?

Luke allows no such distinction to be made. Instead, the parable Jesus tells in response to Peter's question shows that preparedness is applicable to all. At the same time it serves to heighten the responsibility of the disciples to whom the divine will had been revealed (10:21-24). Both accounts give an injunction to vigilance and describe an eschaton wherein hierarchies of status are nullified, but Luke's wider audience makes the parable all the more universalistic.

There are other differences outside of context. Matthew uses the term servant (δοῦλος) while Luke opts for the term steward (οίκονόμος). There is a subtle difference in these terms. Though both describe slaves and not freemen, the latter refers to a slave to whom management responsibilities in the master's house have been entrusted. It seems that Luke is using the term to emphasize the responsibility of Jesus' auditors. That is, they have reinterpreted it for his own situation. It is clear, based on a comparison of Matt. 24:44 and Luke 12:40, that the evangelists used a common source. But accepting this fact does not mean the parable could not have been told twice by the Lord. Rather, it is likely that Jesus told the parable in response to Peter's question (Luke 12:42-48) and again when teaching on the Mount of Olives (Matt. 24:45-51). Both emphasize the need for preparedness and judgment for the lack thereof. However, Luke's account applies to everyone, while Matthew's emphasis is specifically on the disciples.

16 Green, 503.
17 Ibid., 502.

19 BAGD, 560. For a description of Greco-Roman slavery practices vid. R. H. Barrow, Slavery in the Roman Empire (London: Methuen and Co., 1928); Keith Hopkins, Conquerers and Slaves (Cambridge: The University Press, 1978); William D. Phillips, Slavery from Roman Times to the Transatlantic Trade (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985); Alan Watson, Roman Slave Law (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); and
been given the task of vigilance. If they are faithful in this task, more responsibility will be given them (12:44).

Another difference between these accounts is the punishment\textsuperscript{20} of the wicked servant.\textsuperscript{21} Matthew says the servant will be placed with the "hypocrites" (οὐκοκρίτων), where "men will weep and gnash their teeth (24:51)." Luke claims this servant will be put with the "unfaithful" (ἀποστειλόντος)\textsuperscript{22} and proceeds to describe levels of punishment based upon knowledge of the master's will. Only Luke concludes with the aphorism, "Every one to whom much is given, of him much will be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand more (12:48)."

In conclusion, both accounts of the parable are universal in their scope. The coming of the Son of Man will be sudden and unexpected. It requires vigilance and faithfulness from those who would call him "Lord." At his coming, the earthly societal hierarchies will be demolished, faithfulness will be rewarded, and unfaithfulness punished.

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\textsuperscript{20} The punishment described in Matthew and Luke is that of δίχοτομησεθαι, literally cutting him in two, and should not be seen as hyperbolic. Though shocking to modern sensibilities, dismemberment of slaves for misbehavior was most likely not too startling for Jesus' audience. \textit{Vid.} M. A. Beavis, "Ancient Slavery as an Interpretive Context for the New Testament Servant Parables with Special Reference to the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-8)," \textit{JBL} 111 no. 1 (1992): 42.

\textsuperscript{21} Note that only Matthew describes the servant as "wicked" (κακός). As in the parable of the two builders, Luke leaves this determination to Jesus' audience.

\textsuperscript{22} The word translated "unfaithful" here (RSV) may also be translated as "unbelievers" or "those who are faithless" (NASB). \textit{Vid. BAGD}, 85. Though both can fit the context, the latter is preferred as both Matthew and Luke see the punishments from an eternal standpoint. "Dichotomizing" the servant does not seem to be a temporal punishment, and the weeping and gnashing of teeth in Matthew is often used as a description of eternal damnation (cf. Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 25:30).
At these points Matthew and Luke are in agreement. By examining the parable in its respective contexts, the subtle differences in Luke's missiology come to light. Luke gives the parable a wider context and audience, making it more universal in scope. Without answering Peter's question, Jesus makes clear: It is not only the twelve who are called to faithfulness, but everyone who would seek to make Jesus Lord.

That Luke uses the term "steward" and describes in detail the punishment of the wicked servant is also missiologically significant. Jesus uses the opportunity afforded by this parable to continue his warning to the Pharisees. 23 The servant (or steward) who knew the will of the master, but did not act according to that will, would be punished more severely than the one who was ignorant of that will.

The scribes and Pharisees 24 stood as representatives of the Jewish religious community. They had been made stewards of God's election. According to Genesis 12:1-3, God's election and covenant with Abraham (and his descendants) contained three major promises: 1) God would give them the promised land; 2) Abraham's descendants would become a great nation; and 3) they would become a source of blessing to all the peoples of the earth. 25 This third, unmistakably universal element was later expressed by God to Moses:

23 Luke makes clear that Pharisees were present when Jesus began his teaching in chapter 12. After denouncing the Pharisees in 11:37-52, Luke states "as he [Jesus] went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press hard, and to provoke him to speak of many things, lying in wait for him, to catch at something he might say (11:53-54)." It seems clear, then, that the scribes and Pharisees were part of the multitude described in 12:1.

24 The Pharisee party arose from the religiously zealous hasidim ("pious ones") and since the time of John Hyrcanus (135-105 B.C.) became known as the Pharisees. The title is derived from the Hebrew יסוד which means "to separate." A scribe (γραμματευς) was a student of the oral and written Law. Scribes were often members of the Pharisees and were also called "doctors of the Law." Vid. Geldenhuys, 189-91.

25 Filbeck, 60-61.
"You shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." In these two passages is found the kernel of the missionary calling of Israel; election for service. Israel was chosen by God as his servant to reach the nations. They were to be a conduit through which God would bless the peoples of the earth by acting out the dual role of the priesthood, that is, to serve God and to serve God on behalf of others.

Historically, it was this third element of the Abrahamic covenant which was neglected by the Jews. Jesus, in this parable, reminds the religious leaders that they have been chosen as stewards of their election and covenant. They are chosen, not simply to receive special status or position, but for service. In a sense they have been told the will of the master in this

26 Exod. 19:5-6.

27 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 18. Stuhlmueller notes that Israel was no different from its neighbors in seeing itself favored by deities. The difference in Israel's election (say, versus Egypt's) lies in the fact that it was chosen by God, not at the pinnacle of world dominance, but in relative obscurity. Election was to be viewed, then, as a revelation of grace and was not to be "hoarded and defended," but shared. *Vid.* Senior and Stuhlmueller, 85-87.

28 This missionary calling of Israel is expressed more specifically by Isaiah, who describes election in terms of being a "light to the nations (Isa. 42:6; 49:6)."

29 Filbeck, 65.

30 That is not to say that there is no mission activity among the Jews in the OT. Jonah and the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, referred to by Jesus in Luke 4, come readily to mind. There is also evidence of Jews actively proselytizing Gentiles during the intertestamental period and the first century (cf. Matt. 23:15). *Vid.* Senior and Stuhlmueller, 141. However, Israel's self-identification as a missionary people was not a prevalent concept. They were at times ethnocentric and xenophobic. Filbeck, 93-97, argues that as the Monarchy developed, the promise of land in the Abrahamic covenant became the primary emphasis of the Jews (a fact that is still evident in the news today). As the Jews were found wanting in their role as priests to the nations, the designation was adopted by NT authors to designate the church (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10).
regard. As such, their punishment would be more severe than those who were ignorant of this fact.


The accounts of the parable of the leaven found in Luke and Matthew are almost identical in their wording and are thus free of omissions or additions which might reveal Luke's missionary focus.\(^{31}\) However, the context of the parables may reveal more insight.

The parable of the leaven follows the parable of the mustard seed (see below) in both Matthew's and Luke's accounts. Matthew relates the brief saying on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem as Jesus passed through Galilee. Luke also relates this parable as Jesus journeyed through Galilee to Jerusalem, teaching in a synagogue. Though the texts are very similar, the contexts are different.\(^{32}\) Luke gives as a prelude to this teaching the healing of a crippled woman on the Sabbath (found only in Luke 13:10-17). In the aftermath of the healing, a

\(^{31}\) The exception may be Luke's use of "kingdom of God" versus Matthew's "kingdom of heaven." As Matthew's is a distinctively Jewish locution, it could be argued that Luke's term is more inclusive.

\(^{32}\) This brings the reader again to the questions alluded to in footnote 15: Which of the contexts is correct? A corollary question follows: If one of the contexts has been changed, what does this do to the historical reliability of the gospel account(s)? In this particular case, there are two possible answers for question one: Matthew and Luke relate the same parable with one evangelist manipulating the context, or Jesus stated the same parable twice. The latter, though an "easy" answer, must be considered (so A. T. Robertson, *Harmony*, 68, 129). If the former is the case (so Aland et al., *Synopsis*, 348), one must proceed to the second question. The re-application of a quotation of Jesus into a different context by an evangelist, following the inspiration of the Spirit, does not necessarily cut against the grain of historical reliability, provided Jesus actually made such a statement. In this text, Jesus probably stated the parables of the mustard seed and leaven, as Matthew suggests, amid his other kingdom parables found in chapter 13. As the point of the parables emphasizes the same point of his teaching following the Sabbath healing (see discussion above), he likely restated them. Thus, Luke may have had the same source used for the Matthew quotation and justifiably reapplied it to his context (Blomberg, *Historical Reliability*, 141).
controversy concerning the Sabbath ensues. Jesus is shown putting the synagogue leaders "to shame" with the people rejoicing "at all the glorious things that were done by him (13:17)."

From this point Jesus launches into his teaching on the nature of his kingdom found in the parables of the mustard seed and leaven. The αὐτός of 13:18 is significant as it serves to connect the parables to the healing of the infirm woman. In other words the parables are told in connection with this healing and are founded upon truths revealed in the account of this healing.

In the controversy, the ruler of the synagogue argues that work (a healing in this case) "ought" not be done on the Sabbath (13:14). Jesus disputes this claim (13:16). Whereas the synagogue ruler argues from the Law (Exod. 20:9), Jesus argues from creation. The concept of Sabbath is prophetic, symbolizing the goodness and consecration of creation. It also represents re-consecration following the fall (cf. Heb. 4:4-10). Jesus suggests, therefore, that the restoration of this woman to a state more in line with the goodness of creation outweighs an injunction to rest.

The point is brought home by the parables which follow. Both parables teach that the kingdom begins with minute manifestations such as the healing of this woman. In the end, however, the result will be the restoration of all creation and the possibility of the prophetic, universal rest of Hebrews 4:4-10. More explicitly in the parable of the leaven, three elements

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33 Ellis, 186. It should be noted that by invoking the idea of creation in his argument (versus Jewish Law), Jesus is widening the scope of the kingdom from the Jews to the entire cosmos. There is no greater universal concept than the creation of the world. *Vid.* Filbeck, 43ff.
stand out. First, the kingdom, like leaven, is good. Second, the kingdom is a reality, though it is hidden (\[\varepsilon\nu\kappa\rho\omega\psi\varepsilon\nu\]) in its present form. The third element is the effect of the leaven upon the dough. Jeremias suggests that the point of the parable is found in the contrast of the large quantity of dough versus the small amount of leaven. However, the designation of "three measures" of dough may simply be a conventional amount. The emphasis of the parable, then, is found in the last statement: "till it was all leavened." Therefore, the parable of the leaven is not simply describing a small to large motif of the kingdom (which is the point of the parable of the mustard seed), but is building upon that motif showing the universal scope of the kingdom.

Though the kingdom is a reality to Jesus and his auditors, it is hidden. It appears from time to time in minute installments, like the healing of the woman, but will eventually permeate the world. It is universal in scope. The parable celebrates the triumph of the

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33 Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 146-49.


kingdom after a period of lowliness and hiddenness.\(^{30}\)

*(Matthew 22:1-14)*

Luke and Matthew reveal striking dissimilarities, both in context and content, in their representations of the parable of the great banquet. In Matthew the parable follows immediately Jesus' parable of the wicked tenants (Matt. 21:33-36, pars.),\(^{40}\) while Luke places the parable immediately after the parable of the marriage feast (Luke 14:7-14).\(^{41}\) Matthew relates the parable as one of many Jesus told to his audience at the temple (Matt. 21:23). Luke, on the other hand, relates Jesus' telling of the parable at the home of Simon the Pharisee, following the statement of an unnamed guest at the dinner table (Luke 14:1, 15).\(^{42}\) In addition to this contextual variance there is a large measure of content-distinctions between Luke's and Matthew's accounts. A side-by-side reading in the Greek also reveals little word for word agreement.

Despite the differences, it is clear that the evangelists are relating the same basic parable. One is faced with two options. First, Jesus told the parable on more than one occasion, altering the parable to fit each context in which it was spoken. The second is that at

\(^{30}\) Fleddermann, 234.

\(^{40}\) See below for a description of this context. The abbreviation *pars.* will be used to indicate parallel passages in the Synoptic Gospels.

\(^{41}\) See chapter 5 for a discussion of this parable.

\(^{42}\) "When one of those at the table heard this, he said to him, 'Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!'" As is often the case in Luke, Jesus begins his parables by continuing a theme initiated by interrupting statements from the audience. Cf. 11:27, 45; 12:13; 13:1, 23, 31.
least one evangelist dramatically altered the parable for his own purposes. The former is preferred for several reasons. First, as the differences within the accounts are so dramatic, attributing them to redaction immediately calls into question the historical reliability of the accounts. This does not suggest that each evangelist has not highlighted themes which correspond to his theological aims, but simply as a whole, the accounts have been relayed as they were originally spoken. Second, this study has suggested that it was the practice of Jesus to repeat and re-create parables for different circumstances. Finally, each parable reveals earmarks of historicity. It seems, therefore, that Jesus spoke this same parable on (at least) two different occasions, one in the temple precincts recorded by Matthew, and one at the house of Simon the Pharisee, recorded by Luke. It is significant, though, that both parables were spoken to the Pharisees.

If Luke has chosen to include one of these accounts rather than the other, the reasons for his choice may be found in differences of content between the two. Several elements are of interest for this study. Both parables describe the coming eschatological banquet. Matthew highlights this motif by describing a king who gave a marriage feast for his son (Matt. 22:2). Although this exact wording is absent in Luke, the idea is presented through the introductory statement which describes eating bread in the kingdom of God (Luke 14:15).

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42 Note, for instance, the concluding aphorism of Jesus in Matt. 22:14 which was a common manner in which Jesus ended his parables. Note also the introductory exclamation by Jesus' audience which was the impetus for the parable in Luke. *Vid.* n. 42 above.
Where the idea of the eschatological banquet is implied in Matthew's context, it is explicit in Luke.

The second major element upon which Luke capitalizes is found in the invited guests of the banquet. As the original guests made excuses and passed on the invitation of the host, the king in Matthew's account sends his servant to gather "as many as you can find" to enter the feast (Matt. 22:9). A similar scenario is found in Luke's account, but Luke highlights the "socially debilitating rejection" of the host by his peers.\(^4\) In Luke's account the list of new invitees comes from the destitute and outcast of Jewish society (Luke 14:21).\(^5\)

Despite the fact that new guests were brought into the banquet hall, Luke notes that there was still room for more guests (Luke 14:22). To this end the master commands his servant, "Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel\(^4\) people to come in, that my house may be filled (Luke 14:23)." The original guest list has been changed to omit those originally invited (Luke 14:24) and include those normally excluded from full membership in the people

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\(^4\) Green, 555.

\(^5\) Jeremias suggests that Jesus was following a well known story of his time in which a rich man, Ma'jan, invited many guests to a lavish banquet only to be turned down by flimsy excuses. In turn, Ma'jan replaces the guests with beggars. *Vid.* Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 178-79. *Vid.* also Humphrey Palmer, "Just Married, Cannot Come," *NovT* 18 (1976), 250-52.

\(^4\) The verb phrase, ἀναγκασον εἰσελθεῖν, should not carry the idea of forcing one to enter against one's will. Though ἀναγκάζω, in its strongest sense, can mean "compel" or "force" (cf Acts 26:11), the weaker sense of "urgently invite" or "strongly urge" is more accurate here. *Vid.* BAGD, 52. Several mss. pick up on this and replace ἀναγκασον εἰσελθεῖν with ποιήσον εἰσελθεῖν (𝔓⁴, pc, sy⁴). The stronger sense of the word, with all of its negative trappings, became the "missionary paradigm" of the medieval church. The charge cogite intrare was applied and executed on those outside of the faith by the church with the help of the state. *Vid.* Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 219, 240.
of God. Although the guest list is not repeated here, it is assumed that the servants were to find more guests from the same social strata in the "highways and hedges." Therefore, the Lukan guests at the great banquet would include first, those marginalized within Jewish society, and ultimately the Gentiles.  

Both accounts of the parable describe the replacement of original guests by new ones. Both warn Jesus' listeners of their potential absence at the great Messianic/eschatological banquet. However, because of Luke's purposes and themes, his parable also includes a missiological theme. He has chosen to include the parable of Jesus which is overtly missionary.

The Lost Sheep, Luke 15:3-7 (Matthew 18:12-24)

Again, in this parable, a vast difference between contexts can be seen. Matthew relates the parable of the lost sheep as Jesus taught his disciples in Capernaum (17:24; 18:1). Luke, on the other hand, relates Jesus teaching this parable to the scribes and Pharisees following a meal with them as they murmured about his association with tax collectors and 

\[49\] Commentators note that the command to go to the "highways and hedges" sent the servants outside of town to find guests. This, they argue, suggests the inclusion of Gentiles. \[Vid.\] Bailey, Through Peasant Eyes, 100-02; Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, 234-35; T. W. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus (London: SCM 1961), 130. Jeremias claims, "Matthew had already apparently understood the uninvited to refer to the Gentiles. But in Luke the doubling [of the invitation] has heightened the picture; to him the introduction of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God was the first importance. It was the Church in a situation demanding missionary activity, which interpreted the parable as a missionary command . . . " \[Vid.\] Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 64.
sinners (15:1-2). The parable is followed in Luke by two other parables revolving around a lost and found motif.  

Several elements bring to light Luke's missionary purpose in this parable. First, the form of the parable actually is one prolonged question on the part of Jesus to the Pharisees. The phrasing of the question anticipates a positive reply. In other words, the audience is expected to agree that a shepherd would seek a lost sheep, would rejoice as he brought it home, and that such an occasion would be cause for a celebration with his friends.

Second, in asking this question, Jesus has given the scribes and Pharisees the hypothetical opportunity of placing themselves in the position of the shepherd. Not only was this idea offensive, given the ritual impurity of first century sheep herders, but it was aggressive. It is aggressive as Luke's parable describes the sheep as "lost" (ἀπολέσας). Thus, the blame for the lostness of the sheep is placed squarely on the shoulders of the shepherd and not on the sheep. Since this is the case, all the more importance is placed upon

Ellis suggests that Matthew altered and reapplied this parable in the different setting. Ellis, 196-97.

Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 146-49.

Green, 574.

At this point, Jesus is most likely referring to Ezekiel 34 in which the spiritual shepherds of Israel are condemned for their lack of care for the people of Israel. Jesus follows the same idea in his discourse on the good shepherd in John 10.

Green, 573-74 n. 211. *Vid.* also Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, 147, who suggests that this is irony used to show the Pharisees that they were in an unclean profession.

This term is used three times in the parable showing that it is an important aspect of Luke's account. It is even more significant when compared to Matthew's phraseology, "gone astray."

K. E. Bailey, *Finding the Lost: Cultural Keys to Luke 15* (St. Louis: Concordia,
finding the sheep. That the sheep is ultimately found implies some measure of searching on the part of the shepherd.\(^{57}\)

Finally, the deliberate inviting\(^{58}\) of friends and neighbors by the shepherd upon the recovery of the lost sheep implies that they joined the shepherd in a festive meal.\(^{59}\) This serves to tie the parable to its original context, that of Jesus dining with sinners (15:2). By reinstating this theme, Jesus argues his audience should rejoice in the salvation of socio-religious outcasts.\(^{59}\)

The parable of the lost sheep does not seem to involve mission(s) to the nations.\(^{61}\) However, Luke's context centers the parable on the Pharisees' need to seek the lost among their own sheepfold (especially those who are outcasts in the Jewish society). In his strong


\(^{58}\) \(συγκολέω\) suggests the extension of hospitality (cf. 15:9).

\(^{59}\) Green, 574.

\(^{60}\) It is not specifically stated in this passage that any of the sinners with whom Jesus associated were "saved." However, Luke claims that many were "drawing near" (\(ἐγγίζοντες\)) to him. Though the term is often spatial, it can connote a figurative closeness or acceptance (cf. Rom. 10:8). \(Vid. BAGD, 214.\) Luke may have been using a double meaning in this context.

\(^{61}\) Though Jesus does not refer to himself as shepherd in this passage, there is a clear correspondance with the idea of a good shepherd versus the Pharisees as shepherds who had failed in their duties (cf. John 10:1-18). This comparison largely follows Ezekiel 34. Note the statement in Ezekiel's prophecy, "For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad... I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries... (Ezek. 34:11-13)." Jesus certainly picks up on this lost and found motif in the parable. At the same time the Pharisees in his audience would have understood the polemic against them.
language. Luke shows that the Pharisees are to blame for the lostness of many sheep, and they should take the missionary steps needed to recover them (even if it involves leaving the ninety-nine). Following this, the Pharisees should not disparage those who make an effort to reach the lost. Rather, they should rejoice with both the earthly and heavenly communities when one lost sheep is recovered.

Summary

Several observations can be made from this brief comparison of parables in the double tradition. The first concerns the source of these parables. It is evident from the comparison of wording that Matthew and Luke had common sources from which they drew these parables. Whether this was an Aramaic original (parable of the builders?) or some other form of "Q" is unimportant at this point. What is clear is that the parables represent accurate accounts of Jesus' teaching.

The second observation centers on context. It seems that Jesus told several parables in different contexts, and both Matthew and Luke felt free to omit a parable from one context while including it in another (the faithful and unfaithful servants). When this was done, the evangelists referred to their common source and would add the needed introductory formulae to make it understandable in their context.

Thirdly, the change in contexts and subtle word changes should be attributed to the hermeneutics and literary aims of the evangelists. For example, Matthew has Jesus relating the parable of the lost sheep to the disciples, possibly to encourage them in their future mission to the lost sheep of Israel. His emphasis is that Jesus is the Messiah to the Jews.
Luke, however, portrays the same message in a polemic against the Pharisees. His emphasis is that the Pharisees, as stewards of the Law, had failed in their God-given duty to care for the sheep of Israel. As such, the task would fall to others. Likewise, the evangelists, and especially Luke, felt free to make minor changes in wording to support their hermeneutical and literary goals (e.g., the use of steward versus slave and lost versus gone astray).

Finally, it is argued that each of the parables examined, though not purely missionary in purpose, has missiological application. As this is true for the parables in both Matthew and Luke, it reveals that Jesus was concerned with the missiological nature of the kingdom. However, this missionary hue is more readily visible in Luke. Though no clear pattern emerges in each parable, Luke highlights the missiological aspects of the parables through context, wording, and additions to the parables. None of the parables suggest that Luke has omitted elements which do not support his idea of inclusiveness. These observations serve as further corroborating evidence that Luke indeed has missiological aims in his gospel account.

An Analysis of the Parables in the Triple Tradition

(Matthew 9:16-17; Mark 2:21-22)

This parable shows considerable agreement in context and wording in all three gospel accounts. Preceding the parable is the healing of the paralytic and the controversy which ensues (Luke 5:17-26; pars.) and the calling of Matthew and the surrounding controversy.

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62 It is not meant, by using the term additions, that Luke is not concerned with historicity of Jesus' spoken parables. Rather, Luke has simply included elements of the original parable which Matthew has, for his own purposes, omitted. An example of a Lukan addition is Peter's question of 12:41. Examples of unique Lukan wording are his use of "steward" versus "slave" in Matthew and "lost" versus "gone astray." An example of Lukan contextual variation is his description of the healing of 13:10-17 before relating Jesus' parable of the leaven.
(Luke 5:27-32, pars.). Following Jesus' explanation of why he eats with tax collectors and sinners, he claims, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32, pars.)." This statement leads to the occasion for the parable; a question from John's disciples concerning fasting (Luke 5:33, pars.).

It seems, therefore, that the parable centers on Jesus' view of righteousness which differs from the view of the Pharisees (cf. Matt. 5:17). He offers the parable as a summation of the give-and-take table discourse: Old and new are fundamentally irreconcilable. The newness of Jesus and his message (new cloth and new wine) is contrasted to the oldness of the religious patterns of the Pharisees and Torah righteousness (old garment and old wine). This newness is simply too dynamic to be contained by the "traditional framework of obedience."

In showing the new dynamic nature found in his kingdom, Jesus does not call for the complete setting aside of the old. The context of the Lukan pericope shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of the ancient purposes of God—the roots of the new movement are unmistakably Jewish. The old garment is not to be discarded, but mended. Likewise, old wine or wineskins are not bad. Rather, the new simply cannot be superimposed upon or

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63 Hagner, 244.

64 That is, the birth narrative, genealogy, temptation, and Nazareth sermon.

65 Green, 250; Esler, 216.

66 This truth reveals the difficulty in Conzelmann's "three ages" of Luke, where Jesus and the early church are distanced from the life of Israel. If Conzelmann is correct, this parable is somewhat contradictory (e.g., the idea that the old is to be rejected for the new contrasted to
contained within the old without negative consequences. What is needed is a new framework or paradigm for accepting the new. This point is underlined by Jesus' statement in Matthew that "both [new wineskin and fresh wine] are preserved." 

Jesus' statement, "And no one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says 'The old is good.'" is only found in Luke's account (5:39). Here Jesus characteristically draws on conventional, axiomatic wisdom to sum up the discourse. Old wine is good, and the Old Testament and the righteousness described therein are likewise good. The scribes and Pharisees interpreted this righteousness as separation from sinners and the protection of the Law (5:30). However, for Jesus the practice of righteousness demanded reaching out in ministry to those who were lost (5:31-32). By his statement in verse 39, Jesus is simply noting the obvious reason the Pharisees and scribes had murmured against him in 5:30: They had a taste for the old and therefore an aversion to the new. This statement corresponds to Jesus' statement in Luke 5:39). Vid. H. Conzelmann, The Theology of Saint Luke (London: Faber and Faber, 1960).

Matt. 9:17.

Green notes that it is common for Jesus to draw upon conventional wisdom and common experience to make a point in Luke, e.g. 8:16; 11:11-13; 16:1-9; 18:1-8. Vid. Green, 250, n. 90.

See n. 24 above.

This difference in interpretation is fundamental for understanding the conflicts between Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus' statement makes two points: 1) the old is good, but 2) only as it is interpreted correctly. The Pharisees had difficulty grasping the second half of this statement. Later, Marcion would be unable to grasp the first part of the statement and would eventually excise 5:39 from his Bible. Vid. Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary to the Greek New Testament (Stuttgart: UBS, 1971), 138-39.

Geldenhuys, 197.
Luke's understanding of missions to societal outcasts (including Gentiles). It is very difficult for adherents of the old Jewish religion to accept Jesus' newly inaugurated forms. It was this irreconcilable difference in thinking that would eventually lead to his crucifixion.

The Sower, Luke 8:4-15 (Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:3-20)

The parable of the sower is found within the context of Jesus' Galilean ministry. Jesus spoke from a boat on the Sea of Galilee to the multitudes who came to hear him as they stood on the beach and listened (Matt. 13:1-2; Mark 4:1). Only Luke precedes the account with a descriptive list of Jesus' disciples (8:1-3) and omits the details concerning the context of the teaching by simply stating "a great crowd came together and people from town after town came to him (Luke 8:4)." Luke's emphasis on the enormity of the crowd suggests the teacher's popularity.

Though popularly known as the parable of the sower, the parable describes less about the one sowing seed than about the various types of soils the sower encounters. The sower simply serves as the unifying character of the parable. The emphasis of the parable lies in hearing (Luke 8:8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 21) the word (Luke 8:11, 13, 15, 21). These two terms hold the parable together "like glue."


75 Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, 226. It should be noted here that only Luke mentions that Jesus taught δι' αὐτῶν παραβολῆς (cf. ἐν παραβολαῖς in Matthew and Mark). The significance of this adjectival description is that Jesus was not pronouncing a parable as much as he was describing parabolically what actually happened as he (the sower) sowed the seed (the word of God). Vid. Green, 223.

"Hearing" denotes more than auditory reception of the speaker's words. It requires acting upon these words to the point that good fruit is produced (Luke 8:15). In Luke's account, hearing is associated with response "on the basis of and consistent with" that which is heard. Only Luke concludes the teaching of the soils with the pericope of Jesus' true kindred (8:19-21). Those who wish to be in Christ's family must not only "hear" the word of God, but "do it" as well (8:21).

The preceding short list of faithful disciples and the description of Christ's true kindred which follows serve as bookends to the parable. For Luke they provide further illustrations of the importance of responding to the hearing of the word of God. The proclamation of this word is key to the expansion and growth of the kingdom and is an expression of genuine discipleship. The disciples are given the injunction to pay careful attention to Jesus' teaching (8:18). Just as Jesus illuminated aspects of the kingdom to his disciples (8:16-17), so the disciples would eventually become the light bearers of the kingdom to the world (Acts 13:47; 26:18).

\footnote{Note the qualifiers Luke uses with "hearing": hear + believe (8:12-13); hear + choked (8:14); hear + produce fruit (8:14-15); hear + hold fast with patience (8:15); and hear + do (8:21). \textit{Vid.} Green, 223.}

\footnote{Both Matthew and Mark have this pericope immediately preceding the parable of the sower (Matt. 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35). As the pericope serves as a fitting conclusion to the meaning of the parable, it is clear that Luke is following a logical and aesthetic order and not necessarily a chronological one. \textit{Vid.} Geldenhuys, 249. Cf. Marshall's discussion of Luke's interest in the chronology of Jesus' ministry. Marshall, \textit{Luke: Historian and Theologian}, 64ff.}


\footnote{Senior notes the importance in Luke of tying the twelve to proclamation of the kingdom. "For Luke, then, one of the most important ingredients in the missionary program of the community is those leaders who ensure the authenticity of the community's message by linking its mission to that of Jesus. The story in Acts shows that much of the actual mission}
(Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32)

The contexts of this parable in Matthew and Luke have been examined above (the parable of the leaven). It may help, however, to note that Luke places the parable in his travel narrative immediately following his healing of the crippled woman on the Sabbath. Matthew inserts the parable into a Galilean parable discourse. Mark's context closely resembles Matthew's. The mustard seed, in Luke, is closely tied to the healing account by the ouv of 13:18. Therefore, the parable is told in connection with this healing and is predicated upon truths revealed in the account of this healing (see the above discussion).

The parable teaches that the kingdom, like a tiny mustard seed, begins in an almost infinitesimal state, but grows to great proportions. All three accounts are similar and drew from a common source. However, there are subtle differences. Both Matthew and Luke describe the sower of the seed, while Mark describes the seed being sown in the passive. The place of sowing is also different in each of the texts; a field (ἀγρός) for Matthew, the ground (τῆς γης) for Mark, and a garden (κήπον) for Luke. Matthew and Mark state specifically that the mustard seed is the smallest of seeds. As the mustard seed was proverbial for its work is done by people other than the twelve apostles. But this nuclear group authorizes Gentile mission and monitors it." Vid. Senior and Stuhlmueller, 267.

51 Apparently, so does the Gospel of Thomas (cf. Gos. Thom. 20).

52 Mark and Matthew probably do not have a specific point to make with these generalized description (cf. Matt. 13:36, 44, 24.18, 40; Mark 4:8, 20, 26, 28; 13:16). However, this may not be the case with Luke's use of "garden" (the only time the word is used in the GNT). Rabbinic rules of order forbid the planting of mustard seeds in a garden (Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 27 n. 11). Mishnah Kilayim 3.2 states "Not every kind of seed may be sown in a garden-bed, but any kind of vegetable may be sown therein. Mustard and small beans are deemed a kind of small seed and large beans a kind of vegetable" (quoted in Scott, 375). Although the point is minor, Luke may have chosen this description because it fit Roman practices. Cf. I. H. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 561. It is at least possible, then, that Luke is tying the
smallness, Luke sees no need to include this statement. Finally, Matthew and Luke describe the outgrowth of the seed as a tree, while Mark (and Thomas) simply describes the great branches it produces. Matthew and Luke apparently include Jesus' hyperbole\(^3\) to increase the effect of the story.

A missiological element is found in the last statement of the parable: Not only will the small seed become a large tree, but it will provide shelter for the birds of the air (Luke 13:19; pars.). This is most likely a reference, which Jesus' audience would have understood, to several Old Testament passages in which the birds of the air come to rest in the branches of the great cedars of Lebanon.\(^4\) Here, the birds of the air represent the peoples or nations of the world. By comparing the kingdom of God to a tree which shelter the birds, Jesus is claiming, like Ezekiel, that the kingdom will be universal in size. By following this parable with the parable of the leaven, Matthew and Luke describe the kingdom as being universal in scope. However, by placing the parables after the healing episode, Luke describes the victory of Jesus and the triumph of the kingdom more emphatically: Jesus puts to shame his adversaries (13:17); the kingdom grows from very small to encompassing the nations (13:19); and the entire world is permeated by the kingdom (13:21).

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The mustard tree apparently fits better in the classification as a shrub (cf. Matt. 13:32 and Mark 4:32) though it can grow to ten or twelve feet and fit the description of a small shade tree. \textit{Vid.} Blomberg, \textit{Interpreting the Parables}, 285.

\(^3\)E.g., Ps. 104:12, 16-17; Ezek. 31:6; Dan. 4:12. Ibid.; Green, 526.

\(^4\)Fleddermann, 235.
(Matthew 21:33-41; Mark 12:1-9)

The contexts in which this parable is found in the Synoptic Gospels are strikingly similar. In each case Jesus is shown teaching the people\(^6\) (along with the scribes and Pharisees) in the temple precinct. Jesus has entered Jerusalem triumphantly (Luke 19:28-40; pars.) and has cleansed the temple for the second time (Luke 19:45-48; pars.). Following this, Jesus' authority is challenged by the religious leaders (Luke 20:1-8; pars.). After refusing to indicate the source of his authority, Jesus tells the parable of the wicked husbandmen.\(^7\) In each gospel, the questioning of Jesus' authority is the direct impetus for the parable.

There are two striking dissimilarities between Luke's account and those of Matthew and Mark. First, the description of the vineyard in both Matthew and Mark is more detailed than Luke. Matthew tells his readers that the vineyard owner "set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower" before letting it out to the wicked tenants (Matt. 21:33; cf. Mark 12:1). Jesus, in this description, intends to bring to the hearers' mind Isaiah's song of the vineyard (Isa. 5:1-7).\(^8\) In this parable Isaiah describes God's care for Israel as a vineyard owner's cultivation of a vineyard. Isaiah describes the process: "He digged it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes (Isa. 5:2)."

\(^6\) Probably representing Israel in the context of this parable. *Vid.* Green, 703.

\(^7\) Mark and Luke are in complete agreement concerning this chronology of events. Matthew, however, inserts the cursing of the barren fig tree (21:18-22) following the temple cleansing and the parable of the two sons (21:28-32) immediately preceding the wicked husbandmen.

\(^8\) *Contra* Davies and Allison, 3:179-80.
By emphasizing that Israel is the vineyard in Jesus' parable, Matthew and Mark underscore God's past care and concern for the nation of Israel. Isaiah's parable continues, "Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done for it (Isa. 5:3)?" In essence, justification is given for the land owner's drastic and protective measures.

By omitting this detailed description of God's care for the vineyard, Luke does not seek to remind his readers of Isaiah 5:1-7. However, he still intends that the reader associate the vineyard with Israel. Luke's omission of Jesus' statement, then, should be seen as shifting the focus from past events to present and future ones: the destruction of the wicked tenants and the giving of the vineyard to others. This is underlined by Luke's inclusion of the people's response, "God forbid (Luke 20:16)"

The outcome, of course, is the same in all three accounts. Judgment is pronounced upon the wicked tenants (the Pharisees, Matt. 21:45) for polluting God's vineyard. For their wickedness, the vineyard will be given to others (Luke 20:16; pars.).

A second dissimilarity is seen when noting that the statement in Matthew 21:43 is absent from Luke's (and Mark's) account. This statement is a version of several Old Testament passages.

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91 It is at this point where Jesus answers the question at hand, i.e. from where his authority ultimately comes. Jesus is to be seen as the "beloved son" of the vineyard owner who is sent to act upon his authority.
Testament texts which describe the kingdom being handed over to others. It specifically describes the vineyard given to another nation (ἕως) because the current tenants had produced no fruit. As this stands in tension to the rest of the parable (e.g., Matt. 21:34 and pars. assume that fruit was produced), Davies and Allison conclude that the statement is redactional and not original to Jesus. If this is the case, Luke's omission is easily explained. However, as Luke seems more likely than Matthew to highlight Jesus' concern for the Gentiles, the statement should be seen as original to Jesus. Luke (and Mark), apparently, does not appear to be aware of the statement.

Leaves of the Fig Tree, Luke 21:29-33
(Matthew 24:32-35; Mark 13:28-31)

This short parable is found in identical contexts in all three gospel accounts. Each evangelist places the parable within the Olivet discourse of Jesus (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). It is preceded by the prophetic descriptions of Jerusalem's destruction (Luke 21:20-24; pars.) and the second advent of the Christ (Luke 21:25-28; pars.). Following the parable, each evangelist reproduces Jesus' injunction to watchfulness (Luke 21:34-38; pars.).

There are four differences between Luke's and the other synoptists accounts. Luke begins with his typical formula, "And he told them a parable" (cf. 19:11; 20:9, et al.), absent in

\footnote{E.g., 1 Sam. 15:28; Dan. 2:44; cf. 2 Esdras 1:24.}

\footnote{Davies and Allison, 3:187. In their interpretation, the nation (= the church and/or its leaders) gains the kingdom upon the death and resurrection of Jesus (cf. 21:41-42).}

\footnote{This statement in Matthew, though in "tension" with the overall parable, is very much in keeping with Isaiah's song of the vineyard in which the owner of the vineyard pronounces judgment upon the vineyard for its fruitlessness. This provides the reader with a third option to explain the statement. It is also possible that Luke omitted the statement simply because he "buried" the ties to the Isaiah text.}
both Matthew and Mark. The second difference is found in the object of the parable. For
Matthew and Mark Jesus' description only includes that of the fig tree, while Luke includes
"all the trees" in the parable. The third difference is found in verse 31. Here, "these things" (the budding of the tree) in Matthew and Mark are precursors to the second advent of Jesus:
"you know that he is near, at the very gates (Matt. 24:33; Mark 13:29)." For Luke, the rising

The fig tree was seen as a symbol of Israel's blessing in Old Testament literature. In
this case, however, the fig tree stands as a portent of tribulation. From the clues above, it is
possible to see Luke as an interpreter of Matthew and/or Mark. By including the idea of the
kingdom of God, Luke clearly describes the parable in eschatological terms. Also, by
including all trees in the description, he shows that the eschatological events described are
universal, not just centered on the Jews. His point is emphasized in the statement which
follows the parable, "Take heed . . . that day will come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it
will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth (Luke 21:34, 35)."

Luke's omission of the timetable is more difficult to explain. If Luke is concerned with
casting this parable with a more universal hue, it is possible that the statement was omitted
due to its Jewishness. However, it seems more probable that Luke omitted the statement
because it does not support his interpretation of the parable. Both Matthew and Mark use the

95 That is, ταῦτα (cf. Matthew's πάντα ταῦτα).

96 As one of the prominent trees in Palestine, it represented one of God's blessings of the
land (cf. Deut. 8:7-8; 1 Kings 4:25; Hosea 9:10; Micah 4:4). Even after the fall, the leaves of
the fig tree (the only tree named in the garden) provide covering for the man and woman's
shame (Gen. 3:7). Vid. Scott, 332ff.
parable to describe the second coming of the Messiah. To this end, no one—not the angels nor even the Son—knows when these events would take place. This fact is known only by the Father. Luke, on the other hand, uses the parable to describe the coming of the kingdom. By omitting the question of "when" in the parable, Luke essentially collapses time into the present. The kingdom is at hand now. More than a proper discernment of the times is needed for those who would join this kingdom. What is called for is proper discernment which leads to appropriate action. In this case, as the "summer" is at hand, it calls for avoiding temptation and praying for strength to endure the tribulation (Luke 21:34-36).

Summary

When relating a parable from the triple tradition, Luke is likely to describe contexts very similar to those found in Matthew and Mark. However, in relating these common parables, he feels free to emphasize elements neglected by the other evangelists. Examples of this are Luke's placing the pericope of Christ's true kindred (8:19-21) after the parable of the sower and including introductory or aphoristic conclusions not found in Matthew and Mark (e.g. Luke 5:39).

As with the parables of the double tradition, each has missiological application. This is especially true with Luke since one of the primary purposes of his Gospel is missionary in nature. As a historian he faithfully preserves the words of the Lord found in the parables. As a missionary theologian he nuances the parables, expanding their applications. Examples such as Luke's inclusion of "all trees" in the fig tree parable and his distancing of the vineyard from its original Isaianic context in the parable of the wicked husbandmen show that he is

concerned not only that the parables receive a wide hearing, but that his Jewish audience understand their universal scope as well.

Conclusions

At the outset of this chapter, two goals were established for this comparison of the parables found in the double and triple traditions. First, comparing the parables in Luke, Matthew, and Mark should reveal how Luke handles and interprets Jesus' parables. It is clear from the examination that Luke was very much a historian, accurately recording the words of Jesus found in the parables. Though his history at times may not be entirely chronological, it nonetheless accurately depicts the life, ministry, and teaching of the Lord.

The second goal of this comparison concerned the missionary nature of the parables. Could it be determined that Luke casts the parables of the double and triple traditions in a missiological hue? Luke played an additional role in recording the life of Christ for posterity other than being just a historian. He was also a theologian and missionary. Therefore, his presentation of the Gospel is no bare recitation of historical fact, but an interpretation and application of the life of Christ for the church.

As described in the preceding chapters, Luke is concerned with the mission of Jesus and the continuation of this mission within the church. Through subtle context and wording changes, he brings the missiological/universal nature of the kingdom to the forefront of the parables. He shows through the parables of the double and triple traditions that Jesus was very much concerned with reaching the lost, be they Jewish or Gentile.
By implication, Luke asserts that no less should be true for Jesus' followers. The kingdom is universal in scope and includes all nations, people groups, and societal strata. Ultimately, this kingdom would reach all peoples. Those who would follow the Lord must give an authentic hearing to this teaching. They must not only hear the teaching of the parable, they must also carry it out to all nations (Luke 8:21; 24:47).
CHAPTER 5

THE LUKAN PARABLES OF JESUS: INVITATIONS TO THE JEWS TO JOIN IN THE UNIVERSAL MISSION

Luke is very much concerned with missions. As the evidence is laid out, one notes that this concept is quite significant in the thinking of the author of the Third Gospel. His concern for reaching the nations with the gospel message emerges time and again in the pivotal passages of the Gospel and in the themes running throughout the book.

When this evidence is added to the comparison of the parables of the double and triple traditions, two facts come to light. First, Jesus was concerned with missions, and as a good historian, Luke dutifully recorded the Lord's missionary teaching. Second, Luke is a missionary theologian, and he, more than the other synoptists, brought the missiological aspects of Jesus' teaching visibly to the forefront.

In order to understand Luke's missiology and his concern for reaching the nations more fully, especially as expressed in the parables of Jesus, it will be necessary to examine the parables unique to Luke. Such an examination will be twofold in purpose. From a macro-perspective, the question must be asked as to why Luke included the parables that he did. This dissertation has already examined nine parables from his Gospel. In each of these Luke is in agreement with Matthew or with Matthew and Mark. But added to these nine
parables are fifteen more in which Luke is alone in his record. In other words, roughly 63% of the parables in the Gospel of Luke are unique to this account.

It is generally agreed by evangelical scholars that the genre of "gospel" is not meant to be an exhaustive history. Rather, it is a selective account of the life of Christ. If this consensus is accurate, then the most reliable material for determining the purpose or thrust of any one of these gospels would logically be the material that is unique to that gospel. The fifteen parables unique to Luke's Gospel, if a majority of them are missiological, would prove beyond a doubt what has been suggested thus far: missions is a major thrust of the Third Gospel. If they are not missiological, another reason must be found for their inclusion.

From a micro-perspective, each parable may give further insight into the evangelist's missiology from its content. This perspective can only come to light through an exegetical examination of each parable. Each parable will be examined with the purpose of determining if the parable is missions-oriented in nature. However, such an objective is admittedly vague.

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1 *Vid.* L. W. Hurtado, "Gospel (Genre)," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 276-83.

2 Note the many passages in which the evangelists expressly state that they have omitted some of the teachings or works of the Lord. This is often done by stating in general terms that Jesus taught "many things" or "healed many" people without describing the actual events (cf. Matt. 13:3; 14:36; Mark 1:34; 4:2; 6:34; Luke 7:21; John 20:30; 21:25).

3 The most obvious possibility would be that Luke had a sayings source (L) of which Matthew and Mark were unaware. Thus, following a reading of 1:1 in which Luke is "filling in the gaps" of the other gospel accounts, Luke includes these parables simply because others had omitted (or not known of) them. The difficulty with this position is that many of the parables unique to Luke, though not present in form, have striking similarities with statements or descriptions in other gospels. This is true for the parables of the barren fig tree, the great banquet, the cost of discipleship, the Pharisee and the publican, and the pounds. One cannot say unequivocally, then, that Luke was the only evangelist privy to these parables.
and subjective in nature. Therefore, a methodology must be developed to aid and give parameters to this investigation.

**Methodology for Evaluating the Missionary Nature of the Parables**

The methodology proposed for this evaluation will seek to show that a parable is either: 1) inclusive and a direct invitation for the Jews to join Jesus in his universal mission; 2) inclusive and supportive of this universal mission while not a direct invitation to join in the mission; or 3) non-missions related. As this methodology is highly dependent upon the work done in the previous chapters of this dissertation, two caveats should be stated before proceeding. First, it has already been determined that Luke is concerned with missions, so searching for missions in the parables should not be seen as adding a foreign element to Luke's Gospel. Rather, the search for missions in the parables is simply seeking to follow one of Luke's continuing themes. Second, it has been determined that parables are more allegorical than previous generations of scholars had allowed and therefore apt to have more than one point. Therefore, finding missions within a parable does not mean that the parable is *about* missions. For instance, one can gain great missiological insight into the universal nature of the kingdom by seeing the good Samaritan in light of the one doing God's will (versus the priest and Levite). However, the parable is nonetheless told as the answer to the lawyer's question, "and who is my neighbor (10:29)." Therefore, missions appears merely as a sub-theme of the parable. It is hoped, then, that the methodology proposed herein would not serve as a matrix or grid outside of Scripture through which a parable should be read in place of exegesis. Rather, it is simply meant to aid an exegetical evaluation of the parables.
Direct Invitation Parables

A parable which could be described as a direct invitation for his hearers (primarily Jews) to join in Jesus' universal mission would likely contain one or more of four basic elements. Each of these is considered a direct invitation in that it is a proposition Jesus makes for his hearers' consideration. Thus, it would be seen as an invitation for Jesus' auditors to join in the mission of sharing the message of the kingdom with outsiders.

Specific Mention

The first element of a direct invitation would certainly be the specific mention or implication that Gentiles or outsiders enter the kingdom of God. In this case Jesus' overt mention that the kingdom was open to the non-Jew or sinner serves as an expansion of his hearer's concept of the kingdom. Since Jesus viewed the kingdom as open to all, so should his hearers. As parables were example stories told to be applied to the hearer's life situation, the implication is that Jesus' hearers should join in this mission.

Replacement Motif

The second element would be a replacement motif found in the parable. In this case people once blessed are shown as being replaced by others normally viewed as outsiders. More specifically, the salvation which was originally offered to the Jews had been "passed along" to the Gentiles. This brings to point a crucial issue for the study of Luke-Acts, namely, the idea of salvation for Jews and Gentiles.
The New Testament is in agreement that the Jews have a place of priority in God's plan of salvation. Even Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:5), claims that the gospel is the "power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Rom 1:16)." In the same way Luke reveals, both in his Gospel and Acts, that although there is no partiality in God, Jesus came first for the Jews.

The Gospel of Luke shows historically that Jesus was a Jew and ministered among the Jews. Jesus' parents were faithful to the Torah (Luke 2:27, 31); he felt at home in the Jerusalem temple (2:49); and his custom was to participate in Jewish synagogue worship (4:16ff). His disciples were also Jews. The continuation of this priority is maintained in the early church: The disciples were to continue Jesus' ministry "beginning from Jerusalem (24:47; cf. Acts 1:8)." Here the church is shown as Jews, unified by their faith in Jesus as Messiah, who continued in temple fellowship and followed the customs of their forefathers. The first major expansion of the church on the day of Pentecost began with the conversion of 3,000 Jews and proselytes (Acts 2:41). Similarly, other large groups of Jews are shown entering the church at various stages of its expansion.

Despite these positive portrayals of Jews in Luke-Acts, the Jews largely rejected Jesus and his message, ultimately participating in his crucifixion (Luke 23:13; Acts 2:22ff). It was this rejection which allowed the message to reach the Gentiles. Luke shows the message

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4 Bosch, Transforming Mission, 94.


being spread to Samaritans, an Ethiopian eunuch (probably a proselyte), and eventually a
centurion and his household. This latter conversion to Christianity led to the apostles' verdict:
"to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:18)."

This sequence of events should not be seen as merely historical or pragmatic in
nature. Instead, it is theological. Luke shows throughout his Gospel and Acts that it was
God's sovereign plan that the Jews be given the opportunity of salvation first. The priority of
Jews in the kingdom rests on their prominence in salvation history. This fact, however, does
not diminish the Gentile's place in the kingdom. It has been shown that Luke is concerned
from the outset of his Gospel in showing a universal and inclusive kingdom:

The emphasis on salvation for the Jews and their theological priority is, however, never
divorced from the Gentiles and a mission to them. The risen Lord has entrusted the
Gentile mission to the apostles (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8); they execute this mission by
turning, first, to the Jews! The Gentile mission is not secondary to the Jewish mission.
Neither is the one merely a consequence of the other. Rather, the Gentile mission is
coordinated to the Jewish mission. Therefore, on theological grounds, Luke shows Paul preaching first at the synagogue in each
new mission center he established. This missionary praxis continued despite the statement of
Paul and Barnabas to the Jews in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch, "It was necessary that
the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge
yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46)."

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7 That is, "pragmatic" in the sense that the Jews were selected because they would be
more likely than pagans to accept the gospel message.

8 Paul Zingg, "Die Stellung des Lukas zur Heidenmission," Neue Zeitschrift für
Missionswissenschaft (NZM) 29 (1973): 205.

9 Bosch, Transforming Mission, 95. Emphasis in original.

Luke reveals, therefore, that mission is for the world. As a part of God's sovereign plan of Heilsgeschichte, it begins in Jerusalem for the Jews first. However, it is the Gentile world which responds. Luke shows that the message is no "crust from the table of Israel" which God offers, but his universal saving care for all peoples. Thus the movement from Israel to the Gentiles is not the cause of the universal mission, in Luke's view, but the God-ordained moment that clearly reveals God's saving intent for all. It can be concluded, then, that replacement motifs found in the parables of Jesus suggest an invitation for Jesus' audience to seize this salvation-historical moment and join him in his Gentile/universal mission.

Negative Reference to the Jewish Religious Leadership

Closely related to this second element is a third, namely, a negative reference to the Jewish religious leadership. As discussed above, the majority of Jews Jesus encountered, especially those of the religious establishment, rejected Jesus and his message. This rejection was a less extreme but similar line when he states that it is not a question of individual salvation of Jews, but "a question of the direction of the church's mission, and Luke's answer is that the gospel is for the Gentiles, since the Jews by and large have rejected it." Marshall follows a less extreme but similar line when he states that it is not a question of individual salvation of Jews, but "a question of the direction of the church's mission, and Luke's answer is that the gospel is for the Gentiles, since the Jews by and large have rejected it." Marshall, Luke: Historian and Theologian, 187. However, Luke's positive portrayal of the Jewishness of Jesus and the Jewish beginnings of the church in Luke-Acts (see the discussion above) makes this reasoning difficult to accept. God's plan must include both, and did so from the beginning.

11 Senior and Stuhlmueller, 272. Some scholars suggest that the Gentile mission became possible only after the Jews rejected the gospel. Sanders, for instance, asserts that Luke seeks to justify the Gentile mission on the basis of the obstinacy of the Jews and that Luke sees the Jews as "mere theological pawns" in the spread of the gospel. "Vid. Jack T. Sanders, "The Parables of the Pounds and Lucan Anti-Semitism," Theological Studies (TS) 42 (1981): 667. Marshall follows a less extreme but similar line when he states that it is not a question of individual salvation of Jews, but "a question of the direction of the church's mission, and Luke's answer is that the gospel is for the Gentiles, since the Jews by and large have rejected it." Marshall, Luke: Historian and Theologian, 187. However, Luke's positive portrayal of the Jewishness of Jesus and the Jewish beginnings of the church in Luke-Acts (see the discussion above) makes this reasoning difficult to accept. God's plan must include both, and did so from the beginning.

12 Senior and Stuhlmueller, 272.

13 Despite this rejection motif found throughout Luke's gospel, the third evangelist does not have a negative view of Jews in general. He uses the term 'Ἰουδαῖοι in only five places.
is foreshadowed at the outset of Luke's Gospel in the Nazareth episode. It is found in Jesus' teaching, especially in the statement of 19:14 in the parable of the pounds: "But his citizens hated him and sent and embassy after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'" Ultimately, it is found in Jesus' execution. Therefore, negative references to the Jewish religious establishment and its leadership should not be seen as anti-Semitic, but as historically accurate statements depicting the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. To this end, they too suggest a "replacement" of the Jews in God's plan and an invitation to join Jesus in God's mission to the world.

**Lost and Found Motif**

Finally, a fourth element might be found which suggests the parables are direct invitations to join Jesus' universal mission. This element is a *lost and found motif*. According to Jesus in Luke 19:10, his purpose on the earth was to bring salvation to all people: "For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost." The question for this dissertation, then, is "who is lost?" In the most general sense, all of humanity is lost. Luke has inherited Jewish theology and history which described the fall of man in the garden of Eden. He therefore understood that it was Jesus' mission to reconcile and forgive the entire world. Within this plan of salvation, however, Luke highlights certain groups which were neglected by Jewish...
religion. The first group was the outcasts in Judaism, the sinners and tax collectors. Jesus' table fellowship with these not only symbolized God's extension of forgiveness, but anticipated the eschatological meal in the kingdom of God. Whether these were Jews or non-Jews is at this point irrelevant. The Jewish community essentially viewed them as beyond the reach of divine mercy and forgiveness. The second group Luke singles out in God's plan for universal salvation is the poor and lower class of society. Luke enjoys the "reversal of fortune" which is expressed by Jesus throughout his ministry. For Luke the down-trodden have a special place within Jesus' kingdom. However, Luke is not guilty of ebionitism. The poor are blessed only in the fact that they are needy and dependent upon God. The rich, in contrast, are often self-satisfied and see no need for God. Jesus' message, then, has relevance to both, but is more palatable to the former. Finally, Luke's emphasis on showing


17Marshall, Luke: Historian and Theologian, 187. Samaritans should also be seen as falling into this category. Jervell considers these to be "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Vid. Jervell, 113-32.


19This is most evident in Jesus' Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20-26), especially when compared to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-12) which speaks more to spiritual issues. Note the differences in blessings to those who are "poor in spirit" (Matthew) versus "you poor" (Luke), and "those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew) versus "you that hunger now" (Luke).


21Luke notes, however, that riches can be useful. Thus, he stresses the giving of alms (Luke 11:41; 12:33; Acts 9:36; 10:2, 4, 31).
the Gentile world as those whom Jesus came to save has been argued throughout this
dissertation. On the basis of a universal fall from grace, these were as lost as those in Israel.
The only difference was that Gentiles had not had the benefit of the Torah and prophetic
revelation to lead them to God.\textsuperscript{22}

In summary, the lost in Luke's Gospel are all humans affected by the fall. As shown
through Jesus' historical ministry, which was carried out for the most part among the Jews, the
lost must refer first to the house of Israel. However, Luke makes clear in his account that this
description goes much further. The category holds those not having a voice within Judaism,
those in the lower strata of society, and those outside of Judaism. Therefore, a lost and found
motif found in the parables, in the broadest reading, describes any lost person, regardless of
ethnicity or status, as being received into the kingdom.\textsuperscript{23} The emphasis in such parables on
"finding" that which was lost would serve as an invitation for Jesus' hearers to join in the
search.

Supportive Parables

The second category of parables which continues Luke's missionary theme is
supportive parables. These parables undergird the idea of a Gentile/universal mission, while

\textsuperscript{22}Luke describes this the phenomenon through the mouth of Paul to the Athenians: "The
times of ignorance (\textit{\c{c}yvo\i\i\a}) God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to
repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man
whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the
dead (Acts 17:30-31)."

\textsuperscript{23}It should be noted, however, that it is ultimately the context which must determine if
this wider reading is acceptable within any given parable.
not providing a direct invitation to join in that mission. Several elements could be noted in parables falling within this category.

**Universality of Belief**

The first element is the *universality of belief*. In this case the parable emphasizes belief with no regard to genealogical, religious, or social status. Anyone who hears Jesus' message and acts upon it in faith is admitted to the kingdom.

**Small to Large Motif**

The second element is a *small to large motif*. In these parables the kingdom is shown as expanding from modest beginnings to extraordinary size. Such elements suggest the universal nature of the kingdom, expanding from its relatively small Jewish beginnings to encompass the entire world.

**Universality of Faithfulness**

The third element is the *universality of faithfulness*. Here, the parable emphasizes good works or faithfulness with what one has received. This parable will make no distinctions concerning genealogical, religious, or social status.

**Universality of Eschatological Reward or Punishment**

The final element is the *universality of eschatological reward or punishment*. With the possible exception of creation, there is no more universal event than the eschaton; all
creation will face judgment. Parables with this element will emphasize this fact and call the hearers to preparedness.

None of these four elements described above are purely missiological in nature. However, all support the idea of universality in general. Since Luke is concerned with the mission to the Gentiles and the universal nature of the kingdom, and as each one of these elements is in some sense universal, each can be viewed as supportive of the universal mission. However, since they do not speak directly to the Gentile/universal mission, they are not considered direct invitations to join in this mission.

Non-Missions Parables

The final category of parables is non-missions related. Such parables might speak of the worth of the kingdom, signs of the consummation, prayer, money/covetousness, and the cost of discipleship. These parables show that Jesus, and Luke by his inclusion of these parables, was concerned with other elements of faith outside the scope of missions.

Exegesis of the Parables Unique to Luke

The Two Debtors, Luke 7:41-43

Jesus' parable of the two debtors, found in Luke 7:41-43, was told in the context of a meal at the house of Simon the Pharisee.²⁴ As the dinner guests reclined to eat, an immoral 

²⁴Jesus' eating with Pharisees on several occasions shows that he was concerned with reaching this constituency with the message of the kingdom. Luke's record of these repasts shows that his idea of a universal kingdom was open even to those who were most often the ones contending with it. Cf. Luke 7:36; 11:37; and 14:1. This anointing of Jesus should not be confused with another anointing during Jesus' Galilean ministry (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8). Vid. Ellis, 122; and N. Levison, The Parables: Their Background and Local Settings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1926), 56-58.
woman entered and began the anointing process described in great detail by Luke (7:37-39). As was the custom in the first century, the door to a home hosting a banquet was most likely left open. Nevertheless, Luke suggests the surprise this woman's entrance caused with the introductory ἵδικα of verse 37. He describes the woman's social status in discreet, yet unmistakable terms: She was a local, well-known prostitute.

Luke relates that the woman entered with an alabaster cruse of ointment and stood behind (ἀπίστω) Jesus, at his feet (7:38). This statement suggests that following the dining practices of the day, Jesus was reclining on a mat on the floor around a low, wooden table. His head would have been close to the table with his feet either tucked underneath him or extended away from the table. As Jesus' head was away from her, she anointed and kissed that which was accessible to her, his feet. In her expression of joy, her tears wet his feet which she proceeded to dry with her hair.

Simon's unspoken soliloquy is recorded by Luke (7:39). In his thinking, the Pharisee assumes that if Jesus were a true prophet, he would have known the nature of the woman


26 Nolland notes that describing her as a woman "of the city" was an idiomatic Hebrew manner of describing that she was well known, and his calling her a "sinner" is possibly a euphemistic description of her occupation as a prostitute. Vid. John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20, WBC*, eds. David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker, and Ralph P. Martin (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 353.

27 μούρον is descriptive of a strongly aromatic perfume which was often kept in alabaster flasks. Vid. BAGD, 531-32. This would certainly be costly and of great worth to someone whose occupation included making oneself desirable for the gratification of her patron's senses.

anointing him"\(^2^9\) and would have avoided such contact for the sake of maintaining ritual purity. Jesus, however, chooses to show his prophetic gifting by reading the Pharisee's thoughts, responding with the parable of the two debtors.

In the parable, two debtors owe their creditor sums which they cannot pay, one five hundred denarii and the other fifty denarii.\(^3^0\) As both were incapable of paying their debts, the creditor forgave (εχορίσατο) both their debts (7:42). Jesus then poses the question to Simon the Pharisee, "Now which of them will love him more (7:42)?"

The answer to this question is the point of the parable: "The love and gratitude of those who have debts remitted to them depends upon their estimate of the actual amount which has been remitted to them rather than upon the actual amount."\(^3^2\) In Jesus' example story, the one who was forgiven the ten times greater debt would love the gracious creditor more. So Simon answers.\(^3^3\)

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\(^{3^0}\) A denarius is commonly considered the average wage for a day's labor. *Vid. BAGD*, 179. Heichelheim has argued that one adult (in second century Palestine) could survive on half a denarius. *Vid. F. Heichelheim, "Syria," in An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, ed. Tenney Frank (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1938), 179-80. One denarius could most likely support a laborer and his family at subsistence level for a day. *Vid. Scott*, 291.

\(^{3^1}\) This term stems from χορίσομαι ("to be gracious to" or "graciously grant") and suggests that the creditor made a present to them of what they owed. Cf. 7:21 where it is used to describe Jesus' giving of sight to the blind. *Vid. Rienecker and Rogers*, 159.


\(^{3^3}\) But note Simon's half-hearted indifference by beginning his answer with ὑπολογίζων ("I suppose").
Jesus continues to make the comparison by moving from the hypothetical parable to describing the actions before him. Simon had hosted Jesus at dinner, but had neglected to show him even the most common courtesy of the day. The unrighteous woman, however, had made up for his deficiency through her gestures. Her many sins, therefore, were forgiven as shown by the great love she expressed toward Jesus. After pronouncing her sins forgiven, Jesus claims, "Your faith has saved you, go in peace (7:50)."

Of the two anointings Jesus experienced during his ministry, why has Luke chosen to include this account while omitting the other? The answer lies, perhaps, in the purpose of Luke's Gospel. Levison argues convincingly that Luke found this account in his non-Marcan and Matthean sources and included it because it "so appealed to his instincts." He left out the


But note the contrasts in the woman's actions. Jesus' feet were washed, not with water, but with tears of joy. They were dried, not with a towel, but with her own hair. Jesus was kissed, not on the cheek, but on the feet. He was anointed, not on the head (which was deemed worthy of anointing), but on the feet and not with olive oil (which was common), but with expensive perfume.

Roman Catholics have interpreted this passage as an example of a contritio caritate formata, i.e., that her contrite love won her forgiveness. However, Plummer notes that this interpretation fails on three counts: 1) The second half of verse 47 suggests that her love is a post facto expression of forgiveness; 2) The following parable of the sower (8:4-8) shows that her expression of love is simply the fruit of the seed taking root in good soil; and 3) The explicit statement of verse 50, "your faith has saved you," shows that her actions had not won her forgiveness. Vid. Plummer, 213. This begs the question of the timing of her salvation. Perhaps the woman was one of the people who repented under John's ministry described in 7:29, "all the people and tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John." If this is the case, then the woman has simply come to Jesus to thank him for her "new life" and is given as an example of 7:35. Vid. Ellis, 122.
other to save his audience from confusion.\textsuperscript{37} Luke's anointing account centers on the forgiveness of sin/debt and the joy which accompanies such forgiveness. The account provides the opportunity for sharing the parable described above. Within Luke's account, a sinful outsider is given peace (εἰρήνη), suggesting a restoration to wholeness which includes both spiritual and social restoration.\textsuperscript{38} With this story Luke's jubilary theme of cancellation of debt is continued.\textsuperscript{39} The other account of Jesus' anointing centers on Jesus' preparation for burial and allows no such statements to be made.\textsuperscript{40} Therefore, this anointing of Jesus better fits Luke's purposes in writing.

Little can be gleaned from the parable itself concerning Luke's missiology. One might conclude from the two verses which make up this parable that it supports the idea of the universal accessibility of salvation: all humans--regardless of class or status--when forgiven a large debt will be thankful. However, when the parable is examined within the context of the anointing, the parable becomes overtly mission-centered.

Based on the methodology outlined above, this parable could be described as a "direct invitation" parable for Jesus' auditors to join him in his mission. Though the woman is not described as a Gentile, she is certainly portrayed as being outside the Jewish religious community. She stands in stark contrast to Simon, who according to the Law was righteous and ceremonially clean. Jesus makes specific mention that she enters into the kingdom (7:48, 37 Levison, 57.

38 Green, 314.


40 Cf. Matt. 26:12; Mark 14:8; John 12:7.
50). In the same manner, Luke shows a replacement motif in the account. He is careful to point out that Simon was derelict in his duties as a host (which exemplified his spiritual reception of Jesus). Yet it was the sinful woman, standing in the place of the Pharisee, who received him properly. Further, it could be argued that Luke has included in this episode a veiled negative reference to the Jewish leadership. Simon's internal questioning of the righteousness of Jesus (7:39), his supercilious reply to Jesus' question (7:43), his poor hosting ability (7:44-46), and the amazement of all the guests at his forgiving her (7:49) all paint an unseemly picture of Simon and his Pharisaic dinner guests. They serve as examples of the statement Luke makes in 7:30, "but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves . . . ." This rejection of the purpose of God during John's ministry reveals itself in the rejection of the person of Christ. The parable in its context, then, is a direct invitation for joining in Jesus' universal mission to the Gentiles and those outside the normal scope of Judaism.


The parable of the good Samaritan follows immediately on the heels of two important events in Luke. First, in 9:53, Luke tells the reader that Jesus' "face was set" toward Jerusalem, thus beginning the pivotal movement of Jesus to the place of his crucifixion. The second is Jesus' sending of the seventy, two by two, preaching the imminence of the kingdom of God (10:1-24). Following their return and positive report (10:17), a lawyer questions

41 The amazement described in 7:49 suggests that the guests had not changed their perception of this woman as a notorious sinner. Vid. Geldenhuys, 234.

42 Luke uses the term νομικός here to describe a legal expert. The term appears several times in Luke outside of this passage. In each instance "lawyer" has a decidedly negative
Jesus about what is needed to inherit eternal life (10:25). Jesus turns the question back to the lawyer who responds by combining Leviticus 19:18 and Deuteronomy 6:5. This, in turn, elicits another question from the scribe: "And who is my neighbor (10:29)?" Jesus answers this question with the parable of the good Samaritan.

A man, assumed to be Jewish, was traveling to Jericho from Jerusalem. On this seventeen-mile descent, notorious for robberies, the man was beaten and left "half dead." Both a priest and Levite, at separate times, chance upon the dying man but fail to render aid. No indication is given that either shows any sign of concern for their fellow Jew.

connotation (Luke 7:30, 11:45f, 52f, 14:3; cf. Matt. 22:35). Vid. BAGD, 541. That this "theologian" (Ellis, 160) had impure motives on this occasion is made clear by Luke (10:25, 29).

This term, ζωήν αὐτίκον, appears only three times in Luke: 10:25; 18:18, 30. Vid. Wigram and Winter, 165.

The story is not called a "parable" by Luke. Plummer suggests that the story is historical as nowhere else does Jesus speak negatively against priests and Levites. Vid. Plummer, 285-86. However, this notion misses the thrust of the narrative which is the example itself as it compares the lawyer and the Samaritan. The comparison is completed with the ὅπως ("likewise") as the final word of the account. Vid. J. A. Fitzmyer, The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV, AB, eds. W. F. Albright and D. N. Reedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 883.

Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 203.

The terms ἱερέας and ἀειτικός signify members of the priestly class, possibly returning from their duties in the Jerusalem temple (cf. Luke 1:8-9). Vid. Plummer, 287. These men, due to their Aaronic heritage and their close association with the temple cult, held a privileged status in the Jewish world.

It is unclear as to the reason these men failed to stop. Fear of robbers must be an underlying possibility. However, if they thought the man dead, religious laws of defilement would preclude their touching a corpse. Cf. Lev. 21:1-3; Num. 5:2; 19:2-13; Ezek. 44:25-27. Vid. Nolland, Luke 1-9:20, 193. There is also a possibility that they felt no need to show mercy to a "sinner" (cf. Sir. 12:4-6, "If you do good, know to whom you do it ... and do not help the sinner"). Vid. Ellis, 161. What is clear is that the religious characters of Jesus' parable, for whatever reason, failed to render aid to a fellow human in need.
Rather, it is a despised Samaritan who stops, binds the man's wounds, takes him to a safe location to recover, and pays for the injured man's room and board.

As the parable is concluded, Jesus asks the lawyer which of the three men he thought "proved neighbor" to the injured man. Several elements are instructive at this point. First, there is a shift in the definition of neighbor. In 10:27 and 10:29, "neighbor" is someone to whom love is offered. However, in 10:36 "neighbor" is the one who offers love and mercy. Neighborliness, then, is a "two-way street" in which love is offered and received by mankind, regardless of race. Second, the lawyer's answer, "the one who showed mercy on him" shows

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48 The animosity Jews felt toward Samaritans (and vice versa) is well documented. To a certain extent, nationalistic Jews saw Samaritans as worse than Gentiles. *Vid.* Martin Hengel, "The Origins of the Christian Mission," in *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity*, ed. M. Hengel (London: SCM Press, 1983), 56. This thinking was due in large part to the Samaritan defilement of the temple and the killing of a substantial number of Jewish pilgrims by Samaritans. *Vid.* Ford, *My Enemy is My Guest*, 83-86. The sentiment is summed up by a statement in John's Gospel: "For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans (4:9)." Ellis notes the "heresy" of the Samaritan religion involved the question of priestly succession. *Vid.* Ellis, 161. Therefore, Luke highlights the irony in the account by: 1) placing the Samaritan opposite a priest and Levite; and 2) by having the parable told to a theologian. This particular Samaritan was most likely a traveling merchant, given that he possessed an animal (donkey), oil, wine, money, and apparently traveled often to Jerusalem. *Vid.* Green, 431.

49 The payment included two denarii plus the promise to pay any further costs incurred during the man's recovery (see n. 30 above for a discussion on the worth of a denarius). The statement *ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ ἐπανέφρεσθαι με ἐποδώσω σοι* is significant. The *ἐγὼ* is emphatic and removes any responsibility for payment from the wounded man. Similarly, the present infinitive of *ἐπανέφρεσθαι* (i.e., "while I am returning") suggests the surety of the Samaritan's return. The verb occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Luke 19:15. *Vid.* Plummer, 288.

50 J. D. Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 59. Some commentators see this shift as designating two sources from which Luke drew. *Vid.* Scott, 191-92. However, Jülicher argues that Luke uses neighbor differently because he has a *Doppelgebot* (double message) to share: Neighbor is both actor and recipient. *Vid.* Jülicher, 2:596. This may very well be the case when one considers that Jesus' original audience was Jewish, and Luke's likely audience was Gentile.
the motivations behind his original question of 10:29. He studiously avoids answering "the Samaritan." This suggests, perhaps, that the lawyer never really sought the scope of being neighbor, but its limits. Jesus allows no limits to be set and erases the sociological lines that were already drawn by first century Jews. Third, Jesus' concluding imperative, "Go and do likewise" shows that the "inheritance" (10:25) of eternal life is not a de facto right of Jews. It involves putting into practice Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 in light of this parable.

This parable, missiologically speaking, must be viewed as a direct invitation for the Jews to join in Jesus' universal mission. This iconoclastic parable certainly continues Luke's theme of universalism where classes (priest, Levite) and races (Jew, Samaritan) are set aside. The Samaritan's boundary-crossing compassion is not only shown as a positive example, but is overtly commanded by the Lord (10:37). Further, other elements of a direct invitation parable can be seen in the pericope.

There is a strong replacement motif found within the parable. In the account the priest and Levite both come, see, and pass by the wounded man. Similarly, the Samaritan comes and sees the man, but instead of passing by is moved with compassion and stops to render aid. It is this ethno-religious outcast, not the devout Jews, who participates in the covenantal faithfulness of God. The lawyer, and those listening to the story, are told to emulate the outcast, not the religious leaders.

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51 Cf. Sir. 12:1-4. Bailey suggests that the lawyer hoped Jesus would list legal requirements expressed in the OT which the lawyer had kept, thus "justifying himself" before Jesus and the onlookers. Vid. Bailey, Through Peasant Eyes, 36.

52 Green, 431.
Also found within the text is a veiled, yet present, negative reference to the Jewish leadership. Jesus shows, in his discussion with the lawyer-theologian, that his theology was correct, though his praxis was flawed. The Jews had used the Law to set a hedge to protect themselves from any outside impurity. For Jesus the Law was not a wall of protection but a door through which ministry could be offered to those outside. The passage, in "extreme sharpness of polemic," offers an alternative to Jewish xenophobia. The emphasis of the passage is not the Samaritan, but Jesus' command ("Go and do likewise"): "It is simply the Lucan stress on universalism which makes him seek out those in Palestinian society who were not most important."

The Friend at Midnight, Luke 11:5-10

The parable of the friend at midnight appears in the context of Jesus' teaching on prayer (Luke 11:1-13; cf. Matt. 6:5-15). In this passage Jesus responds to the unnamed disciple's request, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples," with the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1b-4). On the heels of this example prayer, Jesus tells a parable in the form of an

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53 This negative inference, however, should not be seen as anti-Semitic. S. Sandmel argues that this passage, in the greater context of Luke, "lend[s] itself to a possible alignment with other anti-Jewish passages (e.g. 14:15-24; 17:11-19)." Vid. S. Sandmel, Anti-Semitism in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 77. However, Conzelmann shows that anti-Semitic readings of these passages were a development of early Catholicism and are therefore anachronistic to the text itself. Vid. Conzelmann, The Theology of Saint Luke, 146ff.

54 Ibid., 146.

Who would not meet the repeated requests of a friend because of inconvenience? 57

The central concept of the parable is persistence in petition (prayer). Jesus summarizes this in verse 13, "how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" God gives "good gifts" 58 to his children who ask and who are persistent in their requests. The theme of missions is absent in this parable. Instead, other significant Lukian themes (prayer and the Holy Spirit) are emphasized. Despite the "hour," prayer is never out of season.


The parable of the rich fool appears in the context of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. Luke shows Jesus teaching his disciples and a crowd of "many thousands" that had gathered

56 Due to the length of the question and the irregular construction of the sentence, its interrogative nature is lost. Vid. Plummer, 298. The structure of the question demands the answer "no one." Vid. Scott, 87.

57 The picture is painted of someone traveling at night, possibly to avoid the heat of the day, and arriving at his host's home unexpectedly. As hospitality is a revered quality in the Semitic world, it is unthinkable that the "host" not meet the needs of his guest. Having no food, the host seeks help from a neighbor. Households in Palestine were normally one bedroom homes in which husband, wife, and children all slept together. Thus, getting up to meet the needs of the neighbor would likely arouse the other family members. Luke makes clear that the neighbor was not concerned about giving away his bread (11:8), but the lateness of the hour (11:7). Vid. Plummer, 213; Scott, 87. Despite the lateness of the hour, and because of the persistence of the host (11:8), the neighbor rises and responds to the host's request.

58 The phrase "good gifts" (δόματα γούσκα), in this exegetical context, consists of the three loaves (11:5), the fish (11:11), and the egg (11:12). In rabbinical literature the phrase "good gifts" points to the messianic age. Ellis suggests Luke views the phrase in terms of a post-Pentecost reality (cf. Acts 2:38; 19:2-6; Rom. 8:15f; 10:15). Vid. Ellis, 166.
to hear his instruction (Luke 12:1). After the discourse on the need to remain faithful in times of tribulation (12:4-12), Luke inserts an abrupt interruption in Jesus' teaching. "One of the multitude" asks for Jesus' help in the division of his inheritance. Jesus answers the man with the statement of 12:15, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." With this statement Jesus turns this apparently irrelevant topic, introduced by the nameless man in the crowd, into further discussion on the wider theme of attentiveness in the face of eschatological crisis. Whereas the former discussion concerned one's physical life, Jesus expands the circle of discussion to include one's material possessions.

The parable Jesus tells serves to comment on his statement of 12:15. A rich farmer has bumper crops and determines to tear down his barns to build larger ones, hoping to make life easier for himself by storing his crops for the future. What this "fool" (ἀχρων) does not

59 See the analysis of the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants (chapter 4) for more details concerning the context of this parable.


63 The rich farmer had many wise traits (honest acquisition of wealth, the desire to save, etc.) Vid. Roswell C. Long, Stewardship Parables of Jesus (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1931), 127. However, the rich man's foolishness is seen in the fact that he has failed to include God in his future plans. In essence his actions deny God and call to mind Ps. 14:1, "The fool (LXX, ἄχρων) says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" In his foolishness and greed, he lacks wisdom and the fear of the Lord (cf. Prov. 1:7, 9:10).
realize is that he was to die that very evening, making his designs for his earthly wealth inconsequential.\(^{54}\)

Though the parable in essence is not missiological, it serves to bolster Luke's missiological and universal argument. It is supportive of mission because of its eschatological nature. Not only does Jesus remind his hearers of the age-old axiom, "Death comes suddenly upon man," but he also intends to warn them of the coming judgment of God. This "imminence of catastrophe" applies to all in the new age (universality of judgment) and reveals just how foolish the storing of earthly wealth can be.\(^{55}\) Also, implied in this parable is the concept of the universality of (un)faithfulness. The rich man stands in judgment not because he has amassed great wealth (cf. Luke 18:25), but because he has been seduced by this wealth and has forgotten God and others.\(^{56}\) He has failed in the area of stewardship. Had he used his wealth for the betterment of others, it is implied, he would not be called a fool. Both of these concepts, as they show the universal principles which govern the economy of the kingdom, support Luke's continuing theme of the universality of the gospel.

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\(^{54}\) Luke includes the final statement of 12:21 to re-summarize the situation: man's life includes more than material possessions. One must be concerned not only with the spiritual state of his soul (ψωφή, life), but with the proper use, or stewardship, of material goods for others. This man has stored up treasure "for himself." However, his untimely demise showed that these possessions were not, in fact, his. Jesus' description that the man was "not rich toward God" further illustrates Luke's understanding of God's desire to see material wealth used for the sake of others. *Vid.* above, n. 21.

\(^{55}\) Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 165.

The Barren Fig Tree, Luke 13:6-9

The parable of the barren fig tree appears in the same context as the above parable, on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. As Jesus finishes his teaching on reconciling with one's accuser (12:57-59), he is told by those in the crowd of the murder of some Galileans at the hands of Pilate (Luke 13:1). Jesus asserts that the death of these individuals did not come about because they were greater sinners than other Galileans (13:2), but uses the story to illustrate the fact that repentance is needed for those still living (13:3). The point is emphasized by Jesus' own example of eighteen Jerusalemites who died accidentally (13:4). They were also not greater sinners than their contemporaries, nor more culpable than the Galileans. Jesus' point is that life is fleeting and death sudden, whether by deliberate or accidental means. At any moment one's life could be demanded of them for scrutiny and assessment (cf. 12:20).

At this point, Jesus relays the parable of the barren fig tree. In the account a man owns a vineyard and has a fig tree which has not produced fruit for three years (13:7). He

67 No reference to this bit of history is found outside of this passage. It can be inferred from the passage that the Galileans were killed by Roman soldiers during the act of sacrifice in the temple, thus "mingling their blood with their sacrifices (13:1)." It is possible that the Galileans, seen by Rome as a particularly rebellious people, had broken Roman law or were suspected of insurrection. Vid. Geldenhuys, 371. It is interesting to note that Jesus, himself a Galilean, refuses to be drawn into a political or nationalistic debate. There is a possibility that the example was given by those in the crowd (especially if they are identified with the scribes and Pharisees of 11:53-54) in order to test Jesus' political sympathies (pro-Roman or pro-revolutionary). Vid. Bailey, Through Peasants' Eyes, 74-80; Green, 513. However, Jesus refuses the opportunity and simply draws a moral from the story.

68 Apparently these eighteen died accidentally as a tower near the pool of Siloam in Jerusalem fell upon them. The pool was near the southern and eastern walls of the city which were part of the ancient defense system of Jerusalem. Vid. Geldenhuys, 371, n. 7.


70 On the symbolic significance of the vineyard vid. chapter 4, n. 90. For the significance of the fig tree vid. chapter 4, n. 97. There is no indication that the vineyard owner was
tells the vinedresser to cut it down in order to plant something which would bear fruit (13:8). The vinedresser beseeches the owner to wait one more year. During that time he pledged to continue to cultivate the tree. If it remained fruitless after a year, he suggests that cutting the tree down would be an appropriate action (13:9).

Taken in the context of the two preceding illustrations, this parable should be read as describing God's long-suffering patience toward individuals. The challenge to prepare for judgment Jesus gives his hearers beginning with 12:1 reaches its climax with this parable: Repent before disaster strikes. His emphasis on fruit-bearing and repentance is underscored in light of God's merciful clemency in withholding his judgment. In contrast to the murdered Galileans and the eighteen who died in the accident, the "worse sinner" would be the one who, on his own accord, procrastinates in his repentance despite the extended period of grace.

seeking fruit out of season or that there was a valid explanation for the tree's lack of fruit. The tree must have been of mature, fruit-bearing age since the owner had come to seek fruit. By including the timetable of three years Luke highlights the sterility of the tree. Vid. Green, 515. The production of fruit is a significant theme in Luke, emphasized in Jesus' Sermon on the Plain (6:43-45) and his parable of the sower (8:4-15).

There is a possibility that this parable is meant to bring to Jesus' hearers minds Isa. 5:1-7 (cf. 20:9-18). If so, the vineyard may represent Israel with the fig tree representing her leadership. Fitzmyer notes other commentators who have carried this allegorical interpretation further, identifying the gardener as Jesus and the three years as his ministry. Vid. Fitzmyer, Luke X-XXIV, 1005.

Although Jesus does not include the vineyard owner's response, Luke leads the reader to assume that he acquiesced to the vinedresser's request.

However, a collective understanding of the parable (i.e. God's patience with humanity in general) can be found in the overall context of Jesus' ministry.


The parable is therefore supportive of Luke's theme of universal mission in that it speaks of a *universal eschatological punishment*. When judgment comes, those who are unrepentant and without fruit will assuredly be "cut down."

**The Marriage Feast, Luke 14:7-14**

The parable of the marriage feast appears in Luke's sixth dinner episode. On this occasion Jesus is dining with lawyers and Pharisees at the house of the ruler of the Pharisees (Luke 14:1). The appearance of an uninvited man with dropsy leads to the short-lived Sabbath controversy of 14:3-6 in which Jesus silences his opponents (14:6). As the Pharisees and theologians began to take their places at the table following this episode, Luke portrays them as vying for places of honor at the table. According to Luke, this is the direct impetus for the parable (14:7).

In the parable Jesus' hearers are encouraged to take the "lowest place" of honor at banquets (in the case of this parable a wedding feast). When this is done, there is a possibility of being moved to a more honorable station by the host. At the same time Jesus

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71 It was common practice for visiting teachers to be invited to dinner after the synagogue service. The fact that the episode takes place at the "ruler's" home, that the theologians ("lawyers") were present, and that they were "watching" Jesus suggests, according to Ellis, that the appearance of the man with dropsy was staged in order test Jesus concerning Sabbath law (cf. 6:1-11). Vid. Ellis, 192. The brevity of the controversy may be due to the fact that Jesus' opponents remembered the outcome of a similar episode, also in Galilee, in which Jesus "put to shame" his adversaries (13:10-17).

72 Distinguished guests in the Semitic world, by virtue of age or social standing, would usually arrive last at feasts and banquets. The places of honor at the table would be those closest to the honoree or host. Vid. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 192.

73 The parable is apparently based on Proverbs 25:6-7, "Do not put yourself forward in
warns that immediately occupying a place of high honor might bring about an opposite scenario, bringing shame on the guest. The parable ends with the aphorism: "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted (14:11)."

Following the parable Jesus directs his remarks to his host, the ruler of the Pharisees. Hospitality is not to be given to those of status and wealth simply in hopes of being "repaid (ἀνταποδοθήσεται, 14:12)." Rather, those with no possibility of repaying hospitality (the poor, maimed, lame, and blind) should be invited to banquets. The host who follows this advice, though not repaid in earthly means, will receive eternal rewards at the "resurrection of the just (ἀναστάσει τῶν δικαίων, 14:14)."

Though outward appearance suggests that the story of the wedding banquet and the table-talk surrounding it is simply moral advice on etiquette, two elements suggest deeper spiritual, kingdom principles are at stake. It is first seen in Luke's description of the story as a parable and also through the fact that it revolves around the theme of a wedding (γάμου).

The verse describes the last judgment, but the passive voice veils the name of God. Vid. Ellis, 193. Though some scholars consider 14:11 as an independent, concluding logion not original to Jesus' parable (so Herzog, 175), such a position is not warranted. A similar statement is made by Hillel (ca. 20 B.C.): "My abasement is my exaltation, and my exaltation is my abasement," and suggests that 14:11 may have been a well-known proverb Jesus employed in this setting. Vid. Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 192. A form of this saying is also found in some mss. (D, Φ, it, vgmass, sy) at Matt. 20:28.

Although the story does not fit the usual parameters of "parable," Luke nevertheless calls it such in 14:7. The reason for this is to "show by an example of human action in natural life, how men should act in the sphere of spiritual life." Vid. A. B. Bruce, The Parabolic Teaching of Christ: A Systematic and Critical Study of the Parables of Our Lord (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), 310.

The concept of the wedding feast is used to represent the coming messianic kingdom (Isa. 25:6; Matt. 22:1; 25:1, 10; Rev. 19:7, 9; cf. 4 Esdr. 2:38). In Luke 5:33-35 Jesus refers
Therefore, the feast Jesus describes concerns the coming of the heavenly kingdom and the requirement for entry: humility. Such humility, Jesus continues, includes reaching out to those who were societal outcasts. As such, three elements make this parable one of direct invitation. The first is the specific mention of the outcasts' participation in the kingdom. Second, Jesus commands his hearers to invite these outcasts. These two elements, coupled with the universal eschatological reward, suggest that this parable provides Jesus' hearers a direct invitation to join in his universal mission.

(Building a Tower and Going to War)

These two parables appear immediately following Jesus' parable of the great banquet, although Luke does not suggest direct chronological sequence. In the passage Jesus teaches his disciples and the "multitudes" which accompanied him of the cost of their discipleship, especially with the looming "shadow of the cross" which was approaching Jesus. The group serves as a connective device between the two pericopes. In the first, they are invited alongside the others at the wedding feast (unlike the lame man who was used as a prop by the theologians and Pharisees to trap Jesus on the horns of controversy), in the second the outcasts replace the other guests.

Jesus invites the participation of the poor (πτωχοῦ), maimed (ἀναπείρως), lame (χωλοῦς), and blind (τυφλοῦς) in the messianic banquet. Those with physical blemishes were banned from full participation in Jewish worship (Lev. 21:17-23; cf. 1 QSa 2:5f). It is interesting to note that this same group of societal rejects are later invited, even compelled (ἀνάγκασαι, "to persuade"), to come in to the messianic feast (14:21f). The group serves as a connective device between the two pericopes. In the first, they are invited alongside the others at the wedding feast (unlike the lame man who was used as a prop by the theologians and Pharisees to trap Jesus on the horns of controversy), in the second the outcasts replace the other guests.

καλέω ("to call" or "invite") is the present imperative form of καλέω.

The preceding pericope took place around the dinner table at the home of a Pharisee (14:1). Luke begins this pericope with the statement, "Now great multitudes accompanied him... (14:25)" suggesting that some time had elapsed.

Ellis, 195.
discipleship required to follow Jesus included putting one's commitment to Jesus above all earthly commitments (e.g. hating one's family and own life, Luke 14.26), imitating Jesus' own commitment, possibly to the point of death (e.g. bearing one's cross, 14:27a), and following Jesus as a servant (e.g. come after me, 14:27b). 87

The two parables are action parables 88 and describe the necessity of planning and counting the cost of a venture. In the case of building a tower, it is necessary to determine if one has the means to complete the project before beginning (14:28-30). In the case of a king's going to war, it is prudent first to determine if he can win the war, and if not, to attempt to reach peace with his enemy (14:31-32). Without counting the cost, which in the case of following Jesus means renouncing all that one has, discipleship is impossible (14:33).

These parables essentially call those who would follow Jesus to take great risks with open eyes: Being near Jesus is a dangerous prospect and offers tribulation and the test of suffering. 89 Just as no one would take on a massive building project or go to war half-heartedly, so no one can follow Jesus in a half-hearted manner. Both parables include the idea of universality of belief. Regardless of birthright or social status, anyone (τίς) who places Jesus first can become Jesus' disciple (14:26). Similarly, whoever (ὅστις) counts the cost can be a disciple of Jesus (14:27). Conversely, anyone (πᾶς) who does not renounce all that he has cannot be Jesus' disciple (14:33). No distinction is made between Jew or Gentile.

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87 Ibid.

88 Crossan notes that parables of action require a decision to be made. Vid. Crossan, 84-85

89 Dodd, 114; Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 196.
rich or poor, male or female. The distinction is found in one's hearing and response to Jesus' message. This universality supports Luke's continuing theme of missions.

The Lost Coin, Luke 15:8-10

Chapter 15 of the Gospel of Luke consists entirely of three parables of Jesus centering on the theme of lostness and the joy associated with finding that which is lost. The first two verses of the chapter provide Luke's readers with the context of the teaching. The scribes and Pharisees were "murmuring" against Jesus, not only because sinners and tax collectors were "drawing near" to Jesus, but because he was accepting their fellowship (Luke 15:1-2). In answer to their protests, Jesus tells three parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.91

Jesus' short parable of the lost coin shows a woman who has lost one of her ten drachmas. Jesus paints a vivid picture of the woman's searching throughout her one-room, 

91 For a discussion of this parable vid. above, chapter 4.

91 Levison, 150, suggests a more logical progression of the parables in Luke 15 would be the coin, the sheep, and the son. He argues that Jesus probably taught the parables of the lost coin and son on this occasion, and Luke added the parable of the lost sheep (found also in Matthew) from his Q source. However, such reasoning still fails to answer why Luke has put the parables in the order he has them. It is more probable that Jesus began his teachings with a parable he had already told (the lost sheep) in order to catch the attention of the Pharisees whom he addressed (15:2).

92 The fact that Jesus uses a woman as the primary character of his illustration, according to Bailey, "required a moral decision" on his part. As with his first parable in Luke 15, Jesus has placed those viewed as inferior by the Pharisees in the position of "hero." In the parable of the lost sheep it was the shepherd, in this parable it is a woman. Vid. Bailey, Poet and Peasant, 158.

93 A drachma was a Greek silver coin, roughly equivalent to a Roman denarius and worth a day's wage for a laborer (see above, n. 30). There is a possibility that these ten coins were a part of this woman's jewelry (worn on a necklace) or dowry. Vid. A. M. Rihbany, The Syrian
windowless, and clay-floored home to find the valuable coin. With the aid of a broom and an oil-lamp, she eventually retrieves her lost property. The joy in her success is shown as she shares her good fortune with her neighbors. Similar joy is found among the angels of God, Jesus tells his audience, "over one sinner who repents (Luke: 15:10)."

As with the parable of the lost sheep, several elements stand out in this short example. The first is the idea of lostness. Sinners (e.g. tax collectors and sinners) are equated with the coin (15:10) and are lost. They are God's possession just as the coin is the woman's. They have value and are not insignificant. This point leads to the second element of the parable: That which is lost, since it has worth, deserves effort in finding it. No one would simply write off a lost sheep or one tenth of one's dowry. In the same way, the scribes and Pharisees should not write off even one of God's possessions. Finally, there is great joy in finding what is lost. Both the shepherd and the woman are shown rejoicing at the return of their lost property. In the same way heaven (15:7) and the angels of God (15:10) rejoice at the "finding" of a lost sinner.\textsuperscript{32} Manson summarizes these two parables aptly:

\begin{quote}
In both parables the point is the same: the endless trouble that men will take to recover lost property, and their deep satisfaction when they succeed. The inference is that the publicans and sinners really belong to God, despite all appearances to the contrary, and that God himself wants them back and will take trouble to win them back to himself . . .
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{32} Here Jesus progressively builds on the heavenly rejoicing at the return of sinners with: 1) heaven; 2) the angels of God; and ultimately 3) the Father (15:20, 22ff).
The characteristic feature of these two parables is not so much the joy over the repentant sinner as the Divine love that goes out to seek the sinner before he repents. Since God takes this care for each one of his lost creations, so those who claim allegiance to God should likewise compassionately seek the lost. By eating with those despised (for religious and/or political reasons) and by sharing this parable with the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus is challenging the religious establishment to change its understanding of those who are lost. The lost should not be disdained and avoided, but diligently sought. Through sharing this *lost and found* motif, Jesus offers a direct invitation to the religious leaders to join him in his universal mission.

The Lost Son, Luke 15:11-32

The parable of the lost son continues the theme of lost and found in chapter 15 of Luke's gospel. In the account the younger of a father's two sons demands his share of the

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95 Manson, *Sayings*, 154.

96 But cf. Michael R. Austin, "The Hypocritical Son," *The Evangelical Quarterly (EQ)* 57 no. 4 (1985), 309-10, who argues that Luke intends that the parable of the lost son be disconnected from the pair which precedes it. This parable, he argues, is not about the lost son, but a father with two sons. One son is a prodigal, and one is a hypocrite. The father loves them both, and the story centers on the contrasts of responses to the "prodigal love of the father who is the image of God." Austin is correct in drawing attention to the often neglected second half of the parable (15:25-32). However, if one is to connect the idea of being "lost" with the sinners and tax collectors of 15:1, then the three parables should be seen as following the same theme. Luke, then, is arguing from lesser to greater. There is great joy at a shepherd finding one lost sheep which is 1/100th of his flock (a sheep cost roughly one drachma, *BAGD*, 206). There was even greater joy at the finding of the coin which was 1/10th of the woman's earthly possessions. Still greater joy is found at the return of one's own son. Luke develops the argument to show that the outcasts with whom Jesus associated were not simply objects like a sheep and a coin, but people like the son who were considered "lost" and "dead" (15:24, 32).
inheritance. This young man takes his newfound wealth and squanders it in "loose living" in a far country. Finding himself without means of survival or food, he attaches himself to a Gentile and works for him feeding his herd of pigs. Realizing his dire situation, the wayward son returns home to the open arms of his forgiving father. However, not everyone

97 This request is illegitimate since the father was still living. Such a demand could have easily been rejected by the father, and the son could have been punished severely for his rebellion (cf. Deut. 21:18-21). Vid. Wendland, 40. The outrageous demand of the son would have been a terrible insult to the father, in essence telling him to "drop dead." Vid. Bailey, Finding the Lost, 118; cf. Via, 169. The audience is not told of the father's motives in graciously granting the request (perhaps to keep the matter quiet), but simply that he "divided his living (βίον) between them (15:12)." The younger son's share would have been 1/3 of the estate. Vid. Ellis, 197.

98 The term διεσκόρπισεν gives no indication that the younger son wasted his money on immoral pleasures, simply that he squandered it or "scattered it in many directions." Vid. Rienecker and Rogers, 186. The only indication that there was immorality involved is given by the incredulous brother who accused him of "living with harlots (15:30)." This may be his assumption or simply a sign of his condemnation of his brother for living among the Gentiles.

99 The son, realizing that his actions were socially and morally reprehensible, cut what was left of his familial and religious ties by moving to a distant land (ἐξ χώραν μακράν). This terminology suggests that he moved to a Gentile-inhabited territory. Vid. Wendland, 42.

100 Without money, friends, or family, the son finds himself in dire straits as famine comes to the land (15:14) and thus attaches himself (κολλάω, literally "glues" himself) to a citizen (πολίτης) of that country. This joining to a citizen may be a reference to the tax collectors who had joined themselves to the services of foreigners. Vid. Linneman, 75-76; Wendland, 43. Bailey suggests that as a means to rid himself of the persistent hanger-on, the citizen assigns him a job he knows the young man would refuse: pig herding. Vid. Bailey, Poet and Peasant 170. That the son would accept such a task shows that he had lost what was left of his self-respect and reveals how far he had strayed from his Jewish roots. This position had him in association with unclean animals (cf. Lev. 11:17; Deut. 14:8) and most certainly working on the Sabbath. Vid. Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 129.

101 No indication, other than the physical want of the son, is given as to the motives behind his decision to return home. Luke's characteristic term for repentance (μετάνοια) is conspicuously absent. Vid. Wendland, 43. His "repentance" occurs when he meets his father in verse 21. The fact that the father saw him "while he was yet at a distance" (15:20) suggests that the father was hopefully expecting the son's return. That this nobleman, in long flowing robes, runs to embrace his son, suggests the father is seeking to protect his son. By assuming this humiliating posture, the father takes the attention away from the
celebrates the son's return: The older son is angered by the feast celebrating the return of his brother.  

This parable is easily allegorized, with the father as God, the younger son as the tax collectors and sinners present at the telling of the parable, and the older son as the Pharisees. However, it should be noted that this is a story drawn from life. Jeremias claims, "Thus the father is not God, but an earthly father; yet some of the expressions used are meant to reveal that in his love he is an image of God." In the same way the younger son is not those sinners dining with Jesus, but he reveals the lostness and destitution one finds in going one's own way in life. The elder son is not a Pharisee, but reveals the characteristic short-sighted hypocrisy of this group.

The parable portrays the love of God to two types of men. The first group is those who are hopelessly lost on their own. To these, God (like the father in the story) seeks, forgives, accepts with open arms, and joyfully celebrates their return. The second, respectable disgraceful return of the son through the narrow city streets of the village. Vid. Bailey, Poet and Peasant, 179-80; Finding the Lost, 143, 152. Such a reading is in keeping with the theme of chapter 15 where the father is going out to "seek and save the lost (cf Luke 19:10)."

102 Some scholars see the conclusion of this parable centering on the elder brother (15:25-32) as a Lukan redaction to the original parable. Vid. Charles Carlston, "Reminiscence and Redaction in Luke 15:11-32," JBL 94 (1975), 373; L. Schottroff, "Das Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn," Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche (ZTK) 68 (1971), 27-52. Carlston bases his arguments on linguistic grounds, and Schottroff on theological grounds. However, both sons are essential to the story, and it is a mistake to see the description of the elder son as a Lukan addition. Vid. Ellis, 197; Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 131; Jülicher, 2:353ff. This is especially true since the story was told to the Pharisees who exhibited traits similar to those of the elder son.

103 Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 128. Note verses 18 and 21, where God is mentioned in the story periphrastically, show that the father cannot legitimately be seen as an allegory of God.
group, claims to have never left the father (15:29). To these God says, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours (15:31)." It was these to whom Jesus told the parable:

The parable was addressed to men who were like the elder brother, men who were offended at the gospel. An appeal must be addressed to their conscience. To them Jesus says: "Behold the greatness of God's love for his lost children, and contrast it with your own joyless, loveless ways, and be merciful. The spiritually dead are rising to new life, the lost are returning home, rejoice with them." ... The parable of the Prodigal Son is therefore not primarily a proclamation of the Good News to the poor, but a vindication of the Good News in reply to its critics.\(^{104}\)

This second group (the Pharisees) was faced with a decision. Like the elder son in the parable, they must decide whether or not to accept the father's entreaty to share in his joy (15:28). Similarly, it can be extrapolated that they must also determine whether or not they wanted to emulate the father in the parable. Were these pious Jews willing to exhibit the same type of "disgraceful" love the father in the parable, and God himself, shows to sinners in order that they move from death to life, from being lost to being found (15:24, 32)? The call for these decisions, the specific mention of the acceptance of the sinful son, and the lost and found motif of this parable all indicate that Jesus was intending to offer his audience a direct invitation to join him in his God-given universal mission of seeking and saving the lost.

The Unjust Steward, Luke 16:1-9

The parable of the unjust steward is the first of two parables in Luke 16 which deal with one's use of wealth. In characteristic fashion Luke's audience is changed from the scribes and Pharisees of Luke 15:2 to Jesus' disciples in 16:1.\(^{105}\) The parable concerns a slave (in this

\(^{104}\) Ibid., 131.

\(^{105}\) Cf. 14:7, 15-16, 25; 15:1-3; 16:1, 14-19; 17:1. It is clear, though, that the Pharisees were present for this teaching (16:14).
case a steward, ὁκονόμος) dismissed from his position on charges of incompetence.\(^{106}\)

Concerned over his future prospects, the steward seeks to gain favor from his master’s debtors by discounting their bills.\(^{107}\) The master, seeing the "shrewdness" of the steward, commends him for his actions (16:8).

It is this commendation which makes the parable one of the most difficult parables of Jesus to interpret.\(^{108}\) The master’s praise must not be seen as his (or Jesus’) approval of the

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\(^{106}\) This is one of the six parables in Luke where servants figure prominently (12:35-38; 12:42-46; 16:1-8; 17:7-10; 19:12-27; 20:9-18). \textit{Vid.} Crossan, 96-120. On Roman slavery and the position of a household steward \textit{vid.} the discussion of the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants in chapter 4, n. 19. That the steward is dismissed does not indicate his freeman status (\textit{contra} Bailey, \textit{Poet and Peasant}, 92; Manson, \textit{Sayings}, 291). Slaves were often allowed a peculium, or wages, for their work. The peculium was a means by which a slave owner could exploit the slave by giving incentive for hard work and by offering the possibility of the slave purchasing his own manumission. The prospect of manumission would keep the slave in "a suspense of good conduct to the end." \textit{Vid.} Barrow, 175; cf. Hopkins, 131. The steward’s dismissal probably indicates that he was to be demoted, lose his peculium, or possibly sent to dig (σκάρπειν, 16:3) in the mines or quarries, a form of hard labor imprisonment where life expectancy was short. \textit{Vid.} E. Ferguson, \textit{Backgrounds of Early Christianity} (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 57. His only other option would be to run away and survive by begging (16:3). \textit{Vid.} Beavis, 49. There is no indication that the charges the master heard about the steward (16:2) are true, but the slave’s failure to defend himself suggests that they were. \textit{Vid.} J. A. Fitzmyer, "The Story of the Dishonest Manager (Lk. 16:1-13)," \textit{Theological Studies} (TS) 25 (1964), 171 n. 19.

\(^{107}\) It is not altogether clear as to the exact nature of this action. Several possibilities exist: 1) the steward gives a true discount to his master’s debtors, possibly out of revenge (so Scott, 265); 2) the steward writes off extra "legal expenses" used to hide the fact that the debts were usurious (so Rienecker and Rogers, 189); 3) the steward legitimately renegotiates the debts on behalf of his master; or 4) the steward reduces the capital sums because he had charged more to the debtors for his own illicit gain (so Jeremias, \textit{The Parables of Jesus}, 181). \textit{Vid.} Michael Ball, "The Parables of the Unjust Steward and the Rich Man and Lazarus," \textit{Expository Times (ET)} 106 (1995), 329. Whatever his motives, they seem to have been dishonest. It is clear that the steward reduced the debts in order to curry favor with the master’s debtors due to his approaching joblessness (16:4).

\(^{108}\) \textit{Cf.} Bailey, \textit{Poet and Peasant}, 86-87; Ball, 329; Beavis, 44; Stein, 106.
steward's actions since the land owner stood to lose a great amount of money in the deal.\textsuperscript{109} Rather, the master wryly recognizes the steward's resourcefulness, common sense, and business acumen.\textsuperscript{110} The two morals of the parable, then, are found in 16:8b-9. First, the disciples (16:1) are to be shrewd in spiritual matters much as others are in their business dealings (16:8b). The second (16:9) is interpreted in light of, and antithetically to, the first: Make friends for yourself \textit{outside} of earthly wealth (unrighteous mammon).\textsuperscript{111} The focus is on one's use of what has been given him. The steward, in the limited time available to him, uses money to gain friends in low places. The disciples (and the Pharisees), in the coming crisis of the kingdom, should use their positions of influence to develop eternal relationships. In this sense, the parable is supportive of the idea of a universal mission in that it underscores the \textit{universality of faithfulness}.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{109} The picture is painted of tenants who were to deliver a specified portion of the produce of the land they rented. The 100 measures of oil corresponds to the yield of 146 olive trees and was worth approximately 1,000 denarii. The 100 measures of wheat was roughly the yield of 100 acres and worth about 2,500 denarii. In each case the reduction of the bill would equal a loss of 500 denarii for the land owner. \textit{Vid.} Jeremias, \textit{The Parables of Jesus}, 181.

\textsuperscript{110} Ball, 329.

\textsuperscript{111} The phrase \textit{ἐξουσίας ποιήσατε φίλους ἐκ τοῦ μαμωνᾶ τῆς ἀδικίας} is usually translated "make friends for yourself \textit{by means of} unrighteous mammon (RSV, NASB)." However, it is possible to read \textit{ἐκ} as "outside," thus building on 16:8b. Cf. Beavis, 52. In this interpretation, Jesus creates an antithetical parallelism. In 16:8b the sons of this world (the steward and those like him) are shrewd in their business dealings, thus making friends by means of mammon (16:4). However, the friendship gained is only temporal. The sons of light (the disciples) should likewise be shrewd, but not exactly in the manner of the short-sighted steward. Their spiritual shrewdness should concern eternal matters. Thus:

\begin{tabular}{lll}
Sons of this world & monetary shrewdness & temporal reward \\
Sons of light & spiritual shrewdness & eternal reward \\
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{112} It could also be argued that the reference to "eternal habitations" (ἀιωνίως σκήνας, lit. "eternal tents") of 16:9 also brings in the idea of \textit{universal eschatological reward}.

Between the parable of the unjust steward and the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, Jesus continues his discussion of the use of wealth (Luke 16:10-15) and the eternal nature of the law (16:16-18). In verse 19 Jesus resumes his teaching on stewardship by telling the story of a beggar named Lazarus. In the account Lazarus begs daily outside the home of an unnamed rich man. The rich man "feasted sumptuously every day" (16:19) and never helped Lazarus, even withholding the scraps from his table. Both men die unexpectedly and go to their eternal dwellings, Lazarus to "Abraham's bosom" and the rich man to Hades (16:22). Ironically, the rich man entreats Abraham to allow Lazarus to comfort him. The entreaty is rejected because of the lack of mercy shown by the rich man to Lazarus while they

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113 A. B. Bruce rightly sees the miscellaneous observations of 16:14-18 as a disconnected parenthesis between the two parables they interrupt. In this reading, Luke added the statements about the law not to explain the story of Lazarus, rather the story of Lazarus explains the presence of these statements. Vid. A. B. Bruce, 378-79. Otherwise, the reader must interpret the parable based upon these statements, making the emphasis of the parable the statements concerning the Law and prophets in 16:29-31. Such an interpretation fails to note the connection between this parable and the unjust steward.

114 The parable is cast with Jesus' (and Luke's) characteristic contrasts: rich/poor, master/slave, insider/outsider. This sets the stage for the reversal to take place. The common Jewish conception of station in life held that the rich man (possibly tied by Luke to the Pharisees who were "lovers of money," 16:14) was blessed by God and the poor Lazarus was suffering as payment for sin (cf. John 9:1-2), thus an outsider to God's kingdom. The name Lazarus (a shortened form of Eleazar), meaning "God helps," probably has no connection to the brother of Mary and Martha (cf. John 11:1-44) and was chosen for its symbolism. Vid. Ellis, 206. Some mss. (𝔓75 with support from the Sahidic) give the name of the rich man as Νευνας, or Ninevah, probably to avoid missing the parallel with 16:20.

115 Jesus is not concerned here with outlining what happens after one dies. Vid. Geldenhuys, 427; Ellis, 201-02. Rather, it is possible that Jesus makes use of a well-known story to illustrate truths of the kingdom of God. Hugo Gressmann, cited in Jeremias, traces the story to Egyptian roots and Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 183, notes that Alexandrian Jews brought the popular tale to Palestine.
were living and because of the great chasm separating the two. Revealing the "anguish in this flame" (16:24) the rich man endures in Hades, he makes one more request of Abraham: Allow Lazarus to warn his five brothers not to follow his path, "lest they also come into this place of torment (16:28)." Again, Abraham rejects the request on the grounds that Moses and the prophets had already given them ample warning. Since they did not heed this revelation, further revelation in the form of a "resurrection" would also be useless.¹¹⁶

Though Lazarus is the only actor named by Jesus in his parables, he is actually a secondary character to this story. The crux of the parable is a warning exemplified in the calamity of the rich man:

The rich man enjoys the social status quo, which has been most kind to him, and is oblivious to the claim upon him of the needs of his beggar neighbor, Lazarus. Those who live so will discover in Hades the bitter truth of the implications of their disregard for the basic demands of the law and the prophets. And those who live so, despite all pretense of piety, will not mend their ways even if one should be raised from the dead to bring them warning.¹¹⁷

The worldly goods of the rich man cannot change his condition once his earthly life comes to an end without knowing the salvation of God.¹¹⁸ This punishment for the unrepentant will be irreversible and just, since God has revealed himself in Abraham, Moses, and the prophets.

On the other hand, those whom God helps (like Lazarus) will be ushered into the kingdom of God.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ This is possibly an allusion to Jesus' own resurrection. Vid. Ellis, 206. Luke's readers would certainly connect the disbelief of the rich man's brothers at the resurrection of Lazarus to the disbelief of the Jewish religious leaders at the resurrection of Christ.


¹¹⁸ Geldenhuys, 427. In the same respect, it cannot be concluded that Lazarus was saved simply because of his earthly poverty.

¹¹⁹ Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, 206.
The parable of Lazarus has several connections to Luke's continuing missiological theme. First, the concept of *specific mention* is found as the outsider in the Jewish community is intimately accepted as a son of Abraham. Second, the parable is built around a *replacement motif*. The reversal of fortunes in the story corresponds to the impending Jewish rejection of the new covenant which Jesus would extend to those formerly seen as excluded. In the end, those admitted into covenant relationship are those who, by faith, accept the offer. Both of these elements suggest a direct invitation to join in Jesus' universal mission. The ideas of the *universality of faithfulness* as well as the *universality of eschatological reward and punishment* are also found in the parable, adding further support to Luke's universal theme.

The Unprofitable Servant, Luke 17:7-10

The parable of the unprofitable servant is found in the context of Jesus' teaching to his disciples on forgiveness. (Luke 17:1-6). The parable concerns the typical servant/master relationship found in many of Jesus' parables and begins with a rhetorical question, assuming a unanimous, negative reply: What master would bring his slave in from the field and invite that slave to eat before him? No self-respecting slave owner would act in this manner, neither

120 "The dying of Lazarus with his reception into Abraham's bosom, will find their counterpart in the coming to an end of that economy in which the Gentile was an alien from the covenant, and in his subsequent introduction... into all the immunities and consolations of the kingdom of God." *Vid.* R. C. Trench, *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord* (Philadelphia: William Syckelmoore, 1878), 361.

121 Though many ideas are present in the parable, it must be remembered that the parable was told by Jesus to the Pharisees as "part 2" of the parable of the unjust steward, and is therefore a stewardship parable (i.e. concerning the proper use of wealth).

would any typical slave owner see the need to thank his slave for the servant's obedience. So
it is with the followers of God, in this case the disciples (17:1). When they have obeyed what
is commanded them, the servants claim "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our
duty (17:10)."

The dyadic, or two-point, parable has two major elements of argumentation. God, like
an earthly master, has sovereignty over those within his household. Without question, the
master has the right to rule his servants simply because the two are not equal. The second
point, found in 17:10, is a corollary to the first and simply views the situation from the
servant's perspective. A servant who obeys his master's orders should not think that he has
earned special favor from the master. He has simply done "his duty." Likewise, obeying the
commands of the Lord cannot earn God's favor. God's favor is based solely on his grace.

These two points do not suggest any missiological undertones for Luke.

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123 This passive clause, according to Jeremias, is a periphrasis for the divine name. *Vid.*

124 As is often the case with parables ending in aphorisms, there is no consensus among
*JBL* 93 (1974): 87, who argues verse 10 is not original to the parable. However, J. Dupont argues
convincingly that each of the four verses in this parable build progressively on the preceding
verse, therefore making each necessary to carry the meaning of the parable. *Vid.* Jacques
Dupont, "Le maître et son serviteur (Luc 17,7-10)," *Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses

125 The specific interpretation of God's grace alluded to in this verse depends largely on
one's translation of the adjective ἄξιόντος in 17:10. The first option is a traditional reading of
the "useless" or "worthless" nature of the servant (so *BAGD*, 128; Rienecker and Rogers, 192;
"miserable" in Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 193; cf. Matt. 25:30). Another option is
"unworthy" in the sense that the servant is unworthy to gain merit for his obedience (so
Jülicher, 2:19-23, NASB; NIV; RSV). The final option is to see the word etymologically as
"without need" in the sense that nothing is owed or due the servant for his obedience (so
Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 262). Luke has taken great pains to show the "worth"
of all of God's creation. Therefore, the first option is to be excluded, especially since a slave
who does all that is commanded him is both a useful and valuable asset. Both of the latter
The Unjust Judge, Luke 18:1-8

The parable of the unjust judge126 follows Jesus' teaching on his second advent (Luke 17:20-37). Toward the end of this teaching, Jesus introduces some fear-inspiring concepts: "losing" one's life (17:33) and spouses and friends being left behind (17:34-35). At this point Luke introduces Jesus' parable: "And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart (18:1)." The parable revolves around a widow who seeks justice from a city judge. Her request is granted, not because of the judge's sense of justice or duty, but because of her persistence. The justice of God is then contrasted to that of the judge. Vindication is given by both, but God's vindication comes "speedily" (18:7b) and stems from his righteous nature out of his love for his chosen ones (18:7a).127

This parable is not missiological, but centers on prayer. With its parallel in Luke 11:5-10, the parable teaches that prayer must be importunate and persevering. These two parables make the same point with different emphases. The parable of the friend at midnight options are preferred to the first, and the third makes the most sense when viewed in Middle Eastern cultural setting (so Bailey, Through Peasant Eyes, 122-24).

The title of this parable focuses on the character of the judge in the story. In this sense it heightens the contrast between the unrighteous judge and a righteous God (18:7). The other main character is the importunate widow (this title is often used to describe this parable) who represents the persistent prayer of "God's elect (18:6)."

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127 This is the only place in Luke where the noun used to describe God's elect (τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν αὐτοῦ) is used. Luke's understanding of election usually follows the OT idea of election to a particular function in God's service (cf. Neh. 9:7; Ps. 78:70, 89:3, 105:26; Isa. 49:7; Jer. 1:4-8; Hag. 2:23) and does not carry the idea of membership in the church. He uses the verb to describe God's choice: of patriarchs (Acts 13:17); of ministers in the church (Acts 1:24, 6:5, 15:7, 22, 25); and of the apostles (Luke 6:13; Act: 1:2). He describes Jesus as ὁ ἐκλεγμένος and ὁ ἐκλεκτός (the chosen or elect one, Luke 9:35, 23:35) in the sense that he was the servant of Yahweh (cf. Isa. 42:1). In this passage Luke is speaking of the eschatological community of God (cf. Mark 13:20-27) in which the idea of limitation is not present. Vide Marshall, Luke: Historian and Theologian, 113-15.
teaches that prayer is never out of season. The parable of the unjust judge shows that persevering prayer, when linked with faith (18:8), is certain to bring a blessing and not a curse. Not only in regard to God's decisive intervention in history are the faithful to be persistent in prayer, but they are to seek Him whenever He seems far away and the confidence of the believer wavers. The solution to fear is prayer.

The Pharisee and the Publican, Luke 18:8-14

Immediately following the parable of the unjust judge, Jesus tells the parable of the Pharisee and the publican to "some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others (18:9)." This parable, also, concerns prayer. However, the concept is expanded to include one's attitude. In the parable a Pharisee and a tax collector go to the temple to pray. The former exhibits a self-righteous attitude and a loathe for sinners.

128 Plummer, 298.

129 Bailey, Through Peasant Eyes, 130.

130 The attitude this parable teaches is one of humility (18:9, 14). Not only would this include humility in one's prayer before God, but Jesus' broad aphoristic conclusion (8:14) suggests that humility should pervade one's entire life.

131 For background on the party of the Pharisees see chapter 4, n. 24.

132 Tax collectors or publicans (τελωνη) were special objects of class hatred among the Jews who viewed them as Roman collaborators. Since the Roman rulers auctioned tax or toll collecting positions to the lowest bidder (the one taking the least percentage of commission), publicans often cheated tax payers (charging higher rates) and/or took bribes. They were known for being corrupt. Cf. Luke 19:8. Vid. R. H. Gundry, A Survey of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 27.

133 Pharisees were notorious for being proud and self-glorifying. They enjoyed being noticed and commended for their righteousness (cf. Matt. 23:5-7; Luke 15:1-2, 25-30). Vid. E. F. Harrison, A Short Life of Christ (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1968), 130-31. This Pharisee appears to be particularly pious. He fasted twice a week, which was rare and not
The latter, in a spirit of humility, begs for God to have mercy upon him. The parable ends with the two men leaving the temple for home, the Pharisee not justified and the tax collector justified (18:14a).

The central point of this parable is the attitude of humility necessary for God's justification. By including this parable, Luke continues the theme of universality in his Gospel. Anyone, even the most despised in society, can be justified by God when he or she seeks him in the right attitude (18:14). Several elements indicate that Luke included this parable in order to continue his theme of inviting Jews to join in the mission to outsiders. Specific mention is made that the sinful tax collector left the temple justified by God (18:14). A replacement motif is found in that the sinner left justified "rather than" the pious Pharisee (18:14). Though no direct negative reference is made to the Jewish religious establishment specifically, the religious leaders of the Jews are shown in poor light. Jesus' concluding aphorism reveals that neither socio-religious status, political affiliation, nor even personal required by the Law (according to Did. 8:1 some Jews practiced a Monday/Thursday fast). He also tithed on all (πάντα) his income (the Law required tithe on only certain kinds of income). Vid. Geldenhuys, 451-52. Pharisaic self-righteousness is exemplified in the following prayer from a Jewish prayer book: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast not made me a Gentile ... who hast not made me a slave ... who hast not made me a woman." Vid. Gundry, Survey, 165.

134 His humility is shown by not approaching the holy places of the temple complex ("standing far off"), not lifting his eyes, and beating his breast. His simple cry for mercy (λάθος) shows that he saw his wretched state. The passive form of this verb shows that he is in need of God's intervention for justification to occur.

135 This aphorism also appeared at the conclusion of Jesus' parable of the great banquet (14:11). As it fits this context quite well, Jesus repeats it here. The statement shows that everyone (πᾶς) exalting himself will be humbled. Even though humbling oneself is a universal possibility, not many will choose this attitude. The few who do (ὁ ταπεινωθης, sg.) will be exalted.
piety can gain kingdom entrance. What is required is the universal notion of humility and brokenness.


Jesus tells the parable of the pounds to the dinner guests of Zacchaeus in Jericho (Luke 19:6, 11). The Zacchaeus pericope is significant as it sets the stage for Jesus' teaching on the kingdom found in the parable. Luke emphasizes that Zacchaeus was seen by the Jews present136 as an outsider to God's kingdom.137 However, the account ends with Jesus' proclamation of salvation to Zacchaeus's house and the pivotal statement: "For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost (19:10)."

At this point Luke provides an introduction to the parable of the pounds,138 noting two reasons for the parable: 1) Jesus was nearing Jerusalem; and 2) his hearers supposed the

136 The reader is not told specifically that Jesus' audience were "Jews," but that when "they" saw (Ιδόντες) Jesus leaving for Zacchaeus's home, "they all murmured" (διεγόγγυσεν) about Jesus' association with sinners (19:7). Luke uses the verb "to murmur" in two other verses (5:20, γόγγυσεν; 15:2, διεγόγγυσεν). Vid. Wigram and Winter, 125, 144. In each case it is the Pharisees and scribes who murmur against Jesus for the same reason cited in this verse. It is probable, then, that Luke intends his audience to assume the "they" in 19:7 as a reference to the Jewish leadership of Jericho.

137 This emphasis is seen in Luke's description of Zacchaeus in 19:2. As a chief tax collector (φραγματευόμενος) Zacchaeus had broken the nationalist/political protocol of the Jews by showing allegiance to Roman occupation forces. His description as a rich (πλούσιος) man suggests that he had cheated his fellow Jews, thereby breaking Jewish religious law (vid. above, n. 132). This is confirmed in his description as a sinner (19:7) and Zacchaeus's own pledge to restore fourfold any fraudulent gains (19:8).

138 This parable is similar to the parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14-30 and is considered by many commentators as being one in the same parable. So Dodd, 146-53; Fitzmyer, Luke X-XXIV, 1227-39; Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 58-59; Jülicher, 2:472-94; Scott, 217-35. However, there are significant differences which suggest these were two similar, yet different parables. Jesus' repetition of parables has been noted elsewhere in this dissertation (vid. the discussion of Luke 12:20-21, 42-48; 13:18-19 in chapter 4). Following Plummer, Zahn, and
kingdom of God would appear immediately (19:11). The parable itself concerns a nobleman who leaves his country of rule for period of time. In his absence, ten servants were given ten pounds (presumably one pound each) with which they were to trade. On his return the nobleman calls his servants to account for their business while he was away. Three servants are described and stand as representatives of the ten: one had gained ten pounds, one had gained five pounds, and one had gained none. Each receives recompense for the use he made of his master's wealth. The servant who earned ten pounds is given ten cities to rule in the new kingdom; the servant who earned five pounds is given five cities to rule, and the one not increasing his masters' capital has the pound taken from him. He is cursed as "wicked" for his failure in this matter. Echoing 16:10, Jesus makes the aphoristic statement: "to every one

Schlatter, Geldenhuys notes major differences in elements of the story, time, context, and wording (of the approximately 300 words in Luke 19:12-27, only 60 are found in both Matthew and Luke, with most of these being proverbial expressions). Vid. Geldenhuys, 476-77, n. 6. Likewise, both parables fit nicely within their respective contexts. Manson notes: "It must be confessed that the resemblances are far outweighed by the differences." Quoted in ibid.

139 The idea of a nobleman traveling to a distant land to secure his reign was a common phenomenon in the Roman world as regions were often assigned by the central government in Rome to governors and kings (cf. Luke 1:5; 2:1).

140 The mina (μνᾶ), rendered by the RSV as "pound," was an Attic Greek monetary unit equaling 100 drachmas (vid. above, n. 93) and roughly 1/60 of a talent. Vid. BAGD, 524. On the Semitic etymology of μνᾶ vid. Fitzmyer, Luke X-XXIV, 1235.

141 Ellis asserts that the three servants may represent three types of responses from the ten servants. Vid. Ellis, 223; cf. Geldenhuys, 478; Plummer, 441.

142 The throne claimant tells the unprofitable servant that putting the pound in the bank and collecting interest on it (which is forbidden by Jewish Law) was preferable to his non-action (cf. Exod. 22:25; Lev. 25:35-38; Deut. 23:19-20). Vid. Green, 680.
who has will more be given; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away (19:26).

The parable contains within it a dual plot.144 As the nobleman departs to claim his throne, a delegation of citizens protests his reign (19:14).145 Upon the throne claimant's return and after his meeting with his servants, the nobleman has the protesters brought before him and slain (19:27).

In determining the emphases of this parable, the exegete must consider Luke's introductory statement (19:11) and the context in which it appears. First, the parable concerns the present reality of God's kingdom. By tying the parable to the Zacchaeus

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142 These two statements make the same point: one who shows faithfulness with little can be trusted with much, but one who cannot be trusted with little certainly cannot be trusted with much. It is significant that the third slave, like the first two, refers to his master as "lord" (Kύριε), thus hoping to show his loyalty to the king. His actions, however, reveal the shallowness of his affirmation (cf. 6:46).

144 This second element of the parable concerning those opposed to the king's rule is considered by some commentators to be a second parable (the throne claimant) which Luke has conflated with the parable of the pounds. Vid. Ellis, 221-22; Jeremias, 58-59, 94ff. Others suggest the rejected king motif as Lukan redaction. Vid. Dodd, 153; Fitzmyer, Luke X-XXII', 1231; Julicher, 2:472-94; Scott, 223. The double-prong point of the parable (i.e. discipleship and Jesus' rejection) fits perfectly in the context within which it appears. Jesus' point about discipleship follows closely his experience in the house of Zacchaeus which precedes it (19:8-10), and his point about rejection fits well with his expected rejection in Jerusalem (cf. 19:39). There is no strong reason, especially considering the historical circumstance, for assuming Jesus did not craft the parable to make these two important points.

145 Jesus probably had in mind the historical account of Archelaus's journey to confirm his kingship over Judea. During his trip, a Jewish embassy of fifty men went to Rome to protest his appointment. After his confirmation, Archelaus exacted revenge upon this delegation. Vid. Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 59.
Luke provides his audience an interpretive frame for the parable. His emphasis is that salvation and the kingdom are present today, even for outsiders (19:5, 9; cf. 17:21). The parable, then, is a corrective to the Messianic expectations of those present. Second, the parable concerns Jesus' arrival to Jerusalem and his eventual rejection. As the throne claimant would be rejected by his own (19:14), so would Jesus be rejected by the Jews. What was expected of the citizens of both the throne claimant's and Jesus' kingdoms was loyalty and faithfulness. The disciple who exhibits these traits can rightly call Jesus "Lord." "As one kingdom displaces another, judgment follows for those who continue to show fealty to the old." Therefore, the parable itself is a direct invitation for Jesus' hearers to join in Jesus' universal mission as it includes both a replacement motif and a negative reference to the Jewish leadership. It is further supported by the themes of the universality of faithfulness (19:26) and the universality of eschatological reward or punishment (19:27).

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146 Luke's phraseology in 19:11, "As they heard these things ... (Ἀκούοντων δὲ αὐτῶν ταῦτα)" clearly ties the two pericopes together for Luke's readers.

147 Green, 674. The kingdom motif is found throughout the parable, βασιλεία (19:11, 12, 15), βασιλεύει (19:14, 27), and ξέουσια (19:17).


150 When the immediate context is included in the discussion, the parable contains the two other elements of a direct invitation, namely specific mention (Zaccheus's salvation) and a lost and found motif ("the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost," 19:10).
Conclusions

Using the methodology outlined above, the parables unique to the Third Gospel reveal a decided missionary emphasis. Of these fifteen parables, eight (53%) are direct invitations to join in Jesus’ Gentile/universal mission, four (27%) are supportive of that mission, and three (20%) are not related to mission. As a whole, then, 80% of the parables unique to Luke’s Gospel support Luke’s continuing theme of universal missions to the nations. This is not to say that missions is the only, or even the primary, theme of these parables. It simply reveals that missions must be seen as one of the major elements of Lukan parables.

Two goals were established in examining the parables unique to Luke. First, the question was asked, "Why did Luke include in his Gospel the parables that are found?" In this survey, several elements concerning the parables have come to light. Each parable fits well within its respective context. Though elements have appeared, from time to time, which suggests a small measure of Lukan redaction, the reader is left with the idea that Luke was indeed an accurate historian. He seems to have portrayed the parables to his audience much as Jesus spoke them to his original audience. So in the broadest sense, Luke included these parables simply because Jesus spoke them. Yet Luke remains a theologian, and each of the parables fits within the larger framework of his Gospel. Most of his unique parables continue his theme of missions. Those that do not pick up on other Lukan themes found throughout the Gospel (e.g., prayer). It seems, therefore, that these parables were chosen because of their content and applications. It is probable, given the high percentage of missionary parables, that Luke chose them in part because of the missionary emphasis of his Gospel.
Second, the individual missionary parables, through exegetical examination, each reveal aspects of mission which are of benefit to the church. In fact, the church would be at a great disadvantage without many of these parables. One might learn of God's love for the prodigal, for instance, without the benefit of having the parable of the prodigal son. Such a lesson is clearly seen in the life of Paul (cf. Acts 9:1-9; 22:4-16; 26:9-18). However, Luke provides his readers this same powerful truth from the mouth of the Lord. Therefore, the primary importance of the missionary theme running throughout these parables is the fact that they reveal God's missionary plan from the beginning. The mission to the Gentiles and Jewish castoffs was not an afterthought in God's plan of salvation history. The point is that Luke's understanding of a universal mission did not originate with him; it was God's idea revealed through the life and ministry of Jesus. Jesus sought to expand his audiences' concept of the kingdom to include those normally neglected. This was essential in God's plan for kingdom expansion. As is the case with all parables, the emphasis lies not in the story itself, but in the response to which it calls the hearers. Jesus' audiences were to accept his kingdom understanding and act upon it, reaching out with the universal message of the kingdom to all people.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS

Luke's interest in reaching those outside of the normal scope of Judaism is apparent at a cursory reading of his Gospel. Just how important is missions as a theme of the Third Gospel? Should missions be seen as one of many re-emerging themes throughout the pages of the Gospel, or is it more significant than that? What, if any, are the implications of Luke's missiology to the church's understanding of missions? This dissertation has made an attempt to answer these questions. The answers to these questions fall under the two major rubrics of understanding the Gospel of Luke and understanding the missions found therein.

Re-reading the Gospel of Luke
The Primacy of Missions in Luke

Luke was a Gentile who wrote his Gospel for a Gentile audience. His purpose for writing the Gospel, following Luke 1:1-4, was to provide an orderly history of the beginning of Christianity and to provide Christian readers with a basis for their faith. As the Acts of the Apostles is also from the pen of Luke, his Gospel does not stand alone and must be seen as the first volume in a two-volume account. Luke's Gospel, then, is the genesis of the fruitful mission of the church, that which was "accomplished among us," as Christianity spread from Jerusalem to Rome. In this sense Luke is a historian who recorded the history of the church.
Yet Luke is much more than a historian: He is a missionary theologian. As a product and participant of the church's mission, Luke intends to justify the growth and the mission of the church. He does so historically, by showing Jesus' emphasis on a universal mission, and he does so theologically, by making missions a prominent theme of his Gospel.

Pivotal passages reflect this missions emphasis. In both his prologue (1:1-4) and conclusion (24:45-49), Luke anticipates the kingdom growth throughout the Roman empire. In the former, the church's missions is implied; in the latter missions is expected. Luke anticipates kingdom citizens coming from Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds, first from Jerusalem, but ultimately from the ends of the earth. Jesus' first public statements in Luke (4:14-30) also show the missionary nature of the kingdom. The passage introduces Jesus as God's Messiah stepping into God's sovereign plan of salvation history. God's kingdom was inaugurated by Jesus and would reach those in every strata of society.

The missions thrust of the Third Gospel is not something the author relates from time to time, picking it up and setting it aside again. Rather, missions is a constant current flowing under the evangelist's stream of thought. It is seen in the many different elements emphasized by Luke in his Gospel. Luke relates the historical account of the life and ministry of Jesus not on a small, localized, Palestinian stage, but on a grander universal stage. Jesus is shown throughout the Gospel as accepting, loving, and ministering to those outside the boundaries established by the Jewish religion of his day. These outsiders, whether tax collectors, sinners, lepers, women, the poor, Samaritans, or Gentiles, because they are humans in need of grace, are all shown by Luke as recipients of Jesus' ministry.
It must be concluded, then, that missions is a prominent theme in the Third Gospel. Luke wrote at a significant turning point of the church. The church had grown from small Jewish beginnings to the point that it reached every corner of the Roman empire. Gentiles were beginning to outnumber Jews in the church. The racial division and the underlying question of Acts 15, though dealt with by church leadership, was still present within the church. As an outsider who had himself been accepted and saved by a Jew, Luke writes his Gospel in part to answer the question, "Whom did Christ come to save?" The answer is simply "the lost." Jesus came to seek and save lost Jews and Gentiles, and everyone falling between these two categories.

The Primacy of Missions in Lukan Parables

It is the contention of this dissertation that Luke continues his theme of missions through Jesus' parables. As illustrative stories meant to reveal spiritual truths through earthly characters, the parables' emphasis is not on the telling of the stories but on the hearing and responding by the audience. Therefore, parables are calls to action, whether positive or negative. The hearers are invited to emulate the actions of heroes and reject those of villains. Parables are participatory. In this sense, parables are invitations to the audience. As many of Jesus' parables contain the message of missions, they are invitations (i.e. suggestions proposed for another's consideration) to act upon that message.

Given Luke's own Gentile heritage and the fact that he takes great pains to show Jesus' universal outlook and significance, it seems reasonable to conclude that Luke is purposefully addressing this issue in his own context.
Parables Unique to Luke

This dissertation has analyzed the fifteen parables which are unique to Luke's Gospel. Of these fifteen parables, eight (53%) could be seen as direct invitations for Jesus' audience to join him in his universal mission. Four of these parables (27%) are supportive of Jesus' universal mission. Three of these parables (20%) are non-missions related. In total, 80% of the parables unique to Luke's Gospel are supportive of the idea of a universal mission.

Following the assertion put forth in chapter 5, it is the unique material of the gospels which reveals most clearly the purpose behind these gospels. Luke has included in his account of Jesus' ministry a great number of parables not found outside the pages of his Gospel. One must conclude that he has done so for a reason. One reason must certainly be that Luke wished to show the importance of the parables within the framework of Jesus' earthly ministry. Another possible reason may be that Luke had access to a parable source unknown to Matthew and Mark, where Luke was simply filling in the gaps left by Matthew and Mark's accounts. Both of these possibilities are likely true to a degree. However, since eighty percent of these parables all contain one common thread, universal mission, it is highly probable that Luke included them for this very reason. His primary purpose for including them was to promote his notion that the gospel was meant for all of humanity.

Parables of the Double and Triple Traditions

The evidence is even more compelling when added to the data gleaned from an examination of parables not unique to Luke. In these parables Luke had a common source
with Matthew or Matthew and Mark. How he handles these parables reveals his underlying missions emphasis.

Ten Lukan parables were examined which have counterparts in Matthew (double tradition) or Matthew and Mark (triple tradition). Of these ten parables, five (50%) of the parables related in Luke constitute direct invitations for Jesus' audience to join him in a universal mission. Several of these are also direct invitations in Matthew and Mark.

However, Luke will sometimes change a parable from a supportive or non-missions related parable into a direct invitation for missions. He has done this in two instances (the new patch and new wine, the faithful and unfaithful servants) by emphasizing elements omitted in the other Gospels. In other cases Luke will simply add missionary elements to the parables without changing the missions categories established in this methodology. Therefore, the parable is missions oriented in both Luke and its parallels, but the missions emphasis is more pointed in Luke.

From this analysis, the following conclusions can be reached. Of the ten parables contained in both Matthew and Luke, five parables (50%) are direct invitations in Luke.

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2 *Vid. below, Appendix 3.*

3 The parable of the sower, in Matthew, has a *negative reference to the Jews* and therefore constitutes a direct invitation (Matt. 13:14-15). The parable of the wicked husbandmen, with its *replacement motif*, is also a direct invitation in both Matthew and Mark. Matthew's parables of the lost sheep (*lost and found motif*) and the great banquet (*replacement motif*, *negative reference to the Jews*) are likewise direct invitations.

4 In both parables Luke has included *negative references to the Jewish religious leadership* which are not found in Matthew or Mark.

5 Luke has added missions emphases in five parables: the new patch and new wine, the wicked husbandmen, the faithful and unfaithful servants, the lost sheep, and the great banquet.
compared to four parables (40%) in Matthew. Four Lukan and Matthean parables (40%) are inclusive or supportive of a universal mission. One Lukan parable (10%) is non-missions related versus two parables (20%) in Matthew. In five of the ten cases Luke has added missionary elements not found in Matthew, and in only one case (the parable of the sower) is there a missionary element found in Matthew but not in Luke.

Comparing the five parables found in Luke and Mark reveals that two of Luke's parables (40%) are direct invitations compared to one (20%) in Mark. Luke and Mark both contain two parables (40%) which are supportive of missions. Only one of Luke's parables (20%) is non-missions related compared to two (40%) in Mark. Luke has added missionary elements in two of the five parables found in both Mark and Luke.

In sum, twenty-five Lukan parables have been examined in this dissertation. Thirteen of these parables, or 52%, are considered direct invitations for Jesus' audience to join in his universal mission to the lost. In addition to these, eight parables, or 32%, are supportive of Jesus' universal mission. Four parables (16%) are not related to missions. Seen together, twenty-one of the twenty-five parables examined in the Gospel of Luke are supportive of his theme of universal mission. In other words, 84% of the parables in the Gospel of Luke speak at least in some measure of Jesus' (and the church's) universal mission to the world.

That is, these parables fit within the category described in this dissertation as supportive. However, as described in the methodology discussion above, Lukan supportive parables are only supportive of a universal mission since missions is a central theme of the Gospel. Whether this can be said for Matthew (or Mark) is debatable.

A negative reference to the Jews is found in Matthew's inclusion of Isa. 6:9-10. Matthew has included this quotation because of his emphasis on the fulfillment of OT prophecy in the ministry of Jesus. As this is not a strong theme in Luke, he has chosen to omit it.
Reassessing Parable Research

C. H. Dodd is certainly correct that the parables of Jesus revolve around the idea of the kingdom of God. The question is, then, must the parables make only one point about the kingdom of God? Are the only choices for the interpreter a controlled Jülicher-Jeremias tradition or uncontrolled allegorizing? Somewhere between these two extremes lies an interpretive strategy which will allow parables to make more than one point of comparison without launching into wholesale allegory. Blomberg has begun to lead scholarship down the right path with his forays into the field. However, the field of parable research merits further exploration.

This dissertation suggests that parable research has yet to take into account the evangelists' own purposes for recording Jesus' parables in the manner in which they have. Luke, for instance, has chosen certain parables because they support the missionary theme of his Gospel. In other parables which Luke has in common with Matthew and Mark, Luke has emphasized missionary elements. This is not to say that Luke has changed Jesus' parables to make them about missions. It simply means that the theme of missions has been included in the parables as an underlying stream of thought. If Luke has done this with the parables in his Gospel, perhaps the other evangelists have done the same for their respective theological aims.

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8 Dodd, 33.
9 Blomberg "Interpreting the Parables of Jesus," 78.
Re-evaluating Lukan Missiology

The "What" of Missions in Luke

In its ultimate sense, mission in Luke is the missio Dei, God's mission of reconciling the world to himself. Jesus is a vital part of that mission. His incarnation into time and space, into salvation history, has not only made God's kingdom a future reality, but a present earthly reality. Although mission is God's and is greater than the church, it must nonetheless include the church. Missions is the missiones ecclesiae. The church, as an heir of Christ's kingdom, has become a steward of his mission. The degree to which she is concerned with saving the lost is the degree to which she will be considered faithful (universality of faithfulness).

This faithfulness describes the necessary partnership involved in missions. Jesus joined the Father on his mission, and Jesus calls his followers to join in this same mission. He told the parables, at least in one sense, to encourage the Jews to accept that calling. This same calling is valid today: Every one of Jesus' followers is asked to join him in the continuation of his mission by the power of the Spirit. Missions is partnership with God.

To whom is the church's missions to be directed? From Luke's vantage point, the answer is "all nations (Luke 24:48)." The original thesis of this dissertation was that the Lukan parables of Jesus were meant as invitations to join in the Gentile mission. However, research has revealed this description to be too limiting in scope. Preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins to "all nations" is no geo-politically confined description, but a missionary physician's theological prescription for a lost humanity. Missions would certainly include the Gentiles, from whose stock Luke himself hailed. Yet this reality does not set aside the Jews to whom Jesus first appeared in salvation history. Also, not to be omitted from the church's

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mission are those in the world without a voice, the outcasts and downtrodden. Missions must be universal.

As in the mission of Christ, the church must likewise be holistic in her missions efforts. This includes social responsibility and action on the part of the church. Article five of the Lausanne Covenant states that socio-political involvement is part of the Christian duty:

> We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all men. We therefore should share his concern for justice and the reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression. Because mankind is made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, color, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he should be respected and served, not exploited.\(^{11}\)

Evangelicals often view the world from one anthropological viewpoint: sinners. Jesus' jubilary address in Luke 4:14-30 reveals that it is also acceptable to view world citizens as sinned against.\(^{12}\) Like Jesus and the prophets of the Old Testament, the prophets of today must stand against injustice. However, when this is done in the absence of the Spirit and without offering eternal solutions, the church simply becomes one of many articulate social critics. Jesus' kingdom is one where favoritism is absent and power is a detriment. He invites his disciples to enter this eternal kingdom, no matter their social strata, gender, or ethnicity. The church must give the same invitation.\(^{13}\)


\(^{13}\) The church of today finds itself in a world of conflict and disparity. As new nation-states emerge, many founded on racial and/or tribal affinities, armed conflicts greatly increase. Major conflicts (those with at least 1,000 battle casualties) have risen from 10 in 1960 to over 50 in 1994. Almost 90% of the deaths in these conflicts are of civilians. Similarly, poverty has greatly increased in the past several decades. One in five world citizens (one billion people) live without the basics of health care, education, adequate nutrition, and safe drinking water. Women make up 70% of the poor and nearly two-thirds of the world's illiterate. There are more than 100 million street children in the world's cities with 25% of these working
God's concern for those rejected by society and its religious establishments is attributed to his justice (*universality of eschatological reward/punishment*). However, though sinned against, world citizens remain active participants in sin. Therefore, social action is a necessary part of the Christian mission, but evangelism takes precedence. Again, the Lausanne Covenant, article eight, states:

We affirm that Christ sends his redeemed people into the world as the Father sent him, and that this calls for a similar deep and costly penetration of the world . . . . In the church's mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary.\(^1\)

As the church is involved in these two significant ministries, and as she keeps evangelism as her priority, her missions endeavors will be successful.

These two constituent parts of missions, evangelism and social responsibility, reveal that Lukan missions is an activity. Missions is no passive maintenance of a Christian presence. Rather, it is the active seeking of the lost (*lost and found motif*) to see the ever-increasing expansion of the kingdom (*small to large motif*). Luke himself was saved through the church's missionary efforts, joined Paul in his missionary efforts, and goes to great pains in his Gospel to record the missionary efforts of Christ. Missions requires active exertion on the part of the church. God's mission cannot be thwarted as Jesus promised his disciples in Luke 24:45-49. However, for the church to play an authentic role in this mission, she must actively preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

and sleeping on the street. It is estimated that by 2025, one-quarter of the population will be considered poor and living in squatter settlements of the Two-Thirds World. *Vid.* John A. Siewart and Edna G. Valdez, eds., *Mission Handbook 1998-2000* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1997), 17-18, 41. Not only must the church of Jesus address these *issues*, she must reach out to these *people*.

\(^{14}\) Stott, 18.
Finally, missions in Luke involves communication. Not only does it involve communicating the economy of Jesus' kingdom, but it includes communicating to kingdom citizens the need to join in the mission. Luke portrays Jesus as a dynamic theologian. Jesus' theology was not communicated through dry platitudes or complex syllogisms. Instead, Jesus communicated through story. Those who gave an authentic hearing to his parables could easily grasp their theological significance and choose to adopt and act upon the kingdom perspectives they revealed. Without altering the content of his message, Jesus contextualized his theology to fit the circumstances in which he taught. He did not strive to make the kingdom relevant to his audiences, he simply showed his listeners how relevant the kingdom was to them. The church, in her missionary enterprises, must likewise be reminded of the relevance of her message. As the modern "seeker-friendly" church attempts to make herself more relevant to a quickly-changing society, her message is in danger of becoming "watered down." The call for authentic discipleship cannot change, though the medium of this message must. Luke's record of the kingdom theology presented in the parables likewise contains a message for the church in its missions endeavors. Luke relates Jesus' profound teaching, not at formal institutionalized settings, but as Jesus is questioned by disciples and skeptics alike. So, too, the missions of the church must be carried out in the contingencies of life. Certainly missionary presence in faraway, distant lands is needed, but missions opportunities arise most often in daily, market-place life.
The "Where" of Missions in Luke

Where is the church to conduct her missionary activities? Luke 24:48 and the corresponding verse in Acts 1:8 show that Jesus has in mind both intra-cultural and cross-cultural missions. Missions began for the disciples in Jerusalem among the Jews. Jesus' own ministry began with the Jews. As the Jews rejected Jesus' Messiahship, the kingdom expanded to include others (negative reference to the Jewish leadership, replacement motif). The church would do well, in contemplating her missionary calling, to be reminded that authentic missions must begin at home.

The Christian message is likewise to be taken in the power of the Spirit across racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic barriers to the point that it reaches "the end of the earth." However, massive urbanization coupled with political, economic, and technological changes in the world have now made this phrase obsolete. As it stands, the "nations" have come to us and attend our universities and technical schools. They live on our streets and shop in our markets. They are building mosques and Hindu temples in our cities. "The 'ends of the earth' have come full circle and landed where we started." The church's missions to the nations must include incarnational missionary work abroad, but must now begin at home.

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15 Urbanization has made the emphasis on cities vital for missions strategies. In 1800 the world was rural and only 4% was urbanized. By 1900 urbanization had increased to 14% with 18 megacities (one million inhabitants) and 2 supercities (four million inhabitants). By 2000 urbanization will have reached 51% with 79 supercities, 433 megacities, and 20 supergiants (10 million inhabitants). If the trend continues, by 2100 there will be only 10% of the world's population which will be considered rural. Vid. David B. Barrett, World-Class Cities and World Evangelization (Birmingham: New Hope, 1986), 16f. Technology is also making the world more accessible. Most of the world can now access the internet, e-mail, or bitnet. Only an estimated 25 countries cannot access this "information highway." Cf. Siewart and Valdez, 25.

16 Jim Reapsome, "What happened to the 'Uttermost Parts?'" Evangelical Missions Quarterly (EMQ) (January 1999): 7. For example, there are an estimated 55 million Chinese
Missions must not be marginalized. As God's plan for universal salvation cannot be thwarted (cf. Job 42:2), the church must partner in his mission. The priority of missions in Luke and the parables he records reveals that missions must again become a priority of the church. It must have a strong biblical foundation and it must be seen as each Christian's responsibility. It is not enough for churches simply to take offerings for missions projects or to send those, like C. T. Studd, called to go to Africa. Rather, as revealed in the parables of Luke's Gospel, missions must again be coordinated to Christian discipleship.

The church's goal must continue to be reaching "the remaining unevangelized peoples on earth in the shortest possible time,"\(^{17}\) or as Jesus claimed in the Gospel of Luke, "to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10)." The changing world and modern technological advances have made the ends of the earth more accessible than ever before in history. Now, the church has a great opportunity finally to fulfill Jesus' commission of preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins to the entire world (Luke 24:47). King Solomon once stated that it is shameful to sleep during the harvest (Prov. 10:5). May the church awaken to the great harvest of souls which is her mission, and may she be faithful to complete this task of reaching all nations successfully.

APPENDIX 1

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

Parables of the Triple Tradition

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<tr>
<th>Parable</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Patch and New Wine</td>
<td>9:16-17</td>
<td>2:21-22</td>
<td>5:36-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sower</td>
<td>13:3-23</td>
<td>4:3-20</td>
<td>8:4-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaves of the Fig Tree</td>
<td>24:32-35</td>
<td>13:28-31</td>
<td>21:29-33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parables of the Double Tradition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parable</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Luke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Two Builders</td>
<td>7:24-27</td>
<td>6:48-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithful and Unfaithful Servants</td>
<td>24:45-51</td>
<td>12:42-48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Leaven</td>
<td>13:33</td>
<td>13:20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Sheep</td>
<td>18:12-24</td>
<td>15:3-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great Banquet</td>
<td>22:1-14</td>
<td>14:15-24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parables Unique to the Gospel of Luke

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parable</th>
<th>Luke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Two Debtors</td>
<td>7:41-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Good Samaritan</td>
<td>10:25-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Friend at Midnight</td>
<td>11:5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rich Fool</td>
<td>12:16-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Barren Fig Tree</td>
<td>13:6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Marriage Feast</td>
<td>14:7-14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 A superscript "P" shows a parable which is given the designation "parable" in the Gospel of Luke. A superscript "C" denotes a Lukan simile or similitude which is considered a comparison.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>verse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Cost of Discipleship (Building a Tower</td>
<td>14:28-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Going to War)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Coin</td>
<td>15:8-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Son</td>
<td>15:11-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unjust Steward</td>
<td>16:1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazarus and the Rich Man</td>
<td>16:19-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unprofitable Servant</td>
<td>17:7-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unjust Judge</td>
<td>18:1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pharisee and the Publican</td>
<td>18:8-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pounds</td>
<td>19:12-27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 2

### THE MISSIONARY NATURE OF THE LUKAN PARABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parable</th>
<th>Inclusive/Direct Invitation</th>
<th>Inclusive/Supportive</th>
<th>Non-missions Related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Two Debtors</td>
<td>specific mention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>replacement motif</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negative reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Good Samaritan</td>
<td>replacement motif</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negative reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Friend at Midnight</td>
<td>specific mention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>emphasis on prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and the Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rich Fool</td>
<td></td>
<td>universality of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>judgment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>universality of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(un)faithfulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Barren Fig Tree</td>
<td></td>
<td>universality of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>eschatological reward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>punishment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Marriage Feast</td>
<td>specific mention</td>
<td>(universality of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>eschatological reward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>punishment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cost of Discipleship</td>
<td></td>
<td>universality of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Building a Tower and Going to War)</td>
<td></td>
<td>belief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Coin</td>
<td>lost and found motif</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Son</td>
<td>specific mention lost and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>found motif</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unjust Steward</td>
<td></td>
<td>universality of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>faithfulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazarus and the Rich Man</td>
<td>specific mention lost and</td>
<td>(universality of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>found motif</td>
<td>faithfulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(universality of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>eschatological reward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>punishment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unprofitable Servant</td>
<td></td>
<td>obedience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unjust Judge</td>
<td>specific mention replacement</td>
<td></td>
<td>prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>motif</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negative reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pharisee and the Publican</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parable</td>
<td>Inclusive/Direct Invitation</td>
<td>Inclusive/Supportive</td>
<td>Non-missions Related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pounds</td>
<td>replacement motif</td>
<td>(universality of eschatological reward/ punishment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negative reference</td>
<td>(universality of faithfulness)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 3

A COMPARISON OF THE MISSIONARY NATURE OF THE PARABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parable</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Patch and New Wine</td>
<td>Non-missions related</td>
<td>Non-missions related</td>
<td>Direct invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sower</td>
<td>Direct invitation</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mustard Seed</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wicked Husbandmen</td>
<td>Direct invitation</td>
<td>Direct invitation</td>
<td>Direct invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaves of the Fig Tree</td>
<td>Non-missions related</td>
<td>Non-missions related</td>
<td>Non-missions related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Two Builders</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithful and Unfaithful Servants</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Direct invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Leaven</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Sheep</td>
<td>Direct invitation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Direct invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great Banquet</td>
<td>Direct invitation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Direct invitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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———. "Interpreting the Parables of Jesus: Where Are We and Where Do We Go from Here?" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 53 (1991): 50-78.


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