

THE STRUCTURE AND THEOLOGY OF LUKE'S CENTRAL SECTION

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Charles Talbert has shown that the literary patterning of Luke-Acts fits into the broad literary tradition of the ancient Mediterranean world.¹ Both in classical civilization and in the ancient Near Eastern world, the principle of balance was felt to be rooted in the cosmos itself and shaped the literary expression. To use Talbert's words, "The Third Evangelist stands before us a man of his time and place. He shares, in this regard at least, in the *Zeitgeist* of the Mediterranean people."² This perspective gives credence to the work of scholars such as Bengel, Lund, Morgenthaler, Goulder, and Bailey who have called attention to Luke's chiasmic structure.³ It is within this perspective, that emphasizes the importance of literary structure, that the present writer would like to address the issue of a lengthy chiasm in Luke's central section. Chiasm is used to speak of the presentation of themes which are then repeated in reverse order.⁴ This work is especially indebted to Talbert's outline presented in his *Literary Patterns and Reading Luke*.⁵

¹Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1974) chapters 1 and 5.

²Ibid. 120.

³John Albert Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament* (4 vols; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1860); Niles Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1942); Robert Morgenthaler, *Die lukianische Geschichtsschreibung als Zeugnis* (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1948); M. D. Goulder, "The Chiasmic Structure of the Lucan Journey," *Studia Evangelica* (Vol. 2, ed. K. Aland; Berlin: Akademie, 1959); and Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).

⁴Cf. Lund, *Chiasmus* 31ff.

⁵Talbert, *Literary Patterns* 51-2 and C. H. Talbert, *Reading Luke. A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 111-12. It is to be noted, however, that Talbert limits himself to listing the correspondences and evaluating each as to whether it is due to the Third Evangelist's editing of the sources (*Literary Patterns* 51-6). His assessment is that the correspondences of Luke 9-19 are primarily for aesthetic reasons (ibid. 120, 143). Talbert's commentary explains the structure and important features of the unit being discussed but does not compare the theological points of the corresponding scenes (*Reading Luke* 111-82). We have also compared the studies of Bailey (*Poet and Peasant* 79-85); Donald R. Miesner ("The Missionary Journeys Narrative: Patterns and Implications," *Perspectives on Luke-Acts* [Danville, VA: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978] 200); and Eduard Schweizer (*The Good News According to Luke* [Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1984] 166). Schweizer gives an introductory outline, pointing out the chiasmic structure of Luke's central section, but actually structures his commentary differently with only an occasional reference to any correspondence (ibid. 165-7, 232, 252, 265, 272). Liefeld ("Luke," *Expositor's Bible Commentary* [ed. F. Gaebelein; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984] 803) refers to Talbert's *Literary Patterns* as demonstrating Luke's ability to use chiasm to present his message, but does not organize his commentary according to the chiasmic structure either.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate, not just by an outline, but by presenting the similarity of the theological points of the corresponding scenes for the reader to observe for himself, that Luke's central section is structured chiastically. It will be assumed that the development or flow of thought expressed in the narrative is important. The narrative will be seen to consist of scenes with a dominant theme. These scenes are sequenced in chiastic or reverse order with multiple interrelationships.⁶ Often a parable or action illustrates a saying or principle just expressed.⁷ These relationships are at the level of concepts and themes or meaning and theological points and not at the level of mere words or language, although often key words aid in communicating the relationships involved. Further, the correspondence of the scenes in the chiastic structure is not that of an exact reduplication, but of an insightful contrast or comparison. Often the correspondence is a positive-negative relationship in making the same or a similar theological point.⁸

The central section of Luke's Gospel develops seven basic themes or scenes which are then repeated in reverse order. These seven themes with corresponding themes, A & B, may be summarized as follows:

LUKE'S CENTRAL SECTION

A		B
<i>Jerusalem & Death</i> 13:31-33	(7A)	(7B) 13:34-35 <i>Jerusalem & Death</i>
Pharisees Warn of Herod		Jesus' Lament over Jerusalem
Jesus' Reply: Prophets die in Jerusalem		Jerusalem that kills prophets
<i>Exclusion from Kingdom</i> 13:10-30(6A)	(6B)	14:1-24 <i>Invitation to Kingdom</i>
Healing of Crippled Woman		Healing of the Dropsical Man
Synagogue ruler's hostility		Religious leader's hostility
Mention of ox & donkey		Mention of donkey & ox
Right to heal on Sabbath		Right to heal on Sabbath
Two Parables Speak of Humble Beginnings of Kingdom of God		Twofold Parable Teaching on Humility in Kingdom of God
Mustard Seed — Yeast		To Guests — To Host
Parable of Closed Door		Parable of Great Banquet
Concerns one being saved or entering narrow door		Those invited refuse

Talbert (*Literary Patterns* 79) asks, "Is it likely that so complex an arrangement of a literary work would have been perceived by the readers/hearers of the document? This is an exceedingly difficult question to answer. There are at least four possibilities: (a) the architectonic scheme was the secret of the author; (b) a few besides the author may have been conscious of the pattern but only after considerable reflection; (c) the pattern was immediately felt by most readers/hearers but was not consciously perceived by anyone until after reflection; (d) the pattern was generally recognized at the conscious level at the time of reading." He accepts (c).

⁶Cf. E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1966) 6-9, 30-3, 146-9.

⁷Luke T. Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977) 19.

⁸Ronald E. Man ("The Value of Chiasm for New Testament Interpretation," *Bib Sac* 141 [Apr-Ju 1984] 148) says that chiasms are able to express "exact equivalents" or "startling contrasts."

Warns of being outside and seeing Abraham, Isaac, Jacob in Kingdom of God
 Many will come in
 "Last first and first last"

Outcasts invited to fill house

Refusers will not enter
 Last are first & first are last

Call to Discipleship & Repentance(5A) 12:49-13:9

(5B) *Call to Discipleship & Repentance* 14:25-15:32

Call to Discipleship
 Sayings on Fire and Baptism with reference to division within families
 Three against Two — Two against Three

Call to Discipleship
 Sayings on Counting Cost with reference to "hating" families
 Tower Builder — King going to war

Call to Repentance
 Urging them to discern the present time of the kingdom and repent
 Too late after in prison
 Galileans Slain
 Those killed by Tower of Siloam
 Parable of Fig Tree
 Patience of caretaker
 Desire for fruit

Call to Repentance
 Parable of Lost Sheep
 Search and rejoice
 Parable of Lost Coin
 Search and rejoice
 Parable of Lost Sons
 Patience of father
 Desire for elder son to enter

Warnings: Hell, Wealth, Accountability 12:1-48

(4B) *Warnings: Accountability, Wealth, Hell* 16:1-31

Fear of Hell
 Jesus warns disciples to fear God alone
 Consequences of denying Christ
 Assistance of Holy Spirit

Accountability
 Parable of Shrewd Manager
 Be ready for the future

Wealth
 Material possessions do not guarantee life
 Trust God & store treasure in heaven
 Accountability
 Be ready for Son of Man
 Be faithful or punishment

Wealth
 No one can serve two masters — God or wealth
 What men prize is abomination to God
 Fear of Hell
 Parable of Rich Man & Lazarus shows consequences of cherishing wealth
 Adequacy of Scripture

Presence of Kingdom 11:1-54 (3A)

(3B) *17:1-18:8 Coming of Kingdom*

Prayer
 Instruction to Pray
 The Friend at Midnight
 Encouragement
 Exorcism of Demon and man spoke
 Twofold Question of Signs of Kingdom

Woe to one Causing Others to Sin
 Cleansing of Ten Lepers and one gave thanks
 Twofold Instruction on Coming of Son of Man

Charge that Jesus casts out
Demons by Beelzebul
Jesus' Reply: "Kingdom of
God has come upon you"
Request for Sign from Heaven

Jesus' Reply: "Only sign of
Jonah" & "One greater
than Solomon & Jonah is
here"

Lamp Saying (transitional)
Woes to Pharisees & Scribes who
sin against others

Question of Eternal Life 10:25-42(2A) (2B) 18:9-34 *Question of Eternal Life*

Parable: Pharisee & Tax Collector
Tax Collector: Humbly praying
to God (Love for God)
Pharisee proud before God &
critical of others

Little Children Come to Jesus
Models of humble trust

Question by Ruler

Answer: Give to poor and
follow Jesus

Disciples left all and followed
Jesus

Question by Lawyer

Answer: Love of God &
Neighbor

Parable of Good Samaritan
(Love for Neighbors)

Mary and Martha Incident

Mary: Humbly sitting at Jesus'
feet

(Love for God)

Martha busy doing things &
critical of Mary

Following Jesus 9:51-10:24 (1A) (1B) 18:35-19:44 *Following Jesus*

Rejection by Samaritans
Three Would-Be Followers

Seventy Sent Out & Return
Kingdom Revealed to Babes

Blind Man Receives Sight
Zacchaeus Receives Salvation
Parable of Minas
(Little Children Come to Jesus)
Entry into & Rejection by
Jerusalem

It may be noted that the first half is the primary order or sequence of the themes of Jesus' teaching as presented by Luke. After introductory matters, the question about eternal life is really the ultimate issue that every person must confront. The answer Luke suggests is found in recognizing the presence of God's reign in Jesus. Then, there are the warnings about hell, wealth, and accountability. These appropriately follow at this point and prepare for the call or challenge of the next scene. Then, the thought of the terrible reality of being excluded from the kingdom completes the message of Jesus as Luke by inspiration of God has presented it. There is the

reminder of Jesus' death in Jerusalem which serves as the pivot of the chiasm or the transition into the secondary presentation of these themes in reverse order. With their different, and usually more positive, emphasis, these themes spell out and underscore the message of Jesus.

THE CORRESPONDENCES IN THE CHIASTIC STRUCTURE

The corresponding scenes of the chiasm will be compared beginning at the center and following the order of the second half, 13:34-19:44. The scene in the first half will be sketched first followed by its corresponding scene in the second half.

<i>Jerusalem & Death</i> 13:31-33	(7A)	(7B) 13:34-35	<i>Jerusalem & Death</i>
Pharisees Warn of Herod			Jesus' Lament over Jerusalem
Jesus' Reply: Prophets die in Jerusalem			Jerusalem that kills prophets

13:31-33 is a very brief scene which picks up the point of 9:51 that Jesus commits himself to go up to Jerusalem to die.⁹ There is the warning to Jesus by the Pharisees that Herod wants to kill him. Jesus replies with the confidence that he will complete his ministry and die in Jerusalem.¹⁰

The second half of the midpoint of the chiasm (13:34-35) is a lament by Jesus. He expresses his desire to welcome the people of Jerusalem, but they will not come to him. For Jerusalem is the city that kills the prophets. As a result, he foretells the desolation of the city until the end when they will receive him.

Once again the motif of his death is sounded, echoing 9:51 and anticipating the crucifixion in chapters 22 and 23. This in effect places the cross at the center and at both ends of this large teaching section, stressing its undergirding importance to Jesus' teaching.

<i>Exclusion from Kingdom</i> 13:10-30(6A)	(6B) 14:1-24	<i>Invitation to Kingdom</i>
Healing of Crippled Woman		Healing of the Dropsical Man
Synagogue ruler's hostility		Religious leader's hostility
Mention of ox & donkey		Mention of donkey & ox
Right to heal on Sabbath		Right to heal on Sabbath
Two Parables Speak of Humble beginnings of Kingdom of God		Twofold Parable Teaching on Humility in Kingdom of God
Mustard Seed — Yeast		To Guests — To Host
Parable of Closed Door		Parable of Great Banquet
Concerns one being saved or entering narrow door		Those invited refuse

⁹Helmut Flender (*St. Luke: Theologian of Redemptive History* [London: SPCK, 1967] 73f.) speaks of the cross here; and Hans Conzelmann (*The Theology of St. Luke* [London: Faber & Faber, 1960] 197) says the journey expresses Jesus' awareness that he must suffer. N. B. Stonehouse (*The Witness of Luke to Christ* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951] 118) speaks of references to the journey as expressing Jesus' inner purpose to go to Jerusalem to die. Cf. Leonhard Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 2.227.

¹⁰L. T. Johnson, *Luke-Acts: A Story of Prophet and People* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981) 35.

Warns of being outside and
seeing Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
in Kingdom of God
Many will come in
"Last first and first last"

Outcasts invited to fill house

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The first scene is introduced by Jesus' healing of the crippled woman. The ruler of the synagogue where the healing takes place is indignant because it occurs on the Sabbath. Although the ruler speaks to the people, Jesus sternly rebukes him for treating an ox or donkey better than this woman.¹¹ Jesus affirms that it is right to heal a daughter of Abraham on the Sabbath. The ruler, representing the religious leadership, is blind to the presence of the kingdom in Jesus' ministry of healing.

Then, Luke narrates the two parables of the mustard seed and the yeast. They speak of the insignificant beginning of the kingdom, like the healing of the crippled woman that does not convince the synagogue ruler. And just as the healing foreshadows the future great healing or redemption, so the parables speak of the future greatness of the present kingdom.¹²

The two references to the kingdom of God in these brief parables prepare for the important parable of the closed door that follows.¹³ When asked about the number of the saved, Jesus responds that it is necessary to strive to enter through the narrow door. He speaks of a time when the master of the house will close the door, symbolic of the door to the messianic banquet or salvation,¹⁴ and no one will then be able to enter. This is a stern warning about being excluded from the kingdom.¹⁵ The scene ends with an optimistic word about many Gentiles coming from east, west, north, and south to recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God.

The corresponding scene, 14:1-24, combines with the preceding one to form the centerpiece in Luke's development of themes. As Talbert has pointed out, "Mediterranean documents frequently, if not generally, have their key point at the center."¹⁶ Similarly, Man quotes Miesner: "... the rest of the structure pivots around the center, which may be either a single or a double unit. Thus, the exegete must attach special importance to the center of a chiasmic structure."¹⁷ In accordance with this principle, these two central scenes focus on the kingdom, the central motif in Jesus' teaching.

¹¹This illustrates the attitude of the Jewish leaders and echoes the woes of 11:37-54. See I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 556.

¹²Ibid. 560; and cf. Danker, *The New Age* 159; Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963) 149, 153; Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 377.

¹³Craig L. Blomberg, "Midrash, Chiasmus, and the Outline of Luke's Central Section," *Gospel Perspectives*, Vol. 3 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983) 221.

¹⁴Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 226.

¹⁵The seriousness of the warning may be seen by Liefeld's noting that only here does Luke use the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" ("Luke," 973).

¹⁶Talbert, *Literary Patterns* 112.

¹⁷"Value of Chiasm," 148, quoting Donald R. Miesner, "Chiasm and the composition and Message of Paul's Missionary Sermons" (Th.D. Thesis, Concordia Seminary in Exile, St. Louis, MO, 1974) 34. Cf. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* 50, 200; and *Through Peasant Eyes* 80, 83.

This scene begins with Jesus at dinner in the home of a Pharisee. He heals a man with dropsy while the Pharisees and lawyers look on critically. They remain silent when Jesus asks whether or not it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath. They see no sign of the presence of the kingdom in this healing. There is a striking similarity between this healing of the man with dropsy and the healing of the crippled woman in 13:10-17. Both happen on the Sabbath with the focus on the critical reaction to the manifestation of the kingdom in Jesus' healings — the blindness of the Jewish leadership. Even the wording about the donkey and ox is similar.

Then, still within the setting of the dinner in the Pharisee's home, follows Jesus' instruction on humility. This is in two parts like the two parables of the mustard seed and yeast which speak of the lowly, insignificant presence of the kingdom (13:18-21). Both parts of Jesus' instruction stress humility or lowliness. First, Jesus addresses the guests, instructing them to take the lower seats so that the host may bestow the honor of a higher place. This speaks of the proper humility that should characterize those entering the kingdom of God. Secondly, Jesus instructs the host not to call those who can in turn invite him back, but rather to invite the needy and outcasts. This reflects God's concern for the poor. The groups mentioned reflect the messianic expectations of Isaiah and point to the presence of the kingdom of God. Further, both the parables of 13:18-21 and the instruction of 14:7-14 involve a contrast between the humbleness of the present and the greatness of the future kingdom of God.

The main part of this important scene as presented by Luke is the parable of the great banquet. A statement about eating in the future kingdom of God shows that the subject being spoken of is the messianic kingdom which was to be inaugurated by a banquet.¹⁸ The parable speaks of a man inviting many to his banquet, but they refuse with ridiculous excuses which show their concern for other things before the kingdom.¹⁹ Then, the man invites outsiders in just to fill up his house. For the eyes of faith the parable speaks of God's invitation to the Jewish people to see in Jesus his invitation to the banquet of salvation.²⁰ Since they are refusing, he invites the poor and outcasts (as in v 13) and perhaps even the Gentiles. Also there is the closing warning (v 24) that those who refuse will not share in the messianic salvation in Jesus. This scene is a positive invitation, while the corresponding scene in chapter 13 is a negative warning. The similarity between the two main parables is evident. Both begin with a "certain one" speaking to Jesus (13:23 and 14:15). The interchange in 13:22-30 closes with reference to the kingdom of God (13:28-30); and a reference to the kingdom of God opens the presentation of 14:15-24. In 13:22-30 the master of the house closes the door and hears three reasons why those outside should be let in (13:25-26). In 14:15-24 three excuses are made and the master of the house becomes angry (15:18-21). In 13:22-30 they come from east, west, north, and south into the kingdom of God; and in 14:15-24 the servant is sent out into the

¹⁸A. R. C. Leaney, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1971) 214, who also points out that the householder, a type of God, is used both in 14:22 and 13:35. The only other use in Luke's central section is 12:39.

¹⁹Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes* 97, and Donald G. Miller, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1963) 118.

²⁰Liefeld, "Luke," 973.

highways to bring them into the banquet. In 13:24 many will not be able to enter; and in 14:24 those who refused the invitation will not taste the banquet. The one scene closes with the declaration that the last will be first and the first last (13:30). The other portrays the outworking of this principle in the actual situation of the parable (14:15-24).²¹ These two strikingly similar scenes together form the apex of Jesus' themes as presented by Luke and focus on the centrality of the kingdom.

<p><i>Call to Discipleship & Repentance(5A)</i> 12:49-13:9</p> <p>Call to Discipleship Sayings on Fire and Baptism with reference to division within families Three against Two — Two against Three Call to Repentance Urging them to discern the present time of the kingdom and repent Too late after in prison Galileans Slain Those killed by Tower of Siloam Parable of Fig Tree Patience of caretaker Desire for fruit</p>	<p><i>(5B) Call to Discipleship & Repentance</i> 14:25-15:32</p> <p>Call to Discipleship Sayings on Counting Cost with reference to "hating" families Tower Builder — King going to war Call to Repentance Parable of Lost Sheep Search and rejoice Parable of Lost Coin Search and rejoice Parable of Lost Sons Patience of father Desire for elder son to enter</p>
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In scene 5A Jesus speaks symbolically of his death as a baptism and the division resulting as some choose for him and others against him as fire. These sayings underscore the importance of understanding what following him means — the cost of discipleship. Then he chides the crowds because they do not discern the times as they do the weather. They must recognize the presence of God's reign in him and repent before God's judgment falls (12:54-59). This echoes the frequently sounded note of the presence of the kingdom (10:23-24, 11:20, and 11:31-32).

Jesus gives further impetus to repentance by citing the Galileans who were slain and those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell.²² The parable of the fig tree also emphasizes that if there is no repentance, there will be

²¹Danker, *The New Age* 163. Although Danker does not discuss the chiasmic structure of Luke's central section, he does recognize the parallel development. "As in 13:10-16, Luke introduces a chain of sayings and parables with a controversy concerning the sabbath (14:1-6). In 13:18-21 statements on the kingdom precede the recital of the locked door at the messianic banquet (13:22-30). Similarly 14:15 introduced the subject of the kingdom, followed by a parable about the messianic banquet (vv 16-24)."

So also Liefeld ("Luke," 978) notes the similarity of content between 13:22-30 and 14:15-24 by saying, "Luke 13:28-30 had shown that some who expect to be present will be excluded; this passage teaches that those excluded have only themselves to blame."

And Blomberg ("Midrash," 245) describes 13:10-35 and 14:1-24 as "two parallel halves," although he does not recognize a chiasmic structure — only a chiasmically structured parable source.

²²Danker (*The New Age* 156) points out that 13:1-8 goes with 12:54-59.

destruction. The judgment is mercifully delayed only to provide time for repentance.²³ This is a sharp warning of judgment to come.

In the corresponding scene, 5B, Jesus spells out clearly the cost of being his disciple (14:25-35). It means putting him before all other relationships, even life itself.²⁴ The seriousness of counting the cost is illustrated with the story of the tower builder and the king going to war.

This is followed by three parables designed to communicate God's love for the lost in order to call them to repentance. Luke 15:1-2 summarizes the responses to Jesus' proclamation. The outcasts are coming to him, but the Pharisees and scribes are grumbling against him. Each parable stresses God's joy over finding the lost. The parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin present the natural response to finding lost things. Jesus intends to show the Pharisees that it is natural for God to desire and rejoice over the return of sinners.

The parable of the lost son develops to a new level the human responses and emotions involved in estrangement and reconciliation. The unusual response of the waiting father who lovingly restores his son effectively conveys Jesus' view of the loving character of God and his welcome of sinners.²⁵ But the main point comes with the anger of the elder son. This mirrors the attitude of the Pharisees and scribes toward Jesus' ministry. Jesus intends that as they see themselves in the parable as the elder son expressing such hostility and jealousy, the Pharisees and scribes will be persuaded to repent and to enter into the joy of the messianic celebration inaugurated by Jesus.²⁶ This celebration was pictured in the great banquet (14:15-24)²⁷ and is echoed in the banquet celebration here. Like the caretaker of the vineyard (13:8), the father (15:31) is patient, hoping for the elder son to come in before the door is closed (13:25). The parable ends dramatically with the door open for them to come in.

The second scene on repentance is considerably longer than its corresponding one, and the content is different. Yet the two dominant themes are very much the same, and both seem to be made up of two double units. On the one hand, in 12:54-56 and 57-59 there is the concern for discernment of the present, in 13:1-5 and 6-9 there is the concern for imminent tragedy/judgment, with the extended patience of the caretaker. On the other hand, chapter 15 contains two double parabolic units showing God's love for the lost. The waiting father of the parable in 15:11-32 displays the same patience as the caretaker in 13:8. Note also that in 15:24-32 the elder son symbolizes the hoped for repentance of the religious leaders and that in 13:6-9 the fruit of the fig tree also speaks of the desired repentance of Israel. The first scene in 12:54-13:9 stresses the certainty of God's judgment unless one repents. The second scene in 15:1-32 stresses the dynamic compassion of God to search out and welcome the repentant sinner. Thus there is a negative to positive relationship between the two scenes of repentance.

The clear meaning of the passage in 14:25-35 on discipleship throws light on the placing and meaning of the more difficult one in 12:49-53. R. E. Man

²³Jeremias, *Parables* 131; John J. Navone, *Themes of St. Luke* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1970) 83.

²⁶Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* 205.

²⁷Cf. Liefeld, "Luke," 981.

has noted this clarifying feature of a chiasm.²⁸ When the two passages are compared, it may be seen that both emphasize commitment to Jesus in spite of the conflicts or the cost, especially as these relate to families. Their points are quite similar.

<p><i>Warnings: Hell, Wealth, Account-</i>(4A) <i>ability 12:1-48</i></p> <p>Fear of Hell</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Jesus warns disciples to fear God alone</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Consequences of denying Christ</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Assistance of Holy Spirit</p> <p>Wealth</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Material possessions do not guarantee life</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Trust God & store treasure in heaven</p> <p>Accountability</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Be ready for Son of Man</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">Be faithful or punishment</p>	<p><i>(4B)Warnings: Accountability, Wealth, Hell 16:1-31</i></p> <p>Accountability</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Parable of Shrewd Manager Be ready for the future</p> <p>Wealth</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">No one can serve two masters — God or wealth</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">What men prize is abomination to God</p> <p>Fear of Hell</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Parable of Rich Man & Lazarus shows consequences of cherishing wealth</p> <p>Adequacy of Scripture</p>
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Luke 12:1-48 is a three-part unit that turns from the woes pronounced on the hypocritical Pharisees and scribes to address the disciples. In the first part (12:1-12), the followers of Jesus are warned against being hypocritical and being tempted to conceal their true loyalty to Jesus in order to avoid persecutions. They are exhorted to fear God because of his power to cast into Hell. Therefore, the disciples are to confess Jesus so that the Son of Man will confess them before the angels of God.²⁹ This is a most solemn warning regarding one's ultimate destiny.

The second part (12:13-34) is actually in two small units, both of which concern covetousness or how one views wealth. Luke 12:13-21 warns the (younger) brother about undue concern for his inheritance, and shows through the parable of the rich fool that worldly wealth does not matter ultimately. To hoard is to lose all. Luke 12:22-34 challenges the disciples to trust God for food and clothing as do the ravens which are fed and the lilies which are clothed. They are to seek his kingdom by giving to the poor and so are to lay up treasure in heaven. It is asserted emphatically that where one's treasure is there his heart will be also. The use of wealth is a test of the heart concerning lordship.

The third part (12:35-48) underscores this point in terms of accountability. The two small sections stressing readiness, the proper perspective on

²⁸Man, "Value," 152; Frank Stagg, "The Journey Toward Jerusalem in Luke's Gospel," *Review and Expositor* 64 (1967) 504-5. It is noteworthy that Stagg discusses 12:49-53 just before 14:15-33 as both dealing with discipleship. Also 11:5-13 and 18:1-8 on prayer as well as 12:13-34 and 16:1-13 on money are discussed together (*ibid.* 510-12).

²⁹Angels of God are mentioned only one other place (15:10), besides 12:8-9, and 16:22 in Luke's central section; *Gebenna* is used only in 12:5, and *Hades* only in 16:23 (and 10:15).

stewardship (12:35-40), and faithfulness, the proper perspective on destiny (12:41-48), may be intended to underscore the positive aspect of the warnings against covetousness (12:13-34), and fearfulness toward persecution (12:1-12). If this relationship exists, then there is a small chiasm here — (a) 12:1-12, (b) 12:13-34, (b¹) 12:35-40, (a¹) 12:41-48. The disciples are to be faithful stewards ready for the return of the Son of Man. The mention of punishment echoes the theme of Hell with which these warnings began.

The warnings in 16:1-31 correspond to those in 12:1-48, but are placed in reverse order. First, the warning about accountability takes the form of a parable about a shrewd manager who is called in to give an account before his master (16:1-8). When his master confronts him with the removal from his position, he resorts to shrewd action to prepare for the future.³⁰ Thus disciples are to act decisively in order to be received by God. This is quite similar to the servants being ready to receive their master in 12:35-48. It is noteworthy that *οικονόμος* and *φρόνιμος* are used together only in 12:42 and 16:8 in Luke. Bailey, following Preisker, Jeremias, and Fitzmyer, points out that *φρόνιμος* has eschatological overtones which would strengthen the similarity of 16:1-8 with 12:35-48.³¹ And although possessions are spoken of several times in Luke's central section (11:21; 12:15, 33, 44; 14:33; 16:1, 14, 23; 19:8), it is said of the faithful and wise manager in 12:44 that he will be put in charge of all of his master's possessions. And in contrast, the shrewd manager in 16:1 is accused of wasting his master's possessions and removed from his charge. Further, there is a blessing pronounced on the faithful servants/manager in 12:37 and 43, and the manager who acts decisively is praised in 16:8.

The second part of 4B (16:9-18) speaks of wealth. This section does not appear to be an entirely independent unit.³² Furthermore, vv 9-13 complete vv 1-8; and vv 14-18 introduce the parable of 16:19-31.³³ Yet the two small units together sound the warning against coveting material wealth and insist on single-minded devotion to God which is demonstrated by using wealth properly. This is the same point made by 12:15 and 33-34.³⁴ Also the reference to eternal dwellings and true wealth in 16:9 and 11 is similar to the reference to life in 12:15.

Luke 16:9-13 sets forth the challenge of trust regarding wealth. There is a correlation between little and much, worldly wealth and true riches, and another's wealth and one's own. It is asserted emphatically that one cannot serve two masters. Wealth tests the loyalty of the heart. So in 12:22-34 Jesus exhorts the disciples to seek the kingdom and to gain treasure in heaven.

³⁰Morris, *Luke* 246.

³¹Noted by John Drury, *Tradition and Design in Luke's Gospel* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1976) 159. With reference to the use of "praise" in 16:8, Bailey says, "... this word provides additional evidence for interpreting the parable as being primarily concerned with eschatology" (*Poet and Peasant* 106). Jeremias defines *φρόνιμος* as "he who has grasped the eschatological situation" (*Parables* 46 n. 83).

³²Bailey (*Poet and Peasant* 110-8) argues that 16:9-13 is a unified poem of three stanzas each structured chiasmically.

³³There seems to be a chiasmic relationship here: (a) 12:13-21, (b) 12:22-34, (b¹) 16:9-13, (a¹) 16:14-18.

³⁴Noted by Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* 116 n. 114: "Luke 12:15 is one of the few places in Luke where possessions are discussed. . . . Then in the narrative section in Luke 12:32-34, the theme of treasure in heaven is clearly very close theologically to Luke 16:9."

Luke 16:14-18 makes a judgment regarding the Pharisees as those who really have wealth as their god. Just as the rich fool in 12:16-21 they trust in wealth and will lose everything. Apparently the difficult sayings of verses 16-18 are intended to support this.

The third part of this section (16:19-31) continues the theme of using wealth properly to lay up treasures in heaven or to prepare for one's ultimate destiny. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus makes the point that one is to fear Hell. Whereas 12:1-12 spoke of God's power to cast into Hell, this parable pictures that solemn warning carried out.³⁵ This is the destiny of the rich man who showed no concern for poor Lazarus and trusted in earthly wealth rather than preparing for the future. Further, it is added that God's Law is a sufficient guide to find true life. This concept is similar to the assertion in 12:1-12 that the Holy Spirit will assist the confessor of Christ.

In summary, these two scenes present Jesus' warnings regarding the three themes of Hell, wealth, and accountability. Although each scene develops the themes in a distinct manner, the similarities between the corresponding themes are fairly clear.

<p><i>Presence of Kingdom 11:1-54</i> (3A)</p> <p>Prayer</p> <p>Instruction to Pray</p> <p>The Friend at Midnight</p> <p>Encouragement</p> <p>Exorcism of Demon and man spoke</p> <p>Twofold Question of Signs of Kingdom</p> <p>Charge that Jesus casts out demons by Beelzebub</p> <p>Jesus' Reply: "Kingdom of God has come upon you"</p> <p>Request for Sign from Heaven</p> <p>Jesus' Reply: "Only sign of Jonah" & "One greater than Solomon & Jonah is here"</p> <p>Lamp Saying (transitional)</p> <p>Woes to Pharisees & Scribes who sin against others</p>	<p>(3B) 17:1-18:8 <i>Coming of Kingdom</i></p> <p>Woe to one Causing Others to Sin</p> <p>Cleansing of Ten Lepers and one gave thanks</p> <p>Twofold Instruction on Coming of Son of Man</p> <p>Request for coming Son of Man</p> <p>Jesus' Reply: "Kingdom of God is among you"</p> <p>To Disciples' Unspoken concern</p> <p>Jesus' Reply: "Son of Man will be seen by all"</p> <p>Prayer</p> <p>Instruction to Pray</p> <p>The Unjust Judge</p> <p>Question about Faith</p>
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In 3A, the brief section on prayer (11:1-13) seems to be a somewhat independent unit, but it also underscores the preceding Martha and Mary incident (10:38-42) and prepares for the following healing (11:14). Perhaps it is intended to teach in narrative sequencing that prayer precedes casting out demons. Mark 9:29 and Matt 17:20 say this, but Luke 9:43ff does not

³⁵Marshall, *Luke* 639.

record this saying. However, here Jesus both demonstrates (11:1) and teaches the disciples to pray (11:2-13). The model prayer is followed by the illustration of the friend at midnight who persists until he gets his needs met.³⁶ This is followed by encouragements to pray.³⁷

Actually this scene begins with the exorcism of a demon and continues with a two-part interchange on signs of the kingdom which is followed by woes on the Pharisees and scribes. Talbert describes this pattern as one of "action-assault-reply" that is characteristic of the Lukan narrative.³⁸

By casting out a demon, Jesus shows the presence of God's reign in himself.³⁹ After this sign, the Pharisees charge Jesus with performing the exorcism by the power of Beelzebub (Satan) and ask him to perform a sign from heaven (God). With this request they reject his miracle as being satanical and challenge him to show that he is from God. He explains that no divided kingdom can stand. He asserts that if he is casting out demons by the finger of God, then God's reign has come upon them. This is a strong affirmation of the presence of the kingdom. Then, following a woman's statement regarding the blessedness of his mother, Jesus speaks of the blessedness of those hearing and doing the word of God.

With regard to the request for a sign from heaven, Jesus asserts that this generation will be given no sign except the sign of Jonah. Apparently the sign of Jonah refers to Jonah as a prophet who calls to repentance⁴⁰ which Jesus views himself as doing. The references to the Queen of the South and to the men of Nineveh stress the significance of the present time — Jesus' presence — and imply that his hearers should repent (11:32b).⁴¹

This twofold interchange is followed by the pronouncement of woes on the Pharisees and scribes for their hypocritical, arrogant attitudes and actions of covetousness and oppression of the godly. Their offenses against others are grievous and will bring judgment. They have not repented and have not come to the light — Jesus.

The corresponding scene (17:11-37) is preceded by a section involving a woe (17:1-10). The main core of the scene is in the same order as that of 11:14-36. It begins with the cleansing of ten lepers and continues with a two-part instruction on signs of the kingdom. It is followed by a brief unit on prayer (18:1-8).

In the preliminary woe section, Jesus speaks to his disciples pronouncing a woe on the one through whom offenses come.⁴² This section concerns the theme of offenses or sins against others. Certainly the disciples are not to be like the Pharisees and scribes (11:37-54). Rather than having attitudes of

³⁶Alternatively, the parable may focus on the sleeper preserving his integrity and giving what is needed (Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* 133).

³⁷Talbert, *Reading Luke* 127-34.

³⁸Ibid. 135 with references. Cf. Ellis, *Luke* 104.

³⁹Danker (*The New Age* 137) points out that this is a sign of the New Age in 7:22; cf. Isa 35:6.

⁴⁰Talbert, *Reading Luke* 138.

⁴¹Note that Luke's order places 11:32b with its word of repentance climactically at the end. Marshall (*Luke* 487) stresses that other signs are not needed. Cf. Miller, *Luke* 107-8.

⁴²Actually both woe sections are somewhat independent and may go with either the preceding or following scene.

⁴³Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes* 124; Danker, *The New Age* 180; Marshall, *Luke* 645; Jeremias, *Parables* 193.

pride and hypocrisy, the disciples are to reprove and forgive without any sense of special merit or feeling that anything is owed to them as they carry out their responsibilities as servants of God.⁴³ Thus the attitude of believers within the community of faith is to be that of a humble servant modeled after the example of Jesus' obedient servanthood.

The main section begins with the cleansing of the ten lepers, which shows the presence of God's reign in Jesus. Jesus' question about the nine who did not return and give thanks as did the Samaritan is probably intended as an indictment of the Jewish leadership.⁴⁴ Jesus is manifesting the power of God's reign, and the Pharisees, not perceiving the significance of his actions, ask when God's reign is coming. Jesus boldly asserts that, in himself, the reign of God is already in their midst.⁴⁵

A comparison of the point of 17:20-21 with the corresponding 11:29-32 would imply that the Pharisees should repent and receive the present manifestation of God's reign in Jesus. In both scenes the Pharisees are calling for signs, and Jesus is calling for repentance and acceptance of the reign of God which is present in his ministry.⁴⁶

It is noteworthy that there are only five healings in Luke's central section. A healing sets the stage for teaching on the kingdom at the two-part center of the central section, the healing of the crippled woman in 13:10-17 and the healing of the man with dropsy in 14:1-6. A healing also introduces these other two corresponding scenes that discuss the kingdom. In 11:14 with the demon possessed man and here in 17:11-19 with the ten lepers, a healing vividly shows the presence of the kingdom of God in contrast to the blind request for signs or question about the coming of the kingdom which is already here. This placing of healings before kingdom scenes seems to be carefully designed by Luke and reflects his understanding that healings specially manifest the promised messianic reign (Isa 35:6).⁴⁷

After his reply to the Pharisees in 17:20-21, Jesus instructs his disciples about the future public manifestation of God's reign in 17:22-37. He points out that its unexpected arrival will bring judgment like the unexpected judgment in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot. But like Noah and Lot, those who are expectant and ready will be delivered.

Jesus desires that his disciples not be deceived by a counterfeit kingdom. Such a deception would involve the disciples in a relationship that would be similar to that which Jesus was charged with — a relationship with Satan (11:15). As in his careful instruction in 11:17-22, so in 17:22-37 Jesus instructs his disciples about the true coming of the kingdom in the future and exhorts them not to be deceived by false signs of the kingdom.

⁴⁴Cf. Ellis, *Luke* 209; Danker, *The New Age* 180.

⁴⁵Danker (*The New Age* 181) and Marshall (*Luke* 652) also note the similarity of 17:20-21 with 11:29.

⁴⁶With regards to 17:20, Leaney (*Luke* 230) observes, "There is irony in this, for their watching of him would show them the kingdom if they looked aright, if they were able to discern the signs of the times (11:56)."

⁴⁷Paul J. Achtemeier ("The Lukan Perspective on the Miracles of Jesus: A Preliminary Sketch," *Perspectives on Luke-Acts* [Danville, VA: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978] 154) does not discuss this placing of the miracles of Luke's central section when he discusses them as miracles Luke adds. However, Navone (*Themes* 29) notes healing as a special aspect of the Messianic Age.

The striking similarities between these two passages may be stated concisely as follows. There is the emphatic assertion both in 11:20 and in 17:21 that the kingdom of God has come upon them or is among them. In 11:21-22 there is a parabolic reference to Jesus' power as the stronger one and in 17:22-37 there is the emphasis on the return of Jesus in power. Both passages also use the title Son of Man (11:30 and 17:22, 24, 26 and 30) and refer to "this generation" (11:29, 30, 31, 32, 50, 51 and 17:25). 11:24-26 speaks of the unclean spirit returning and 17:23 warns the disciples about being deceived by false christs. 11:31-32 warns of judgment because people have not repented at the presence of one greater than Solomon and Jonah, and 17:26-36 warns of judgment on those not ready at the future coming of Jesus. The key concept in both passages is judgment because of the failure to recognize the presence of the kingdom. Also, each scene closes with a special saying. In 11:33-36 the lamp saying is a final call to see the light (Jesus) and repent. In 17:34-37 the saying about separation is a final warning of judgment and destruction to come.

Further, the somewhat independent section on prayer in 18:1-8 corresponds to 11:1-13⁴⁸ and adds a word of encouragement to the thought of 17:22-37. The essential content of prayer — the coming of the kingdom — is the same in both chapters. Jesus urges the disciples who long for the return of the Son of Man to pray for the coming redemption and to be encouraged for that day will not be delayed long. The parable of the unjust judge makes this point. If the unjust judge vindicated the widow, how much more will God bring justice soon to his elect.

In summary, these two corresponding scenes have a similar structure and content: a healing, which manifests God's reign, is followed by a discussion of God's reign that shows how the Jewish leaders are blind to the presence of that reign in Jesus and warns of judgment to come.⁴⁹ Further, the scene in Luke 11 has a unit on prayer preceding it and a series of woes (37-54) following it, and the corresponding one in Luke 17 has a woe section preceding it (1-10), and a unit on prayer following it (18:1-8).

<p><i>Question of Eternal Life</i> 10:25-42(2A)</p> <p>Question by Lawyer Answer: Love of God & Neighbor</p>	<p>(2B) 18:9-34 <i>Question of Eternal Life</i> Parable: Pharisee & Tax Collector Tax Collector: Humbly praying to God (Love for God) Pharisee proud before God & critical of others Little Children Come to Jesus Models of humble trust Question by Ruler Answer: Give to poor and follow Jesus</p>
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⁴⁸Liefeld, "Luke," 1000; "In each parable the reputation on [sic] the one being petitioned is at stake. . . . Therefore, though God is not compared to a crooked judge, there is a partial basis of comparison in that God will also guard his reputation and vindicate himself." Cf. Leaney, *Luke* 188; Marshall, *Luke* 462, 669; Ellis, *Luke* 213. Drury (*Tradition* 164) speaks of the two parables on prayer as "obvious pairs," and Jeremias (*Parables* 157) refers to them as almost doublets.

⁴⁹There is a similarity to John's fourth and central episode on the manifestation and rejection of the light and life (cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge: University Press, 1963] 345-54).

Parable of Good Samaritan
 (Love for Neighbors)
 Mary and Martha Incident
 Mary: Humbly sitting at Jesus'
 feet
 (Love for God)
 Martha busy doing things &
 critical of Mary

Disciples left all and followed
 Jesus

The first scene begins with a question and its twofold answer.⁵⁰ The two parts of the answer are then illustrated in chiasmic order by two incidents—a parable and a story.⁵¹ It should be noted that a similar interchange is recorded in Mark 12:28-34 and Matt 22:34-40 without a parallel in Luke at that point in the narrative. Thus it would appear that this section, 10:25-28, is carefully placed by Luke.⁵²

A lawyer asks Jesus what he can do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asks how he understands the law. The lawyer's reply combines the need for love of God and neighbor. This twofold answer is then illustrated with the parable of the good Samaritan and the incident of Martha and Mary. If Luke did indeed design this sequence, then it is significant that sitting at Jesus' feet portrays what it means to love God.⁵³ Further, the following closely related unit on prayer (11:1-13) would appear to supplement the priority of loving God. Like sitting at Jesus' feet, prayer to God is an expression of one's love for him.

The corresponding scene (18:9-34) begins with a brief parable of the Pharisee and tax collector⁵⁴ which answers the question of 18:8b regarding faith.⁵⁵ This section (18:9-14), with its concern for prayer, complements the preceding unit, 17:1-18:8. In fact, it may complete a chiasmic structure as follows: (a) 17:20-21, the present kingdom to Pharisees; (b) 17:22-37, the future kingdom to disciples; (b¹) 18:1-8, the future kingdom to disciples; and (a¹) 18:9-14, the present kingdom to Pharisees.

This parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector corresponds to the Martha and Mary incident in 10:38-42 in the overall chiasmic structure. The point of both passages is the contrast in attitudes between the two persons involved. Here the tax collector displays the humility necessary for entering the kingdom of God in contrast to the pride and self-trust of the Pharisee.⁵⁶ In 10:38-42 Mary sits at Jesus' feet, symbolizing love for God, but Martha is preoccupied with the chores at hand.

There is also the brief scene in 18:15-17 about the children coming to Jesus.⁵⁷ This incident exemplifies the foundational truth that the kingdom of God is entered only through humble, childlike trust which both the blind beggar and Zacchaeus display in the narrative that follows. Both this scene and Jesus' thanksgiving in 10:21-24 emphasize that spiritual perception is given to babes.

In the main part of the larger scene a ruler asks Jesus what he can do to inherit eternal life. Jesus replies by citing the commandments. This reply is

⁵⁰Marshall, *Luke* 430.

⁵¹Talbert, *Reading Luke* 120, and Blomberg, "Midrash," 246.

⁵²Liefeld ("Luke," 942, 944) sees these as different conversations, be 671. And note 16:14-15.

⁵³Liefeld, "Luke," 1007.

similar to 10:27 in intent. When the man says he has kept the commandments, similar to the lawyer in 10:29 who tried to justify himself, Jesus says he lacks one thing. He is to sell all, give to the poor, and follow him. The rich ruler turns away sorrowfully. Here is another picture of what wealth can do — keep one from loving God (10:27). This act of self-preservation by the rich ruler stands in sharp contrast to the extraordinary self-sacrifice of the good Samaritan presented in that parable for the lawyer.

Then Jesus speaks of the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom of God. Peter states that he and the other disciples have left everything to follow him, as did the good Samaritan who gave up much for the man who had been left half dead. This sacrifice expresses the disciples' love for God just as Jesus' command to give to the poor expresses love for neighbors. Thus this scene corresponds closely with 10:25-42.⁵⁸ The phrase "one thing you lack" in 10:42 may be echoed in 18:22.⁵⁹ Both scenes close with Jesus' word of vindication; about Mary in 10:42 and about the Tax Collector in 18:14.

It should not be overlooked that possessions determine the ruler's decision and lead to his sorrowful departure from Jesus,⁶⁰ recalling the principle of 17:33, the rich man of 16:19-25, the Pharisees of 16:14, the warning of 16:1-13, the two sons of 15:13, and 29-31, the discipleship of 14:33, the principle of 12:15, 31, and the point of 10:25-37. Thus from the portrayal of the selfless sharing of possessions by the good Samaritan to the sorrowful grasping of possessions by the rich ruler, and the several instances in between, one's use of wealth expresses either his unselfish love for neighbor and love of one's Master or his selfish covetousness and love of mammon. This is a very significant motif in Luke's central section.⁶¹

The passion prediction of 18:31-34 seems to be intended as a conclusion to this scene. In this way Luke pictures Jesus as the model of forsaking all for the kingdom.⁶²

<p><i>Following Jesus 9:51-10:24</i> Rejection by Samaritans Three Would-Be Followers</p> <p>Seventy Sent Out & Return Kingdom Revealed to Babes</p>	<p>(1A) (1B) 18:35-19:44 <i>Following Jesus</i></p>	<p>Blind Man Receives Sight Zacchaeus Receives salvation Parable of Minas (Little Children Come to Jesus) Entry into & Rejection by Jerusalem</p>
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⁵⁸Ellis, *Luke* 217. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes* 159.

⁵⁹Marshall, *Luke* 677: "In effect, Luke has here returned to the question of qualifications for discipleship and characteristics of disciples (10:25-11:13) with which the long non-Markan section began. . . ." Cf. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes* 163.

⁶⁰Liefeld, "Luke," 1003.

⁶¹Thus, eg, *πλοῦσιος* is used three times in Matthew, twice in Mark, but eleven times in Luke. Cf. L. T. Johnson, *Sharing Possessions* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981).

⁶²Cf. Ellis, *Luke* 217, 151: "Jesus requires no more than he himself has given." However, if 18:31-34 were viewed with the last scene (18:35-19:44) it might be thought of as echoing the decision of 9:51.

Luke opens the central section of his gospel (9:51-19:44) with a description of Jesus' resolution to go to Jerusalem for his taking up, his death-resurrection-ascension. This is followed by his rejection by the Samaritans (9:52-56). This echoes the rejection motif of 4:16-30 and forms an inclusion with 19:28-44 that follows.⁶³ Then there is the encounter with three potential disciples (9:57-62). These two paragraphs focus on the cost of following Jesus. The next large unit shows the effectiveness of Jesus' mission through the Seventy(-two). He commissions and instructs his disciples and they go out and return. Jesus speaks figuratively of their success in terms of Satan falling from heaven. He also gives thanks to the Father for his hiding and disclosing of who the Son is. Then, he pronounces a blessing on the disciples for seeing and hearing God's reign in his ministry.⁶⁴

These sayings and incidents have to do with one's relationship to Jesus or the following of Jesus. It is this broad concept of following Jesus that seems to correspond to the last incidents (18:35-19:44) in Luke's central section.

In this last large scene (18:35-19:44), which completes the central section of Luke's gospel, the first two units portray two very dissimilar persons coming to Jesus.⁶⁵ These two stand in sharp contrast to the rich ruler of 18:18-23 and the would-be followers of 9:57-62. The first individual (18:35-43) is a poor blind man sitting by the way. He learns that Jesus is passing by and cries out to him as the Son of David for mercy. This is a striking act of faith and humility (18:8b). Jesus restores his sight and the man follows Jesus praising God.

The second individual (19:1-10) is a wealthy chief tax collector who climbs a tree to see Jesus — another striking display of faith and humility. When Jesus comes to his house, Zacchaeus demonstrates his change of heart by promising to repay those he has wronged. Jesus then pronounces that salvation has come to his house today.

These two incidents together picture both poor and rich coming to Jesus.⁶⁶ The latter picks up on the word of Jesus in 18:27, echoing Gen 18:14-15 that all things are possible with God. And in light of Luke's emphasis on using wealth properly all through his central section, Zacchaeus' response to Jesus is important.⁶⁷

The twofold parable of the minas sums up remarkably well the two aspects of Jesus' teaching that have been portrayed throughout Luke's central section. On the one hand, the nobleman's entrusting of wealth to his servants is a final call to the disciples for faithfulness. On the other hand, the drastic slaying of the subjects who do not wish the nobleman to rule over them serves as a final warning to the Jewish leadership that judgment is awaiting them. Perhaps there is a general similarity between this parable

⁶³Talbert, *Reading Luke* 111.

⁶⁴Liefeld, "Luke," 940.

⁶⁵Cf. Morris, *Luke* 271.

⁶⁶Ellis (*Luke* 216, 221) views 18:15-19:44 as developing the theme of "who receives the kingdom" like 10:21-24. Both 18:35-43 and 19:1-10 emphasize seeing. Perhaps this is intended to contrast with the would-be followers of 9:57-62 who do not "see" the real significance of Jesus.

⁶⁷Liefeld, "Luke," 1007.

and the mission of the seventy (10:1-20) in that both units portray serving Jesus with the servants/disciples giving their report at the end. And kingdom or kingship is central to both. In addition, the introduction to the parable in v 11 mentions Jerusalem and thus echoes 9:51 and 13:31-35 and clarifies the fact that Jesus' journey to the city is to give his life and not to establish his kingdom immediately.⁶⁸

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and his lament over the city complete this scene.⁶⁹ After carefully making preparations, Jesus enters the city with a multitude of disciples who proclaim his coming with the words of Psalm 118. This messianic expression upsets the Pharisees, but Jesus does not heed their demand to rebuke his disciples. Instead he laments the fate of Jerusalem because they did not recognize God's visitation in his ministry. This note of rejection forms an inclusion with 9:51-56 that ties the entire central section together. Furthermore, the blindness of the Pharisees vividly illustrates the point of 10:21-24 that the wise and learned will not see.

The brief section about the children coming to Jesus in childlike faith and humility (18:15-17) also has a relationship with this scene because it corresponds with Jesus' thanksgiving to the Father for giving childlike faith and humility to babes in 10:21-24. Although 18:15-17 is not in the proper place in the overall chiasmic pattern, it is clear that both show that God reveals the kingdom to babes. Talbert has pointed out that the use of the chiasmic structure in antiquity always included asymmetrical elements.⁷⁰ This seems to be the case with regard to the placement of 18:15-17.

Further, 18:15-17 is closely related to 18:9-14 in that it illustrates the point of that parable.⁷¹ So 18:9-14 and 15-17 form a twofold positive model of how one enters into eternal life, in sharp contrast to the rich ruler who trusts in his wealth and turns away from Jesus (18:18-23).

THE VALUE OF THIS STRUCTURE

The value that results from the recognition of the chiasmic structure of Luke's central section is fourfold.⁷²

First there is the encouragement that one is dealing with a very carefully designed document that reflects the literary style of its time. Each half is almost equal in length, 200 verses to 224 verses or about 16 pages of Greek text (Nestle) to 17 pages.

Secondly, the meaning of each small unit and large scene is illuminated by the insights gained from seeing them within the context of the whole and grasping their similarities and differences within the chiasmic structure. The structure provides a kind of "check and balance" on the interpretation of any one part of the whole, especially between the corresponding units.

Thirdly, the structure displays that which was important to Luke and to Jesus. This gives the confidence that the interpreter is seeing the significant

⁶⁸Liefeld (Ibid. 1008) speaks of four functions of the parable. Ellis (*Luke* 222) and Marshall (*Luke* 700-1) see two purposes.

⁶⁹On the ending of the central section, see Talbert, *Literary Patterns* 122, n. 19.

⁷⁰Ibid. 78-9.

⁷¹Talbert, *Reading Luke* 170.

⁷²Note Man, "Value," and *Chiasm*, esp. ch. 4.

themes in Jesus' teaching. Each motif is repeated for emphasis and structured to stress the centrality of the kingdom.

Finally, the structure gives us an inspired prioritizing or systematizing of the theology or teaching of Jesus. By grasping the relationship of the Lukan sequence, one recognizes what is important and how the concepts are related or valued. Luke tells us that coming to Jesus is the beginning point for entering into life and that this is entering the kingdom and a relationship to God. It is possible not to see it, and wealth is the greatest danger or distraction because it produces pride or self-trust. Nevertheless, one is called to repent and totally commit oneself to the kingdom (Jesus), which is made available through the cross. Thus the chiasmic structure brings into clear focus the theology of Luke's central section.

A DEFENSE OF THIS STRUCTURE

In the order of a self-evaluation, it must be acknowledged that the seven corresponding scenes do not have the same kind or degree of similarity. The sixth and second pairs of scenes are obviously similar in wording and action. These come near the beginning and end and at the center of the overall structure. The third pair of scenes must be carefully understood and then the similarity of thought becomes apparent. It must be acknowledged that the kind of correspondence in the fifth and fourth pairs of scenes is not wording and action. These scenes are different in content, but the themes and points made are unmistakably similar in the fourth scenes and quite similar in the fifth. Admittedly there is only a general sort of correspondence between the first pair of scenes. Yet there is the definite rejection motif that forms an inclusion tying the entire chiasmic structure together. When the reader recalls the rich diversity of material that Luke presents in these chapters, then it will be recognized that his structuring of these scenes is remarkable.

The two most insightful attempts to structure Luke's central section are those of Charles Talbert⁷³ and Kenneth Bailey.⁷⁴ However, neither has gone much further than to outline the material and briefly comment on it. Talbert's *Reading Luke* only discusses Luke's Gospel in sequence without elaborating on the correspondences. His commentary even omits some passages (Luke 11:37-54 and 13:22-14:35). Bailey's two works are collections of essays on selected passages from Luke in an arbitrary order.

This essay attempts to deal with every passage in Luke's central section and carefully, though concisely, to point out and discuss the theological correspondences. The main concern is to give a coherent explanation of the structure of the text as it stands in Luke's Gospel. And the most important thing about the structure is not language, length, style, geography or anything else except the theological point — the meaning of the passage. Admittedly these theological points could be debated, but if it can be shown that the same or similar point is made at the appropriate point in the chiasmic structure then that interpretation should be given serious consideration.

⁷³*Literary Patterns* 51-6.

⁷⁴*Poet and Peasant*, esp. 79-85, presenting his outline.

The matter of specific differences in structure will now be considered. Talbert and Bailey give prominence to Jerusalem in their structures. Certainly Jerusalem is the geographical focal point of the ministry of Jesus and Luke's portrayal of it. However, this writer has tended to emphasize the theological point made at Jerusalem. Thus my opening and closing titles are "Following Jesus" rather than "To Jerusalem." However, 9:51 certainly presents Jesus going up to Jerusalem and 19:41-44 presents Jesus as being rejected by the religious leaders at Jerusalem. Thus, although different words are used to describe the structure of Luke, the outlines are really very similar. My work simply goes on to describe the theological correspondences pointed out by Talbert's outline.

It may also be noted that Luke's large chiastically structured section begins with Jesus' rejection by Samaritans and ends with Jesus' rejection by Jerusalem. Most scholars acknowledge that 9:51 begins the central section. Thus it is a matter of following the corresponding structure through to the rejection scene of 19:41-44 and the entry into Jerusalem of 19:28-40 that corresponds with 9:51 and 9:52-56. It might be possible to include 19:45-48 as Bailey and others do. But once it is recognized that the motif of rejection functions as a literary technique of inclusion,⁷⁵ then the basic structure is apparent. Minor variations in outline such as these do not change the main emphases of Luke's narrative.

It may be noted that those who extend the central section only to 18:14 do so on the basis of source material, not structure.⁷⁶ This does not respond to the concern for theological structure which this structural discussion seeks to investigate.

The widely accepted alternative of dividing the narrative after Luke 19:27 or 28 can be readily understood. This division is accepted by H. Conzelmann, F. W. Danker, J. A. Fitzmyer, L. Goppelt, D. G. Miller, B. Reicke, and W. C. Robinson, Jr.⁷⁷ Most of these studies were done before the chiastic structure was perceived. And the Parable of the Ten Minas does summarize remarkably well the central section's emphasis on encouragement to the disciples and warning to the leaders and does begin to draw the central section to a close.⁷⁸ However, when the chiastic correspondences are noticed, then it becomes apparent that the rejection scenes open and close the central section.⁷⁹

Another difference with Talbert's outline is that this present outline has tended to recognize larger scenes. Thus "Prayer" in Luke 11:1-13 and 18:1-8

⁷⁵Talbert, *Reading Luke* 111.

⁷⁶C. F. Evans, "The Central Section of St. Luke's Gospel," *Studies in the Gospels* (ed. D. E. Nineham; Oxford: Blackwell, 1955) 37-53.

⁷⁷Conzelmann, *Theology of Luke*; Danker, *New Age*; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According To Luke*, vol. 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1981); L. Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981); Miller, *The Gospel According To Luke*; B. Reicke, "Instruction and Discussion in the Travel Narrative," *Studia Evangelica*; W. C. Robinson, Jr., "The Theological Context for Interpreting Luke's Travel Narrative," *JBL* 79 (1960) 20-31.

⁷⁸Marshall, *Luke* 700.

⁷⁹Talbert, *Reading Luke* 111; *Literary Patterns* 122, n. 19; Bailey (*Poet and Peasant* 79) uses 9:51-19:48; Stonehouse (*The Witness of Luke* 111-12) accepts 19:45. E. Ellis (*Luke*), N. Goldenhuys (*Luke*), and L. Morris (*Luke*) hold to 19:44.

has been recognized as being within the larger scenes of 11:1-54 and 17:1-18:8 regarding the Kingdom. And the titles of these sections have been described more precisely as "Presence of the Kingdom" and "Coming of the Kingdom," in part following Bailey.⁸⁰ Again these differences with Talbert's outline are not significant.

On the other hand, although Bailey is very perceptive, he omits Luke 12:1-12 from his structure. This leads him to correlate 11:37-12:34 with 16:9-31 and to give it the title "Conflict with the Pharisees: Money." However, as Talbert has pointed out,⁸¹ there are three themes making up the units of 12:1-48 and 16:1-31 which are themselves in reverse order. Observing the similarity of 12:1-12 with 16:19-31 about the threat of hell, 12:13-34 with 16:9-15 about riches, and 12:35-48 with 1-8 about stewardship or accountability would seem sufficient evidence that Luke perceived the similarities and placed the units in correspondence in his narrative. The fact that no passage is omitted — a limitation of Bailey's work — further strengthens the argument that the corresponding emphases are deliberate in Luke's design.

Further Bailey places 12:35-39 in correspondence with 16:1-8, 16. This unconvincing relationship is a result of not seeing the way 16:1-8 relates to 12:35-48.

Bailey's decision to designate 13:10-20 and 14:1-11 as a small section on "The Nature of the Kingdom" fails to take into consideration the way the two large and focal scenes on the kingdom are structured. Along with Talbert, we have suggested that the two headings 13:10-17 and 4:1-6 serve to introduce their respective scenes 13:10-30 and 14:1-24 on the kingdom. This results in a somewhat different structure from Bailey's.

Probably it will not be possible within the scope of this essay to convince everyone that one particular structure is correct in every detail. The richness and complexity of the narrative may prevent anyone from totally grasping every correspondence. But many of the similarities are so striking that many if not most may be convinced that Luke has deliberately designed at least some correspondences to heighten the meaning and reinforce his basic themes. It may be years before a final structure is written, but efforts to delineate Luke's thought seem greatly worthwhile.

The preceding is offered with the hope that some progress has been made, not that the structure presented in this essay is the last word.

⁸⁰*Poet and Peasant* 80-2.

⁸¹*Literary Patterns* 52.



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