

## LUKE'S JOURNEY NARRATIVE: A LITERARY GATEWAY OF THE MISSIONARY CHURCH IN ACTS

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### Abstract

*The article is written in the form of a broad overview of Luke's two-volume work and focuses on the 'Journey Narrative' with the portrayal of Christians as 'Followers of the Way' as its dominant theme. Key markers which stand out as dominant characteristics in Luke's literary structure, are identified and their contribution to the Missionary Church in Acts briefly discussed. These key markers are: the centrality of the resurrection and its associated characteristic of justice; the importance of faithfulness to the scriptures in the light of the resurrection; the setting of people free from that which binds them; their re-integration as whole people into the society and the commission to being witnesses of Jesus' ministry.*

**Key Words:** Luke; Journey Narrative; Followers of the Way; Justice; Liberty; Stand up; Witnesses; Resurrection

### Luke's Journey Narrative

In considering the church in Acts as being a missionary church, it is appropriate to begin with Luke's literary structure of a 'Journey Narrative' which he has used as a backdrop for his two-volume work. Moreover, closely linked to the 'Journey Narrative' structure, the description of Christians as 'Followers of the Way'<sup>1</sup> adds special significance to their missionary activity of being witnesses of the resurrected Christ from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

The structure of the 'Journey Narrative' forms a continuous thread that extends from the beginning of Jesus' ministry and culminates with Paul's proclamation of the Gospel in the capital of the Empire. Although the structure of the 'Journey Narrative' is a well-known feature of Luke's work, its contribution to the understanding of the content and portrayed spread of the Christian message needs further development.<sup>2</sup> Briefly stated, Luke's 'Journey Narrative' is structured on the ministry of Jesus which begins in Galilee (Luke 4:14). This ministry then gains momentum and direction when Jesus sets out resolutely from Galilee to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). The initial goal of the 'Journey Narrative' is attained when Jesus reaches Jerusalem (Luke 19:28) where He is crucified, where He dies, is resurrected and ascends. The continued structure of the 'Journey Narrative,' as it is

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<sup>1</sup> In the New Testament, the description of Christians as 'Followers of the Way' is unique to Luke. It is used on six occasions: Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Bovon analyses the contribution of various scholars who have researched Luke's use of the 'Journey Narrative' but concludes that a *redaktionsgeschichtlich* on the Lukan notion of the Way is still needed. F Bovon, *Luc le Théologien*, (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2006), 340.

portrayed in Acts, is a mirror image to that of the Gospel, for unlike the movement towards Jerusalem it is reversed and becomes a movement away from Jerusalem. The progression in this subsequent part of the 'Journey Narrative' is clarified in the words: "You will be my witnesses in *Jerusalem*, and in all *Judea* and *Samaria*, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The portrayal of the progressive expansion of the 'Journey Narrative' away from Jerusalem resonates in Luke's later observation: "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at *Jerusalem*, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout *Judea* and *Samaria*" (Acts 8:1). The geographic expansion in the 'Journey Narrative' continues to form the backdrop of the missionary journeys that follow. Paul and Barnabas setting out on their 'first' missionary journey from Antioch to Phrygia, Pisidia and Anatolia (Acts 13 & 14); the 'second' missionary journey (Acts 16-18:22); the 'third' missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:17); climaxing in Paul's journey to and arrival in Rome (Acts 27-28:14).

Whether Luke used the 'Journey Narrative' because of a perceived correlation with Jesus' and the Apostles' itinerant ministry is a moot point,<sup>3</sup> but the significant place that this structure accords to the resurrection needs to be highlighted.

### **The Resurrection; the Turning Point**

A key aspect of the 'Journey Narrative' is the turning point at which the journey *to* Jerusalem becomes the journey *away* from Jerusalem. This significant change of direction occurs on the day of the resurrection when for the first time Jesus is portrayed as walking *away* from Jerusalem. Luke's account of events on the day of the resurrection differs from other gospel writers for, unlike them, he does not portray the resurrected Jesus being met in the garden, in Jerusalem. In Luke's account, neither the women who initially go to the tomb nor Peter who later runs to the tomb, meet Jesus (Luke 24:1-12). For Luke, the first people who encounter the resurrected Jesus are the two men walking *away* from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Thus the beginning of the movement away from Jerusalem is intimately linked to the resurrection. The subsequent directive of being Jesus' witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) is already anticipated on the day of the resurrection. Marguerat observes that the schematic presentation in Acts 1:8 is evidence that for Luke geography is

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<sup>3</sup> In Bovon's opinion, a formal *redaktionsgeschichtlich* analysis of Luke's 'Journey Narrative' is still needed. Bovon, *Luc le Théologien*, 340. Observations from other scholars are as follows: Marguerat's observation of the schematic presentation of Acts 1:8, is that for Luke geography is theology. D. Marguerat, *Les Actes des Apôtres (1-12)*, (Genève, Labor et Fides, 2007), 20. Dupont highlights that the expansion of Christianity is not simply a geographical expansion but is part of God's plan and effected by Christ according to the scriptures. J Dupont, *Le Salut des Gentils et la signification théologique du livre des Actes*, NTS 6 (1959-1960), 132-155. O'Neill who placed Luke's work in the II century (115-130) argues that the plan for Acts and the geographical expansion was not so much the growth of Christianity in the world as the progressive detachment of Christianity from Judaism. JCO'Neill, *The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting*, (London: SPCK, 1970). For Haenchen, the opposition between faith and law is not the issue, but that faith in the resurrection and the Jewish law are not mutually exclusive, then for him the composition and the plan of Acts becomes clear. Haenchen wishes to show that Christianity is the true Israel. E Haenchen, *Judentum und Christentum in der Apostelgeschichte*, ZNW 54 (1963). Conzelmann sees in Luke's work the Judeo-Christian church based in Jerusalem and a Pagan-Christian church spread throughout the world. H Conzelmann, *Die Mitte der Zeit. Studien zur Theologie des Lukas*, (Tubingen: 1954, 1960). See also related articles: PGR De Villiers, The Medium is the Message. Luke and the Language of the New Testament against a Graeco-Roman Background. *Neotestamentica* 24 2 (1990) 247-256. D Marguerat, Luc-Actes entre Jérusalem et Rome. *Un Procédé Lucanien de Double Signification*, *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999), 70-87. DP Moessner, Luke 9:1-50: Luke's Preview of the journey of the Prophet Like Moses of Deuteronomy. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 4 (1983), 575-605.

theology.<sup>4</sup> In this way, the resurrection is the focal point where the movement to Jerusalem begins to be mirrored by the movement away from Jerusalem.

Echoing the Emmaus account, initial conversion accounts in Acts, where faith in the risen Christ is born, are likewise portrayed as taking place while the prospective converts are journeying *away* from Jerusalem. The Ethiopian eunuch is suddenly joined by the Christ-like Phillip while traveling *away* from Jerusalem (Acts 8:26-39).<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the thrice narrated dramatic encounter of Paul with the resurrected Jesus occurs while he is traveling *away* from Jerusalem to Damascus (Acts 9; 22; 26). Thus the pivotal place of the resurrection is recapitulated in subsequent events. When viewed in its entirety, the turning point in Luke's 'Journey Narrative' from Galilee to Rome occurs on the day of the resurrection.

In considering 'The Missionary Church in Acts' this turning point indicates the pivotal role Luke accords to the resurrection. The proclamation of the resurrected Christ is at the core of the Missionary Church's life and message.<sup>6</sup>

### Opening of Eyes

Although the 'Journey Narrative' highlights the centrality of the resurrection, Luke portrays the significance of the resurrection as not being grasped until it is perceived through eyes that have been opened. The special role that Luke attaches to the process of opening eyes is linked to the unique way in which he has reported the resurrection event. The climactic moment occurs when the resurrected Jesus is first recognized by the two Emmaus disciples as their eyes are opened (Luke 24:31).<sup>7</sup> Thus closely linked to the event of the resurrection is the dawning realization of its significance.

The significance of the two disciples having their eyes opened is enhanced when linked to the promise that the blind will receive their sight, contained in Jesus' inaugural sermon (Luke 4:18f.). Scholars have identified in this seminal passage, based on the quote from Isaiah 61:1-2, a chiasmic structure with its focal point being the announcement of the

<sup>4</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 20. Kilgallen makes a similar point when he writes: "What began in Nazareth – no, what began in the explicit signs of God's will in the Old Testament – this moves through the Gospel and continues through the whole Mediterranean world, demanding two books to recount the triumph of the word of God. This theological statement, literarily united to the geographical outline of Acts 1:8, is agreed upon by many exegetes to be a predominant purpose for the composition of Luke-Acts." JJ Kilgallen, *Acts: Literary and Theological Turning Points*, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 7 4 (1977), 177.

<sup>5</sup> The reverse in direction is highlighted by Luke in that he describes Jesus as 'going up' to Jerusalem (ἀναβαίνω Lk.19:28) while the eunuch is portrayed as 'going down' from Jerusalem (καταβαίνω Acts 8:26) The similar wording and setting of the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel indicates that it needs to be interpreted as a parable pointing to the future. The indication that the traveler was 'going down' (καταβαίνω Lk. 10:30) or away from Jerusalem, alerts the reader to a post resurrection theological and time frame.

<sup>6</sup> The resurrection was the main criteria for the selection of a replacement for Judas: "For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:22). Both the speech of Paul in Athens and his speech before Festus and Agrippa climax with the proclamation of the resurrection (Acts 17: 31 & 26:23) and are brought to a sudden close thereafter.

<sup>7</sup> Some scholars have noticed the imagery of light and eyes in relation to the resurrection in Luke's work. Garrett, in her comparison of the Exodus theme contained in the Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24 writes concerning the Acts 12 account: "the 'sleeping' one is told arise, and is (or will be) bathed in light (cf. Acts 12:7)." Garrett explains further: "Certainly the early interpretation of baptism as participation in Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; cf. Luke 12:50) would be consonant with this story's imagery of sleep in bondage and darkness, followed by light and 'rising'." S Garrett, *Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24*, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990), 673.

recovery of sight to the blind.<sup>8</sup> Forming an enclisio around the quote from Isaiah, the periphery of the chiasmic structure is evident as follows: Jesus stands up, he is handed the scroll, he unrolls the scroll (Luke 4:16f), he rolls up the scroll, he hands the scroll back, Jesus sits down (Luke 4:20).

The heart of the chiasmic structure is based on the quote from Isaiah 61 and focuses its central point on the recovery of sight for the blind.<sup>9</sup> Thus the promise made at the beginning of Jesus' ministry finds its climactic fulfilment in the opening of the eyes of the two Emmaus disciples on the day of the resurrection. However, they do not merely see Jesus, but in the process of their eyes being opened there is an intellectual perception that takes place, for as they recognize Jesus they also realize that the resurrection heralds a new beginning. Luke brings out the intellectual perception involved with the opening of eyes (Luke 24:31) by his use of the verb *διανοίγω* (to open; to explain; to expound).<sup>10</sup>

The way Luke uses *διανοίγω* (to open) in various texts indicates that he attaches a specific function to it. Where it is linked to the opening of the heart, it confirms the intellectual dimension, for in first century thinking the heart was seen as the seat of moral and intellectual life.<sup>11</sup> Hamm concurs with this interpretation for he explains that the seeing being referred to is an 'inner kind of seeing called recognition.'<sup>12</sup> He explains further: "This restraining of eyes in Luke 24:16 and the opening of eyes in v.31 is clearly a metaphor for understanding."<sup>13</sup> For Luke, the realization of the reality of the resurrection is a process of recognition and understanding which involves an intellectual process. This is in agreement

<sup>8</sup> This chiasmic structure has been explained by R Meynet, *Initiation à la rhétorique biblique*, (Paris: 1982), 33; who in turn built on the work of N Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*, (Chapel Hill: 1942), 236-238. op. cit. D Hamm, *Sight to the Blind: Vision as Metaphor in Luke*, *Biblica* 67 (1986), 458f.

<sup>9</sup> Hamm explains that the reference to the "setting at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18c) does not form part of Isaiah 61:1-2, but has been imported from Isaiah 58:6. The reason that Luke does this is to balance the chiasmic structure so that the reference to the 'recovery of sight to the blind' is balanced on either side by a reference to setting captives free. In this way the concept of opening eyes is intensified. Hamm, *Vision as Metaphor*, 459. Heil has shown that the trial of Jesus was depicted by Luke as a symbolic tension between the 'power of darkness' and the 'light of day.' J Heil, *Reader-Response and the Irony of Jesus before the Sanhedrin in Luke 22: 66-71*, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51 (1989), 276.

<sup>10</sup> Liddell & Scott translate the word as 'to open' with the connotation 'to explain, expound'. *Greek-English Lexicon* (1883). Of the nine occurrences of *διανοίγω* in the New Testament, seven of them occur in Luke's work with six directly related to the opening of eyes, heart, mind or scriptures. Even more specifically, Luke uses *διανοίγω* on four occasions, for the opening of eyes, of the heart and of the mind (*νοῦς*), as well as the opening of scripture in relation to the resurrection. In Luke 24:45f. *διήνοιξεν* refers to the *minds* of the disciples being opened up to understand the scriptures which spoke of His dying and rising. In Acts 7:56 Stephen's vision of the heavens being opened up (*διηνοιγμένους*), reveals the risen Lord standing at the right hand of God. In Acts 17:3 *διανοίγων* refers to Paul opening up the scripture for the Thessalonians and proving that the Christ must die and rise again. Although the following two references do not mention the resurrection directly, they do state that it was the scriptures that were being opened. Luke 24:32 refers to the hearts of the disciples burning as He opened up the scriptures. Acts 16:14 refers to Lydia whose heart was opened to pay attention to Paul's message. The fact that she became a believer and was baptized implies that Paul's message focused on the risen Jesus. This has been examined in greater detail by E Germiquet, *Superstition, Atheism and Reasonable Faith in Acts 26: A Graeco-Roman perspective on Paul's defence before Festus and Agrippa*, (PhD Thesis, Rhodes University, 2001), 128f.

<sup>11</sup> J Behm, *καρδία*, *TDNT* 3: 608. Behm also notes: "In Stoicism the heart is in some sense the central organ of intellectual life, the seat of reason, from which feeling, willing and thinking proceed." *Ibid*, 608f. See also the discussion by Malina on how in the first century, the make up of a person closely linked the eye to the heart, with the capacity to think, and how this is repeatedly reflected in the Scriptures. B Malina, *The New Testament Worlds: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, (SCM Press 1983), 61-65.

<sup>12</sup> Hamm, *Vision as Metaphor*, 474.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*.

with Hamm's conclusion about Luke's intentions in using the metaphor of 'opened eyes'. Hamm writes: "The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that when Luke presents Jesus either as enabler or as object of physical seeing, he does so in a way that symbolizes the deeper seeing which is the faith that perceives Jesus' true identity and acts upon it."<sup>14</sup>

The importance of the resurrection is therefore not only highlighted by the 'Journey Narrative' structure but is also enhanced by its being the focal point in the 'opening of eyes' metaphor. Luke's dovetailing of the turning point in the 'Journey Narrative' with the 'opening of eyes' points to the pivotal role of the resurrection in Luke's two volumes. This is confirmed by Marguerat's observation that in Luke's reading of Scripture, the position of the resurrection is the 'corner stone' in his understanding of history.<sup>15</sup> Thus the resurrection is not simply an event needing to be reported but its significance needs to be grasped.

### According to the Scriptures

Luke's emphasis on the centrality of the resurrection does not end with the turning point in the 'Journey Narrative' coinciding with the moment of the opening of eyes. For Luke, it is vital that the scriptures be understood in the light of the resurrection. The importance that this new understanding of scripture plays is evident in the words of Jesus to the two men on the Emmaus road: "He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow of heart that you do not believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27). The emphasis on reading the scriptures from the perspective of the resurrection is reiterated in subsequent verses: "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.' Then he opened their minds so that they could understand the Scriptures. He told them: 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and will rise from the dead on the third day'..."(Luke 24:44-46).

The testimony concerning the resurrection being in accordance with the scriptures continues to be a feature in the spread of the Gospel message in Acts. In Thessalonica, Paul "lectured to them *from the scriptures*, opening up (διανοίγω) and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead" (Acts 17:3). The Bereans are said to be of noble character because "they *examined the scriptures* every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11). Referring again to the importance of the scriptures, Paul states before Festus and Agrippa: "I am saying nothing beyond what the *prophets and Moses* said would happen – that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles"(Acts 26:22f). Some of the reasoning behinds Luke's emphasis on the witness of scripture is apologetic.<sup>16</sup> However, Marguerat explains that grasping the significance of the resurrection is not simply because it is attested to by scripture but because the scriptures provide a framework for its understanding.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 458.

<sup>15</sup> "Si l'on tourne son regard vers la lecture que Luc opère de l'Écriture dans le livre des Actes, force est de constater avec quelle cohérence l'auteur a fait de la résurrection la clef de voûte de sa compréhension de l'histoire." D Marguerat, *Résurrection: L'après-mort dans le monde ancien et le Nouveau Testament*, (eds.) O. Mainville, D Marguerat (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2001), 204.

<sup>16</sup> The evidence that Christianity was not a new religion but had ancient writings to which it could point, was an important argument for its validity. AN Sherwyn-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome*, (Cambridge: Whitefriars Press Ltd, 1967), 3.

<sup>17</sup> Marguerat, *Resurrection*, 214.

In considering the Missionary Church in Acts, a mark of its witness is that it goes beyond a simple emphasis on the resurrection, that of reading scripture in the light of the resurrection and the grasping of its significance. Marguerat elaborates on this point by explaining that henceforth the resurrection enables salvation history of Israel to be appropriated by the reader. In addition to this the reader can also be guided on how to interpret the events of contemporary history by discerning God's activity in it. Moreover, Luke's interpretation of the Torah and of the prophets offers the reader lessons in exegesis.<sup>18</sup>

### Resurrection and Justice

However, it may be surprising that in Luke's many references to the scriptures concerning the resurrection, there appears to be no direct quote from the book of Daniel, for Daniel is the only Old Testament book which makes an unambiguous reference to the resurrection. "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan.12:2).<sup>19</sup> Although Luke does not cite it directly, its implications permeate his work.<sup>20</sup> Various scholars have highlighted the influence this passage had in early Christianity and particularly on the understanding of the resurrection in relation to God's justice.<sup>21</sup>

In order to obtain a clearer understanding of the significance associated with the resurrection at the time of Luke's writing, the circumstances leading to the first expression of the resurrection imperative in Daniel, is essential. The clear formulation and expression of the resurrection in Daniel took root as a direct result of the unjust martyrdom inflicted on the Jewish community in their apparent futile attempt to resist the massacre associated with the 'abomination of desolation' at the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Instead of death being the just reward for the wicked it appeared to have become the undeserved lot of the innocent. From then on, an innocent death began to be seen as both positive and creative and an event that demanded a response from God. The resurrection supplied the answer to

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<sup>18</sup> "En second lieu, la théologie lucanienne de la résurrection permet au lecteur de s'approprier du salut d'Israël. L'Écriture et ses promesses prennent sens à partir de l'initiative pascale de Dieu tout autant qu'elles donnent sens à cet événement et le préservent d'une compréhension vitaliste. À cet égard, l'interprétation de la Torah et des prophètes offre au lecteur de l'œuvre à Théophile, à de multiples occasions, des leçons d'exégèse." *Ibid*, 214.

<sup>19</sup> It appears that at the time of Luke's writing, there was still some uncertainty in Jewish quarters about the canonicity of Daniel. This was partly due to certain theological traits in Daniel that were considered too unorthodox at the time. Aspects such as: angelology; the idea of the resurrection of the individual; the use of Aramaic; the transcendence of God and also the concept of the Son of Man. Thus Daniel was initially only accepted in an inferior category of the Hebraic canon. G Baldensperger, Daniel, *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de la Bible*, (Paris: Je Sers, 1932), 269.

<sup>20</sup> Some scholars have identified a number of parallels to Daniel in Luke's work. A few examples of parallels that have been identified are: Bovon notes that in Luke's Transfiguration account, the changing of Jesus' face is similar to the change of Nebuchadnezzar's face in Dan. 3:19. Bovon, *Luc*, 478. Bovon also identifies the drowsiness that the disciples experience as similar to drowsiness described in Dan. 8:18 & 10:9. *Ibid* 486. Marguerat points to the similarities between Luke's account of Paul's conversion (Acts 9) and sections in Daniel 10. In particular the similarity between Acts 9:7 and Dan.10:7 where the companions hear the sound but see nothing. Moreover, as Paul Daniel is incapacitated for some days (Dan. 8:27) or is without strength and falls to the ground (Dan. 10:8-9). D Marguerat, *Les Actes des Apôtres (1-12)*, (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2007), 330-331. Luke's use of Daniel is an area of research that needs further attention

<sup>21</sup> D Marguerat, *Le Dieu des Premiers Chrétiens*, (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1997), 93f. A.Lacocque, *Daniel et son Temps*, (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1983), 204.

this imperative (Dan.12:2).<sup>22</sup> Martin-Achard highlights that the main thrust of apocalyptic literature is to proclaim and live out a message of hope in tragic times. Martin-Achard explains that the resurrection message in Daniel proclaims God's judgment against the tyrants who oppose God or God's people.<sup>23</sup> In the first century AD, the understanding of the resurrection was still closely linked to its apocalyptic tradition and roots. Although rejected by the Sadducees, the concept of the resurrection had spread widely and held out a compensatory plan by God in the face of their present sufferings. Rather than the understanding of the resurrection as a prolongation of life, the resurrection was closely linked to the issue of God's justice. It was an answer to the concern raised about the triumph of evil in the face of an apparently passive God. Marguerat concludes that for Luke the hope of resurrection and the awaiting of God's judgment were consubstantial.<sup>24</sup> As evidence of this, Luke's linking of justice to the resurrection is evident in the speech to the Athenian philosophers. "For he has set a day when he will judge (μέλλει κρίναι) the world with justice (δικαιοσύνη) by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).<sup>25</sup> As with the Sadducees and the Pharisees (Acts 23:7), the Athenians philosophers are also divided over the issue of the resurrection and its link to God's justice (Acts 17:32).

Luke's thorough integration of justice into the structure of his work and in his understanding of the resurrection can be seen in the way he has presented Jesus' inaugural sermon (Luke 4:16-21). Bovon describes the literary structure of this key passage as 'striking'.<sup>26</sup> The restoration of sight to the blind that appears at the center of the chiasmic structure of this passage<sup>27</sup> is flanked on either side by the proclamation of 'liberation': 'freedom (ἄφεσις) for the captives' and 'freedom (ἄφεσις) for the oppressed.' For Bovon, Jesus' offer of the Good News is encapsulated in the word 'liberation' (ἄφεσις).<sup>28</sup> The grasping of the reality of the resurrection that takes place when the eyes of the blind are opened is therefore buttressed on both sides by the proclamation of God's justice. The manifestation of God's justice is evidenced by the proclamation of liberty to people who, for various reasons, are bound.

Bovon observes that the offer of liberation and the gift of a renewed life by Jesus are not to be understood as images that represent spiritual blessings that will be given at death or at

<sup>22</sup> Lacocque, *Daniel et son Temps*, 207f. "De punition méritée du coupable, la mort devient sort immérité de l'innocent." Linking the aspect of justice to the resurrection, the name Daniel means 'God is Judge.'

<sup>23</sup> "...l'auteur de l'apocalyptique, « déchiré entre sa foi et le déni de l'histoire », qui crie « non » contre les tyrans, contre la violence et les mensonges des hommes et proclame l'impossibilité de « la mort de Dieu »..."; "l'affirmation nouvelle, même révolutionnaire, de la résurrection, qui s'impose dans la logique même de l'apocalyptique,..." R Martin-Achard, in the introduction in Lacocque, *Daniel et Son Temps*, 6f.

<sup>24</sup> "Espoir de la résurrection et attente du jugement de Dieu sont consubstantiels." Marguerat, *Premier Chrétiens*, 94.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen's speech portrays God making a promise to Abraham that the Israelites being led out of bondage will be an aspect of God's judgment (Acts 7:7). In Paul's defense before Felix, the issue of justice and judgment is likewise present. After stating that the real reason for his trial is his belief in the resurrection (Acts 24:21) Luke portrays Paul as making Festus uneasy because he started discussing, amongst other things, judgment and justice (Acts 24:25). Another passage that links death/resurrection with justice is Acts 28:4f. When Paul is bitten by a snake and the islanders expect him to die, they reason that "Justice (ἡ δίκη) has not allowed him to live." However, Paul does not die and they reverse their opinion and say that he is a god.

<sup>26</sup> Bovon, *Luc (1-9)*, 205.

<sup>27</sup> See footnote 8.

<sup>28</sup> "L'offre de Jésus, la bonne nouvelle, « libération », et le don de la vie renouvelée – surpasse, malgré tout ce qu'elle a de concret, toute espérance humaine." Bovon, *Luc (1-9)*, 206.

the Parousia. Rather, that the speeches and miracles show that the offer of Jesus is for the present.<sup>29</sup> For Luke sin is not primarily a moral failure but expresses a ruptured relationship with God together with its ethical consequences. Anthropologically, prior to forgiveness, a person is a slave (captive) of the devil (cf. imagery of the captive Luke 4:18 and of the blind Acts 26:18).<sup>30</sup> Forgiveness of sins is being set free and experiencing the reestablishment of a relationship between God and humans. The importance of ἄφεσις (liberation/freedom/forgiveness) is evident in that it is included as a core component of the gospel's proclamation: "...and repentance and forgiveness (ἄφεσις) of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all nations..." (Luke 24:47). A similar commissioning is given to Paul: "I am sending you ...so that they (Gentiles) may receive forgiveness (ἄφεσις)..." (Acts 26:18).

In considering 'The Missionary Church in Acts' the issue of justice in terms of liberation needs to be integrated to the proclamation of the resurrected Christ. This manifestation of justice will be developed further in the next section.

### Followers of the Way

Luke has not only structured his two volumes as a 'Journey Narrative' but has carefully added to it the description of Christians as followers of 'The Way'.<sup>31</sup> This description of Christians not only integrates in a dynamic way their involvement in the propagation of the gospel from Jerusalem to the end of the earth, but also depicts them as manifesting liberation. Malina explored the first century anthropological models and drew up a three-zoned profile of human self-expression.<sup>32</sup> The third zone is that which he entitled 'Purposeful Action' and is expressed through: hands, feet, legs, arms, and the associated nouns: action, walking, way, course, active, quick.<sup>33</sup> Seen through this first century perspective, the designation of Christians as 'Followers of the Way' carries the connotation of people who are not bound but free; of people who have purpose, drive and direction.<sup>34</sup> Garrett in her article 'Exodus from Bondage' analyses Luke's use of the 'Journey Narrative' in relation to Moses' leading of the Israelites out of bondage and concludes: "Moessner is certainly correct that one can detect the influence of the deuteronomic story on the Lucan journey account."<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Bovon, *Luc (1-9)*, 206.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 241.

<sup>31</sup> Eight examples: Acts 9:2; 18:25; 18:26; 19:9; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14; 24:22. The discovery of the Qumran documents where the term 'way' often appears, has initiated research on the term ἡ ὁδός in Acts by a number of scholars.

<sup>32</sup> The first zone is entitled 'The Emotion Fused Zone' and is expressed through the activities of understanding, thinking, remembering and considering. The more complete list includes the following organs through which these activities are expressed: eyes, heart, eyelids, pupils and the activities of these organs: to see, know, understand, think, remember, choose, feel, consider and look at. The following are representative nouns: thought, intelligence, mind, wisdom, intention, mind, wisdom, intention, folly, plan, will, affection, love, hate, sight, regard, blindness, look, intelligent, wise, foolish and sad etc. The second is 'The Zone of Self Expression' and is expressed through: speech, mouth, ears, tongue, lips, throat, teeth, jaws, and the activities of these organs: speak, hear, say, call, cry, question, sin, recount, instruct, praise listen blame, and curse. Associated nouns: speech, voice, cry, hearing, silent, attentive etc. Malina, *Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 61.

<sup>33</sup> The more complete list includes the activities of these organs: to do, act, accomplish, execute, intervene, touch, come, go, march, walk, stand and sit. *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>34</sup> Malina analyses the description of the Son of Man (Dan. 10.6) and notes that it exposes all three zones. "His face is like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of bronze, and the sound of his words like the noise of a multitude." (Italics mine). *Ibid*, 63.

<sup>35</sup> Garrett, *Exodus from Bondage*, 658.

The emphasis on the ability to walk as evidence of God's judgment against bondage is not particular to Luke alone. God's liberating involvement was experienced during the long walk from Egypt to the Promised Land, in that the feet of the Israelites did not swell (Deut. 8:4).<sup>36</sup> The attention to their feet meant that their journey of liberation was not inhibited. Garrett states further: "(T)he exodus from Egypt served as a theological paradigm for Luke: the first exodus prefigured the deliverance from bondage that Luke portrays as constitutive of Jesus' earthly ministry and post-resurrectional lordship."<sup>37</sup> From this perspective, Luke's numerous references to 'feet' and to the ability 'to walk' are to be understood in relation to Christians being designated as 'Followers of the Way'.

A few examples of Luke's focus on feet and ankles are worth noting. In the preparation for Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, Luke represents Jesus having his feet anointed with oil (Luke 7:36-50). Luke has used the account found in Mark 14:3-9 (repeated in Mt. 26:6-13), but has changed the focus of the other synoptic gospels from the anointing of Jesus' head to his feet. The emphasis on Jesus' feet is indicated by the word *πόδας* occurring seven times (Luke 7:38 three times; vs.44 twice; vs.45 and vs.46) in the account.

Another indication of the importance of feet in Luke's work is his parallel accounts of cripples who are healed. Amongst the first healings recorded by Luke is the account of the paralytic who was brought on a mat and lowered through the roof (Luke 5:17-26). In similar vein is the account of the disciples Peter and John, who heal the paralytic at the temple gate (Acts 3:2-8). As a further parallel, Paul heals the cripple in Lystra (Acts 14:8f). In this way the healing of the ankles which enabled the Israelites to realize their liberation (Deut. 8:4) is continued in Jesus' ministry of enabling people with crippled feet to walk. It is in turn carried forward by His disciples (Peter and John) who are representatives of first generation Christians. Paul, as a representative of second generation Christianity, continues the same ministry. The open ended way in which Luke has structured the end of Acts invites the reader to realize that the ministry of enabling cripples to walk and thereby become 'Followers of the Way' is to continue in subsequent generations.

With respect to the 'Missionary Church in Acts' the proclamation of liberty is more than a proclamation of God's judgment on the forces that seek to bind people into immobility. It is the proclamation of liberty in the name of the resurrected Christ that enables the liberation needed to become a 'Follower of the Way.' This aspect is explored further in the following section.

### **You are Set Free so Stand up and Walk**

For Luke, it is evil that hinders the progress of the 'Followers of the Way.' This hindrance is described in terms of 'binding.'<sup>38</sup>

The interplay between 'bondage' and 'liberation' is illustrated in the account of the

<sup>36</sup> That this was an important sign of divine assistance is indicated by the repetition of this phenomenon in Nehemiah 9:21. Luke's report of Stephen's speech links God's judgment against the oppressors which is accompanied by the journey to freedom (Acts 7:7).

<sup>37</sup> Garrett, *Exodus from Bondage*, 659. Garrett has elaborated on SH Ringe's work: Luke 9:28-36: The Beginning of an Exodus, *The Bible and Feminist Hermeneutics*, (Semeia 28; (ed.) Mary Ann Tolbert; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983), 83-99.

<sup>38</sup> Garrett devotes most of her article to the exposition of Satan as the principal force of bondage from which people need to be liberated. "I shall argue below that Luke regarded the death, resurrection, and ascension as an 'exodus' because in these events, 'the one who is stronger,' led the people out of bondage to Satan." Garrett, *Exodus from Bondage*, 659.

healing of the infirm woman (Luke 13:10-16). As the account of this healing is unique to Luke, his distinctive literary and theological emphases are noticeable. While the outward symptom is that it is her infirmity that renders her bent double, it is really Satan who *binds* (δέω) her. "Should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has *kept bound* for 18 long years, be *set free* from that which *binds* (δεσμός) her?" (Luke 13:16). The command that sets her free from the inhibiting power of her bondage is the pronouncement of release and liberation: "Woman, you are set free" (ἀπολέλυσαι). The graphic indication that her infirmity bound her and rendered her immobile comes from the comparison that is made in the previous verse to the ox and donkey that first need to be untied (λύω) before they can be led to water (Luke 13:15). The description of the woman not only indicates that walking and progressing would have been very difficult, but being bent over gives her an animal-like posture, not unlike the ox and donkey that are tied up.<sup>39</sup> Bovon draws attention to this perspective by indicating that to not be killed, but to be prevented from assuming a vertical posture was an indication of an incurable evil. Jewish thought viewed the vertical stance, amongst other things, as that which differentiates humans from animals.<sup>40</sup> In this case, the woman who could only make progress with great difficulty, was unable to look up nor was she able to look ahead to discern the way. In this impaired state, her likelihood of being a 'Follower of the Way' was greatly diminished, if not impossible.<sup>41</sup>

Bovon notes that the bent condition of this woman symbolizes humanity in its fallen state. Creation in its good state is 'head up' while creation in its fallen state is 'head down'.<sup>42</sup> Thus creation in its fallen state can only observe base things and is incapable of raising the eyes to the sky. For the woman, the word of liberation is accompanied by her being straightened up. Her weakness is replaced by strength. The immediate effect of the command indicates that the power is from God. The straightening of the woman is accompanied by the understanding of moral and ethical redress.<sup>43</sup> Her being able to return

<sup>39</sup> The conversion account of Paul indicates that when the light flashed around him, he fell to the ground and adopted an animal like posture, for the words of Jesus: "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" (Acts 26:14) implies the behaviour of an ox. As with the woman, Paul is then instructed to assume a vertical position. "Rise up and stand on your feet" (Acts 26:16).

<sup>40</sup> "Ce qui frappait l'homme ou la femme antique, c'était le caractère irrémédiable d'un mal qui ne tuait pas, mais empêchait d'être en position verticale. La pensée juive estimait en effet que la position verticale, la parole, le discernement et la vue permettant de prévoir distinguaient l'être humain de l'animal et le rapprochement des anges." Bovon, *Luc (1-9)*, 353. Lacocque makes a similar point when he describes Daniel's falling on all fours at the vision of the Son of Man (Dan.10:10). A.Lacocque, *Le Livre de Daniel*, (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1976), 155 n. 6. He also draws attention to a passage in Ovid: "pronaque cum spectent animalia cetera terram, os homini sublime dedit caelumque videre iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus." (While other animals look downwards at the ground, he gave human beings an upturned aspect, commanding them to look towards the skies, and, upright, raise their face to the stars.) Ovid, *Metamorphoses I*, 84-86.

<sup>41</sup> A similar pattern can be discerned in Luke's third description of Paul's conversion. Paul's behaviour is described in terms of a kicking ox. "We all fell to the ground and I heard a voice saying to me: Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads" (Acts 26:14). Shortly thereafter Paul is commanded to stand up (vs. 16).

<sup>42</sup> Similarly with the logion of the high and the low, found in the Gospel of Thomas 22 and again with a theological elaboration in Acts of Peter 38 and the Acts of Phillip 140. Bovon, *Luc (9:51-14:35)*, 353 n. 35.

<sup>43</sup> Bovon, *Luc (9:51-14:35)*, 355. The power of Satan being depicted by the metaphor 'binding' and restricting progress, is not unique to the passage above but appears in a number of other incidents. The Gerasene demoniac is bound by chains (ἐδεσμεύετο ἀλύσειν) and driven to solitary places (Luke 8:29). Prior to his conversion, Paul used to 'bind' (δέω) the 'Followers of the Way' (Acts 9:2). Peter is described as being in prison and 'bound' with two chains (Acts 12:6). While Paul is on his journey to Jerusalem, the prophet Agabus ties his own hands and feet with Paul's belt and declares that the Jews are going to 'bind' (δέω) the owner of the belt (Acts 21:11). Paul's response is that he is ready to 'be bound' and to die, if necessary (Acts 21:13). Yet again, when Paul is accused of bringing the Gentile Trophimus into the temple, the commander

to an upright stance indicates that dignity and respect, which is not accorded to animals, has been restored to her.

The power to straighten up that is evidenced in the healing is not power as an independent entity but is intimately associated with the power that raised Jesus. The early Christian community used two verbs to describe the rising up of Jesus at the resurrection; ἐγείρω (to awaken) and ἀν-ίστημι (to rise up) with the associated noun ἀνάστασις (resurrection).<sup>44</sup> One or both of these words are used where prostrate cripples are commanded to ‘stand up.’<sup>45</sup> This is evident in the sequence of three healings of paralytics referred to above; namely the paralytic lowered on the mat (Luke 5:17ff.); the cripple at the temple gate (Acts 3:2ff) and the cripple at Lystra (Acts 14:8ff). In Luke 5:24f. the command to the paralytic on the mat is arise/awaken (ἔγειρε) and the result for the cripple is ἀναστὰς (rising up). In Acts 3:7, Peter is said to have raised the cripple (ἤγειρεν) from the ground. In Acts 14:10, Paul commanded the crippled who was sitting and who had never walked, to ‘stand up’ (ἀνάστηθι). Luke’s intended link between the rising of Jesus from the dead and the standing up of cripples from immobile lives is particularly evident in the account of the healing at the temple, for the reference to the standing up of the cripple and the resurrection of Jesus are textually close. Peter “taking him by the right hand, he raised him up (ἤγειρεν)”, (Acts 3:7), while the same verb is used a few verses on in the defense of this healing by appealing to the resurrection of Jesus: “You killed the author of life, but God raised him (ἤγειρεν) from the dead” (Acts 3:15). In this way the healing of the cripple is portrayed as a parallel to the resurrection and becomes a testimony to the liberating power of the resurrected Jesus.

In considering ‘The Missionary Church in Acts’ both word and action attest to the power of God who raised Jesus from the dead. “With great *power* the apostles continued to *testify* to the resurrection (ἀναστάσεως) of the Lord Jesus...” (Acts 4:33).<sup>46</sup> This focus on Jesus Christ is the sign that the resurrected one is present amongst them.<sup>47</sup> It is at the ‘name of Jesus’ that healings are effected and that the feet of cripples are strengthened, thus enabling them to be set free from that which binds them and to become ‘Followers of the Way.’

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arrested Paul and ‘bound’ him with two chains (Acts 21:33). The ‘binding’ of people renders them powerless, hopeless, directionless and immobile and restricts the ‘Followers of the Way’ in their progress.

<sup>44</sup> See the discussion on this point by Marguerat, *Premiers Chrétiens*, 92f. Christian resurrection language did not have to invent its own vocabulary but made use of terms and metaphors from Jewish apocalyptic literature that were already rich with meaning. Thus the two words used in describing the resurrection of Jesus were already in use in Daniel. E.g. Daniel 12:1-2: “At that time Michael the great prince shall stand up (ἀναστήσεται from ἀν-ίστημι) ...and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise (ἐξεγερθήσονται from ἐγείρω)...” In his commentary on Daniel, Lacocque explains that Michel is one of the manifestations of the corporate personality of the Son of Man Lacocque, *Daniel*, 178.

<sup>45</sup> Luke has five references to cripples and two to paralytics. Lk.5:18; 14:13; 14:21; Ac.3:2; 8:7; 14:8.

<sup>46</sup> Similar references are to be found in Acts: 1:8; 2:32; 5:30-35; 10:40f; 13:30f. For an in depth discussion on the connotations of the resurrection in the miracles of the New Testament, see D Marguerat, *Resurrection. Une histoire de vie*, (Poliez-le-Grand: Éditions du Moulin, 2001). Although Scheffler has produced an in-depth analysis of suffering in Luke’s Gospel, the role and significance of the resurrection (which is so central to Luke) is conspicuous by its absence. (E Scheffler.) Suffering in Luke’s Gospel. *Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 81 (1993). Furthermore, the pronouncement of ‘liberation’ (ἀφεσις) is applied only to spiritual suffering. *Ibid*, 97.

<sup>47</sup> D Marguerat, *La Première Histoire du Christianisme*, (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1999), 164.

### 'Pick up your Mat and go Home'

Bovon observes that for Luke healing is like a resurrection, for it brings new hope and new life.<sup>48</sup> Healings for Luke are not intended to be isolated acts of divine charity. They restore people and the evidence of that restoration is the re-integration of people into their communities.<sup>49</sup> Thus the understanding of the 'Way' for Luke is in terms of a daily walk manifested by the apostles and believers when the spiritual and the material were not yet separated.<sup>50</sup> Paradoxically, while the vision of expansion in Acts 1:8 is for the message to spread ever further, the outworking of that liberating message is the restoration and reintegration of the individuals into their communities. An individual is only able to live when he/she has been re-integrated into society. On the healing of the leper (Luke 5:12-16) Bovon comments that the need to go and show himself to the priest was to officially re-integrate the man who had been a leper, into his society. Healing was not valid unless a representative of the community had officially recognized it.<sup>51</sup> Bovon explains that leprosy implied exclusion from communion with God and leads to suffering and death and that the domain of leprosy was close to death and to the devil.<sup>52</sup> Bovon adds further that re-integration was like a new life, similar to a resurrection.<sup>53</sup>

The paralytic brought on the mat (Luke 5:17ff.) as well as the demoniac (Luke 8:26-39) are both told to 'go home'. In particular, the man from whom demons had been cast out had begged Jesus to be able to go with Him. However, Jesus sent him home with the words: "Return home and tell how much God has done for you" (Luke 8:39). The transformation in this man's social status is particularly clear. Being naked and wondering amongst the tombs and in solitary places bound by chains, he represented a man who had lost his human dignity and who was totally alienated from his community. He represents a man whose life had not only come to a stand still but was a living dead amongst the tombs. However, having been unbound from the chains that once bound him, he was sent home fully clothed and in his right mind.

For Luke, Jesus does not identify the cause of suffering and of wrong doing<sup>54</sup>, but opens the possibility of hope. Although the resurrection as a final victory over suffering is yet to come, the possibility of forgiveness is offered in the present. Just as the refusal of repentance leads to death, so the forgiveness of sins leads to the restoration of life and the renewing of the person.<sup>55</sup> The liberating activity of the resurrected Jesus is manifested in Luke's work through the formation of an integrated Christian community.

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<sup>48</sup> Bovon, *Luc (1-9)*, 233f.

<sup>49</sup> Brown discusses the importance of having an ecclesiological understanding to being a follower of the 'Way.' S. Brown, *Apostasy and Perseverance in the Theology of Luke*, (Rome, 1969), 142f. Cit. ap. Bovon, *Luc Théologien*, 341.

<sup>50</sup> See the discussion on this point: Bovon, *Luc le Théologien*, 341f. Bovon agrees with Brown that the 'Way' is to be understood ecclesiastically.

<sup>51</sup> Bovon, *Luc (1-9)*, 233f.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 232.

<sup>53</sup> "Il se remet à vivre, comme après une résurrection." *Ibid*.

<sup>54</sup> Grundmann, Markus, 59.

<sup>55</sup> Bovon, *Luc (1-9)*, 244.

### Witness to What you Have Seen and Heard

Coleridge qualifies the announcement that the disciples are to become ‘witnesses of these things’ (Luke 24:48) as the ‘climax of the disciples’ epistemological journey.’<sup>56</sup> Coleridge has come to this conclusion as a result of his outline of a ‘grammar of recognition’ in four stages: a) to look without seeing; b) hear the explanation; c) to see with perception, i.e. understand; d) become witnesses.<sup>57</sup> That the designation of being witnesses is crucial to Luke’s overall vision is evident by the link that this has with the prologue (Luke 1:2) which identifies the information handed down as coming from ‘eye witnesses’ of the ‘word.’ The two activities of being ‘eyewitnesses’ and ‘servants of the word’ are paralleled by the two qualities of ‘sight’ and ‘hearing.’<sup>58</sup> Conveying what one has ‘seen and heard’ are the two essential qualities of a true witness. The content of witnessing to what has been seen and heard finds its heart in the resurrection and the understanding of this event and its implications in the light of scripture. Luke reveals this by his description of Paul’s commissioning by Ananias: “You will be his witness to all men of what you have *seen* and *heard*” (Acts 22:15). The frequency and significance with which Luke attaches the activities of seeing and hearing with that of being witnesses points to the ongoing work of the Missionary Church in Acts. It is worth noting that in all three accounts of Paul’s conversion the companions traveling with him are described as either seeing the light or hearing the voice, but not both. Thus only Paul emerges as a true witness for he both sees and hears. The challenge of being a faithful witness is reiterated at the close of Acts where Luke quotes Isaiah 6:9-10. “Go to these people and say, hearing you shall hear and not understand; and seeing you shall see not perceive... for their ears are hard of hearing and they have closed their eyes...”<sup>59</sup>

It is to the ministry of Jesus that witness has to be given. The ministry that Jesus began in the gospel continues in Acts. In the key verse (Acts 1:8) Jesus commissions the disciples to be ‘his’ witnesses; the emphasis is on witnessing to Jesus. This corresponds to the introduction of Acts where Luke reminds the reader that the former book recounted what Jesus ‘began’ to do and teach (Acts 1:1). The implication is that the book of Acts reflects the continuing ministry of Jesus.

### Conclusion

Luke’s two-volume work focuses on the ‘Journey Narrative’ with the portrayal of Christians as ‘Followers of the Way’ as its underlying theme. Key markers which stand out as dominant characteristics in Luke’s literary structure and which contribute to a dynamic and challenging vision of the Missionary Church are: the importance of faithfulness to the scriptures in the light of the resurrection; the setting of people free from that which binds them; their re-integration as whole people into the society and the commission to being witnesses of Jesus’ ongoing ministry.

<sup>56</sup> M Coleridge, “You are witnesses (Lk. 24:48): Who sees what in Luke? *ABR* 45 (1997), 1-19.” *Op. cit.* Bovon, *Luc* (19:28-24:53), 470 n. 66.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 470.

<sup>59</sup> Concerning the introduction: “Go to this people and say” Evans points out: “The inclusion of this part of Isaiah is particularly appropriate in the light of the missionary thrust of Acts.” CA Evans, *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6:9-10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation*, (Worcester: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 64, 1989), 121. For further in-depth analysis of Luke’s use of Isaiah 6:9-10 see the discussion of Evans in chap. 9.

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