

IN THAT DAY

IN THAT DAY:
THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN
IN LUKE-ACTS

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the concept of the "Day of the Lord" as it comes to expression in Luke-Acts. In these books, this Old Testament concept is reinterpreted and used in conjunction with another Old Testament theme: the coming of the Son of man. An analysis of the Lukan passages about the coming of the Son of man (Luke 17:22-37; 21:5-36; 12:35-48) in the context of the contemporary historical situation of first-century Judaism reveals that when speaking of the coming of the Son of man, the Lukan Jesus is referring to a number of comings; namely, his own life (Luke 12) and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE (Luke 17 and 21). The Old Testament imagery of the Son of man is used to show the nature of this coming: a vindication of those suffering "for my name's sake" (Luke 21:17). In Luke this message of hope and judgment is brought to Israel; Acts shows how the final age has dawned, extending this message of hope and judgment to the gentiles. The suffering of Jesus and his resurrection of vindication become the suffering of the church to be ended by another day of vindication and resurrection. Luke-Acts, therefore, points out the eschatological character of the coming of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, for they are the

beginning of an event that will be consummated in the final coming. In the mean-time, those who eagerly await that coming can claim the already fulfilled promises and testify to the Spirit-filled restoration taking place already now, in the last days.

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INTRODUCTION

Anguished criticism of the current world order and the energizing promise of a radically new future characterized the prophetic tradition from Moses to Jesus.¹ A wealth of symbols portrayed the ending of the old, worn ways and the dawn of a new time; one of these was the concept of "the day of the Lord".

As the story of Israel progressed this concept changed and grew. Its solid basis in Israelite history made the day of the Lord a symbol of Yahweh's involvement with his people. Prophetic application of it to specific periods and times infused the concept with new meaning and import. Jesus, too, adapted this motif in the message he delivered to first-century Israel. In doing so he affirmed the meaning that this symbol carried for Israel, reinterpreting it for his own time.

In this thesis I shall undertake an analysis of the prophetic day-of-the-Lord theme as it comes to expression in Luke-Acts.² In the body of the work I shall analyze the

¹See Walter Brueggemann, The Prophetic Imagination (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).

²Mention should be made of Hans Conzelmann's Die Mitte Der Zeit; ET, The Theology of St Luke trans Geoffrey Boswell (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961). Most studies of Luke and/or Acts since the publication of this book have focused on Conzelmann's assertion that Luke de-eschatologized the gospel in order to account for the delay of the parousia, a

theme of the day of the Lord as it is revealed in various passages, viz: Luke 17:22-37; 21:5-36; 12:35-48; Acts 2:17ff; 3:17-26; 17:30-31. These texts "do not carry their meaning within themselves",³ nor do they derive their meaning from other similar texts. Therefore, I shall attend to the historical situation from which these sayings derive force, momentum and colour. To this end the first five sections of the thesis deal with the historical situation and Jewish eschatological expectation in first-century Palestine; the nature of apocalyptic language; the Old Testament themes of the Son of man and the day of Yahweh; and the composition and date of Luke-Acts.

delay which caused a crisis in the early church. Conzelmann's position has been more than adequately refuted, most recently by Robert Maddox, The Purpose of Luke-Acts (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982), 100-157, and so will not be discussed in this thesis.

³Wayne A. Meeks, "A Hermeneutic of Social Embodiment" in Christians Among Jews and Gentiles ed G.W.E. Nickelsburg with G.W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 183.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The First Century in Judea

First-century Judaism existed in a situation of crisis. Centuries of servitude to Babylon, to Persia, and then to the Hellenistic heirs of Alexandria had culminated in Roman rule. Under Roman control Jewish society settled down to stagnant routine characterized by inequality and exploitation. An underlying spirit of revolt threatened to erupt into action with every particularly oppressive act.⁴ This political situation resulted in questions about the efficacy of Israel's God. As the fall of Jerusalem in 587/6 and the subsequent exile had produced a crisis of faith in Yahweh, so Israel under the Romans split into diverse camps: pious quietists, disaffected skeptics, and, at least sporadically, revolutionaries.

If there was one creator God who had chosen Israel as the single people with whom he had entered into covenant, and if, contrary to her obvious destiny Israel languished in

⁴See G. Theissen, The First Followers of Jesus: A Sociological Analysis of Earliest Christianity trans. John Bowden (London; SCM, 1978); Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson, Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), Introduction; Sean Freyne, Galilee, Jesus and The Gospels (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), which all do an analysis of the historical situation at this time.

servitude, it was to be expected--so Israel reasoned--that God would finally take the initiative, decisively vindicating his people in the sight of their enemies.⁵ This expectation of intervention by the Lord of history, who made to live, and who made to die (Deut 32:39; cf. Job 34:14f; Ps 104:29f), is what is generally referred to as eschatology.

Since eschatological hope emerged in modes of action and forms of life that related variously to the ushering in of the great intervention, different groups within Judaism could be distinguished in accordance with their different eschatological hopes. Josephus attempted to describe to his gentile readership the Essenes, Sadducees and Pharisees. But he judged that the description would be intelligible only if eschatological expectation were translated into familiar philosophical terms. Accordingly, the Essenes, who thought God would act to establish his rule, became determinists; the Sadducees, who thought that it was up to them to establish God's rule, believed in free will; and the Pharisees, who entertained both policies, believed that fate and the human will cooperated. (JA)

⁵N. T. Wright, "Jesus, Israel and The Cross" in SBL 1985 Seminar Papers ed. Kent Howard Richards (Atlanta: Scholars Press), 79. That this was ancient expectation is indicated by Klaus Koch, The Prophets: The Assyrian Period Trans. M. Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 96, "ancient tradition... assumed that God would intervene under all conditions on behalf of the only people on earth who belonged to him." See also J. Neusner, First-Century Judaism in Crisis (New York: Abingdon, 1975), 19f.

XIII.172-173; cf JA XVIII.12-18; BJ. 162-165).⁶

Luke also attempted to characterize the eschatological hope and expectation of Jesus and his followers, but was more successful than Josephus in maintaining the Jewish character of those beliefs. Our interpretation of eschatology, and specifically the theme of the day of the Lord in Luke-Acts, therefore, should bear in mind the specific historical circumstances and expectations to which that eschatological hope is tied.

A Note on Language

By and large, it was the prophetic literature which provided the framework within which Israel thought about God's historic action on her behalf. First-century Israel was a people once again in exile, waiting for the great day of Yahweh in which God would act on her behalf; when this day was spoken of, therefore, it was with the symbol-charged language of the prophets. In the last two centuries of the Second Temple (130 BCE-70 CE) prophetic language took on apocalyptic traits, which could be characterized as follows.

1. Apocalyptic literature and language were rooted in a concrete historical situation: at a fundamental level something was wrong.⁷ The apocalyptic mode of speech

⁶N. T. Wright, "The Battle For the Kingdom: Jesus and The Temple", lecture delivered at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, January 31, 1989.

⁷J. J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypse" in Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre ed. J. J. Collins, (NP: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), 27.

addressed and assessed this historical situation.⁸

2. Apocalyptic literature envisioned a decisive action by Yahweh by which oppressive enemies would be judged and the people vindicated and restored.⁹ The apocalyptic writers envisioned this day in such a way that the present time was one of urgency and crisis.¹⁰ In light of this it should be remembered that Judaism in general and Jesus in particular "read the Bible as if the mass of promise and prophecy referred to today and to a tomorrow on the point of dawning."¹¹

3. Apocalyptic literature referred to God's action in end-of-the-world language. This did not necessarily suppose that this action would actually result in the end of the historical world.¹² Hence, apocalyptic imagery should be understood as "symbolic realism,"¹³ which used the

⁸Richard A. Horsley, Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 138.

⁹Horsley, 160; also Collins, 25, where the use of "wicked" and "good" place an unwarranted emphasis on the individual rather than the corporate emphasis found in most apocalyptic writing.

¹⁰G. B. Caird, The Language and Imagery of The Bible (London: Duckworth, 1980) 258; Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypse" 26.

¹¹B. F. Meyer, The Aims of Jesus (London: SCM, 1979), 184.

¹²Caird, 256.

¹³A. N. Wilder, "Eschatological Imagery and Earthly Circumstance" NTS (1959), 235; see also C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,

language of finality "not in the sense of 'last' or 'the end', but only in the sense of 'finally' or 'at last.'"14

4. The interpretation of apocalyptic language should therefore work on a level other than the literal, while allowing for literal interpretation on the part of hearers.15 In the words of C H Dodd, "it is at least open to the reader to take the traditional apocalyptic imagery as a series of symbols standing for realities which the human mind cannot directly apprehend, and as such capable of various interpretation and re-interpretation as the lessons of history or a deepening understanding of the ways of God demand."16

The language and forms for speaking about God's action in history in the first century were those of apocalyptic literature. Our analysis of Jesus' sayings as recorded in the gospels, therefore, shall take into consideration the nature and purpose of apocalyptic literature in his time.

The Son of Man

Although the theme of the Son of man and Jesus' use of it have been the centre of much debate in recent scholarship, a number of points can be secured with high

1961), 81.

14Horsley, 168.

15Caird, 256.

16Dodd, 81, see also Meyer, Aims, 245-259.

probability. These points shape the assumptions from which our analysis proceeds. The Old Testament basis for the Son of man imagery in the New Testament and other apocalyptic writings is Daniel 7.¹⁷ In Dan 7:13-27, "one like a [Son of] man" (v 13) receives dominion and an everlasting kingdom (v 14). The subsequent interpretation (vv 17-27) reveals that the "one like a [Son of] man" is identified with the saints of the most high (v 18, 27),¹⁸ who shall undergo a period of suffering under an unjust king (v 23-25). This king will then be judged and destroyed (v 26), and the saints of the most high shall receive the kingdom (v 27).

Central to this passage is the concept of the suffering of the people of God and their ultimate vindication with the coming of the "one like a [Son of]

¹⁷See N. Perrin, Rediscovering the Teachings of Jesus (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 167-172; cf Donald Juel, Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 165f. The basis of the Daniel 7 imagery, according to J. A. Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery" JTS 9 (1958) 225-42, is an Israelite (formerly Canaanite) enthronement ritual.

¹⁸On the corporate interpretation of Dan 7, see M. D. Hooker, "Is the Son of Man Problem really Insoluble?" in E. Best and R. M. Wilson, Eds, Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 155-168; M. Casey, "The Corporate Interpretation of 'One Like a Son of Man' (Dan 7:13) at the time of Jesus" NT XVIII (1976), 167-180; C. F. D. Moule, "Neglected Features in the Problem of 'The Son of Man'", Neues Testament und Kirche: Festschrift fur Rudolf Schnackenburg ed. J. Gnllka, (Freiburg, 1974), 413-428; cf J. J. Collins, The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction To the Jewish Matrix of Christianity (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 82.

man".¹⁹ This is also apparent in another Old Testament text, Psalm 80:17:

But let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,
the Son of man whom thou hast made strong for
thyself.

Here, too, one called the Son of man is a figure that has suffered.²⁰

Mention should also be made here of the Similitudes of Enoch and 4 Ezra 13. Although the occurrence of the phrase Son of man in these two works may suggest the existence of a fixed Son-of-man figure in Jewish thought, it is more likely that both writings reflect the "varied use of Son of man imagery in Jewish writings."²¹ Hence, although they are loosely based on the imagery of Dan 7, Enoch and Ezra move creatively beyond Daniel,²² enlarging his imagery to encompass their own situation. The imagery of 4 Ezra, moreover, coincidentally touches that of Luke by reference to a "day" of the Son of man (4 Ezra 13:52). This document also draws upon the Old Testament theme of the day of the Lord.

¹⁹Hooker, 1979, 167; see also E. Schweizer, Lordship and Discipleship (London: SCM, 1960), 22-31.

²⁰Moule, "Neglected Features", 418.

²¹Perrin, Rediscovering, 166ff.

²²See Perrin, 167ff; Collins, Apoc Imag, 148, 166.

The Day of the Lord

The Old Testament day-of-Yahweh theme is first found in Amos 5:18-20. Although this is the first occurrence of this phrase, it is quite evident that the prophet is referring to a common concept, since the passage is concerned with the correction of a misconception of what this day will be like. It has been suggested, and seems likely, that the prophetic day-of-the-Lord concept had its pre-prophetic roots in an autumn festival which celebrated the Kingship of God, triumphant in the cosmic conflict.²³ A number of not-so-obvious characteristics belong to this day.

1. The Day is denoted not only by the phrase "day of Yahweh" but also by the editorial references "in that day", and "in those days."²⁴ A reading of the texts reveals that just as "day" refers to a period of judgement²⁵ as well as to a time of salvation²⁶ in the prophetic books so the term "days" refers to a period in the future which can

²³J. Gray, "The Day of Yahweh in Cultic Experience and Eschatological Prospect" Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok 39 (1974), 5-37. See also J. Gray, The Biblical Doctrine of The Reign of God (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979).

²⁴Gray, 7.

²⁵Eg. Amos 5:8-20; Hos 5:9; Micah 5:10; 7:4; Is 3:18-4:1; 10:3; 63:4; Jer 4:9; 18:17; 51:2; Zech 12:3-13:6; Mal 3:2; 4:1; Joel 1:15, 16; 2:1, 2, 11.

²⁶ Eg. Am 9:11f, Hos 2:21; Mic 4:6; Is 4:2ff; 11:10, 11; 29:18; Jer 27:22; 30:2; 39:17; Zech 2:10; 4; Mal 4:5, Joel 3:18.

consist of either judgement²⁷ or salvation²⁸. Both "day" and "days" denote a time of fulfilment when a promised act of God shall be realized.

2. Furthermore, the Day of Yahweh is not a literal twenty-four-hour day. In the Old Testament the words used for 'day' and 'year' are not precise temporal designations but rather "temporal rhythms filled with particular content."²⁹ The Day of Yahweh refers, therefore, to a period of time having a certain still-to-be-defined character.

3. The Day of Yahweh does not mean the end of history, but rather a change within history.³⁰ It is expected that the world will continue, but in such a radically different way that over time end-of-the-world language is used to emphasize the nature of the day.³¹

4. The Day of Yahweh is not a one time occurrence, but has many particularizations in history.³² These

²⁷Eg. Amos 4:2; 8:11, Hos 9:7; Is 39:6; Jer 5:18; 7:32; 9:25; 19:6; 41:12; 49:2; 51:47, 52.

²⁸Eg. Amos 9:13; Micah 4:1-4; Is 2:2; 27:6; Jer 3:16-18; 16:14; 23:5-7; 30:3; 31:27-34; 33:14-16; 50:4-5; Zech 8:23; Joel 3:1.

²⁹Klaus Koch, The Prophets: The Assyrian Period Trans M. Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 161.

³⁰See Koch, 162; B. De Souza "The Coming of The Lord" Studii Biblicai Franciscani Liber Annus 20 (1970) 171.

³¹See p. 6f above.

³²De Souza, 175; Gray, 7.

particularizations consist of realization of the purpose of Yahweh for Israel,³³ and are therefore times of eschatological import.

5. Use of the phrase "the latter days" in Jer 23:20; 30:24; Mic 4:1-4 and Isa 2:2 indicate that a final epoch is envisioned. In some instances this is conceived of in terms of judgement (Ezek 38:16) and in others in terms of restoration (Mic 4:1-4, Isa 2:2). Jeremiah depicts this age as an epoch of understanding (Jer 23:20; 30:24).

³³Gray, 8, 26.

THE LUKAN BACKGROUND

The Composition and Date of Luke-Acts

It is by now accepted by most scholars that both Luke and Acts were written by a single author and were intended to comprise a two-volume work.³⁴ This thesis shall, therefore, deal with the two books as a unity. This reveals the first of two assumptions I am working on with respect to Luke-Acts. The first is that, though drawing on a number of sources, Luke-Acts is a homogeneous work, for the redactor selected his materials and rigorously edited the whole. The second assumption is that, though Luke interpreted his sources, he did so in a way that shows "how profoundly he understood both the apostolic tradition and the eschatological language in which it came to him".³⁵ In short, it is possible that Luke's interpretation of the events he recorded is substantially accurate for it is grounded in solid traditions. My treatment of this work, therefore, while acknowledging that editorial work took place, will deal with Luke-Acts in the form in which it was

³⁴See Maddox, Purpose, 3ff, for a discussion of the reasons for this acceptance.

³⁵G. B. Caird, "Eschatology and Politics: Some Misconceptions" in Biblical Studies: Essays in Honour of William Barclay ed. J R McKay and J F Miller (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 73.

passed on.

Estimates regarding the date of the composition of Luke-Acts vary widely among scholars.³⁶ No consensus currently holds, for the proposed dates range from pre-70 to the second century. The diversity is due to the following sets of inferences. First, Luke needs to be dated late for the following reasons: 1. Mark, a second generation book (cf. 15:21), is a source for Luke. This and the time which must also be allowed for its circulation before its use by Luke, suggest a later date.³⁷ 2. Luke's portrayal of Paul is of a heroic figure of the past, hence some temporal distance is implied.³⁸ 3. The prophecies regarding the fall of Jerusalem (21:20-24; 19:41-44; 23:27-31) suggest a post-70 date.

On the other hand, Luke needs to be dated early for

³⁶J.C. O'Neill, The Theology of Acts in Its Historical Setting (London: SPCK, 1961), dates Luke in the second century; R. Maddox, The Purpose of Luke-Acts (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982), 8, dates Luke-Acts in the 80's or 90's CE; E. E. Ellis, The Gospel of Luke (London; Nelson, 1966) 58, and I. H. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke (Exeter, 1978) 35, date Luke around 70 CE; B. Reicke, "Synoptic Prophecies on the Destruction of Jerusalem" in Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honour of A P Wikgren, ed. D E Aune (Leiden: Brill, 1972) 126-8? and J. A. T. Robinson, Redating The New Testament (London: SCM, 1976), 92, suggest a date before 70, with Robinson asserting that Acts was completed in 62 CE and gospel sometime earlier; and P. Parker, "The 'Former Treatise' and The Date of Acts" JBL 84 (1965), 52-58, dates Acts no later than 63 CE with Luke in its present form sometime after.

³⁷Maddox, Purpose, 8.

³⁸Maddox, Purpose, 8.

the following reasons: 1. No mention is made of Paul's death or the Neronian persecution in Acts.³⁹ 2. The destruction of Jerusalem is not mentioned in Acts.⁴⁰ 3. The prophecies of the fall are based on Old Testament prophecies⁴¹ and suggest that Luke was written before the flight of Christians in 66 AD.⁴²

One can see how complex the issue is, especially since the sayings concerning the fall of Jerusalem are used as an argument for a late date in one instance and for an early date in another. While I do not think that one must date Luke-Acts late on the basis of these prophecies,⁴³ neither must one date it early on this basis. Luke may have deliberately refrained from rewriting them in light of actual historical developments.

Maddox's late dating of Luke based on Markan dependence rests, it seems to me, on an assumption about Markan priority which is itself questionable.⁴⁴

³⁹Robinson, 87-92; Parker, 53.

⁴⁰Parker, 53.

⁴¹See C.H. Dodd, "The Fall of Jerusalem and The 'Abomination of Desolation'" in More New Testament Studies (Manchester: MUP, 1968), 69-83.

⁴²Robinson, 88.

⁴³See C.H. Dodd, "The Fall of Jerusalem and the 'Abomination of Desolation'", 69-83.

⁴⁴See Wm. R. Farmer, The Synoptic Problem (Dillsboro, North Carolina: Western North Carolina Press, 1976); Pierson Parker, "The Posteriority of Mark" in New Synoptic Studies ed. Wm. R. Farmer (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press,

If Acts is late, as the picture given of Paul does indeed suggest, it is curious that no mention is made of the death of Paul, nor of the Neronian persecution of 64 CE, nor of the fall of Jerusalem. On the basis of these absences one might perhaps support an early date; but such an argument from silence assumes that Luke wrote down absolutely everything that he knew. That assumption seems precarious.

On the whole, it is difficult to say anything with certainty about the date of Luke-Acts. Luke does, however, seem to view the destruction of Jerusalem as a prominent event full of eschatological import, which suggests to me that this destruction was either impending, or in the recent past.⁴⁵ My inclination, therefore would be to date Luke around, probably shortly before, 70 CE, with Acts sometime after.

Luke's Audience

In his preface (1:1-4), Luke indicates that his gospel is addressed to one Theophilus, a person whose identity is unknown. Rather than attempting to determine

1983), 67-142.

⁴⁵See G.W.H. Lampe, "AD 70 in Christian Reflection" in Jesus and the Politics of His Day ed. E. Bammel and C.F.D. Moule (Cambridge: University Press, 1984), 153-171, for an interesting account of the (un)importance of the destruction of Jerusalem in early Christian thinking. This suggests that proximity did make this event important in Luke's mind.

the Lukan audience from this uncertain introduction,⁴⁶ I shall make a few observations about the "authorial audience".⁴⁷ The "authorial audience" is the audience which Luke saw himself addressing. By examining the assumptions about the audience which are present in the text, we can determine something about what type of people constituted Luke's readership.

In the first place, Luke assumes that his audience has knowledge of the Old Testament.⁴⁸ The work is thoroughly steeped in the milieu of Judaism and the Old Testament. Moreover, Luke's reliance on Old Testament themes and quotations is, for the most part, without explanation. A reader with no Old Testament background would not understand much of what Luke is saying.

Second, Luke appears to have been written for people with a Christian background.⁴⁹ This is evident in the use of material directed specifically to the disciples,⁵⁰ some of which is esoteric. The question has also arisen as to whether Luke would have included the

⁴⁶See Maddox, 12-15, for an up-to-date discussion of the alternative interpretations of the prologue.

⁴⁷See R. A. Culpepper, Anatomy of The Fourth Gospel: A Study In Literary Design (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 205-211, for a discussion of the "authorial audience".

⁴⁸See Maddox, 14.

⁴⁹See Maddox, 15.

⁵⁰Luke 11:5-8; 12:35-48; 16:1-9; 17:7-10.

Lord's prayer and the words of institution of the Lord's Supper in a work directed to non-Christians.⁵¹ This does not seem likely.

This thesis assumes, then, that the audience Luke was addressing was a Christian audience, well versed in the Old Testament and the expectations of Israel.

The Lukan Context

It is evident from the outset that Luke regarded Jesus as the fulfilment of the promises God had made to his people Israel, the fulfilment of the eschatological hope. The angel Gabriel announced one who would "reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of [whose] Kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:33). Likewise the Song of Mary:

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his posterity for ever.

(1:54-55)

and the Song of Zechariah:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has visited and redeemed his people,
and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets

⁵¹Maddox, 15. The question was originally raised by Jeremias.

from of old,
 that we should be saved from our enemies,
 and from the hand of all who hate us.

(1:68-71)

reveal that the birth of Jesus was to be seen as a fulfilment of all that Israel had been longing for: salvation from enemies, God's saving act of deliverance in history. This is further emphasized by the description of Simeon as one who was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel (2:25) and by the actions of the prophetess Anna: "And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Israel" (2:38).

Right from the outset Luke made clear the context of Jesus' coming: he came to realize the hope of redemption for Israel, to release her from her enemies. His coming, therefore, is to be interpreted as God's decisive action in history, as the inauguration of a new age, a new day.

The Gospel repeatedly emphasizes this understanding of the coming of Jesus. The Lukan Jesus himself saw his coming in this light in Luke 4:18-21. By declaring that "today" Isaiah's great prophecy of the new age of redemption is fulfilled he made an unmistakable claim: I am bringing salvation, I am establishing the new age.

The fact of this claim is clearly confirmed by how the crowds and disciples received it. A climactic moment in

this reception was the crowd's adulation and cry ("Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" v. 28) at the entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-40). In Jesus they saw a king come to redeem Israel; the new age would begin with him. Similarly the disciples on the road to Emmaus had hoped that this prophet, mighty in word and deed, was the one to redeem Israel (24:19,20). With the resurrection this hope was rekindled, "So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'" (Acts 1:6). The claim Jesus was making had not been misunderstood by those who heard his message.

Although it is clear that the Lukan Jesus is the fulfilment of Israel's hope, it is also evident that the manner in which Jesus intended to bring fulfilment was misunderstood by both the people to whom he addressed his message and the disciples. This caused uncertainty among those who wished to accept him. Hence, upon hearing of the things Jesus was doing, John the Baptist posed a question: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (7:19). The disciples also failed to understand how redemption was to come; the two going to Emmaus spoke of a hope that was over (24:21), and even after the resurrection the disciples asked about a restoration that had already begun to take shape (Acts 1:6). Although they wanted to believe that God's decisive action in history was taking

place through Jesus, and although his actions on occasion convinced them that it was happening, this was not quite what Israel had expected.

The unexpected nature of what Jesus was doing made it difficult, according to the Lukan account, for some within Judaism to welcome his message. Hence Jesus' words on "this generation":

"To what shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the market place and calling to one another,

'We piped to you and you did not dance;
We wailed and you did not weep.'"

(Luke 7:31, 32)

Jesus has not responded to their crisis in the way they had expected, hence they did not respond to him in the way the crisis message he was bringing demanded.⁵² Jesus' message, therefore, had another side to it. The message of restoration for some was a message of judgement for others, notably those that did not heed his message (Luke 11:29-32, 51; 13:1-5; 14:34, 35; 19:41-44; 20:9-16; Acts 3:23 cf. 6:14).

The Lukan use of the day of the Lord theme reinforces the above general picture of Jesus as fulfiller of eschatological hope in Israel. Through our analysis of

⁵²See Jeremias, Parables, 161-2.

this theme, we hope to show how Jesus revealed the fulfilment of these prophecies in a new way. Our point of entry shall be the two extended discourses on the coming day in Luke 17:22-37 and 21:5-36. Whereas these passages are directly relevant to our concerns, they are not altogether transparent in meaning. We shall have to appeal, therefore, to other Lukan texts referring to the coming day, some of which will throw an indirect light on the two main passages.

LUKE 17:22-37

This passage is full of images of daily rural life: waking and sleeping, eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, planting and building. Biblical images abound: the unwitting in the days of Noah and Lot, fire and brimstone falling from heaven. Then the end strikes, lightning flashes and vultures gather. From Daniel comes the image of the Son of man and his day(s). The juxtaposition of these two sets of images (biblical symbols and everyday life) results in an illumination of the daily actions of ordinary life by means of Biblical symbols. Ordinary patterns of living become charged with meaning. What the charged meaning is, however, can be a matter of debate; eg. the vultures (ἀετοὶ) mentioned in verse 37 are seen as an image with positive connotations by some scholars,⁵³ as neutral by others,⁵⁴ and as negative by still others.⁵⁵ An interpretation of this image as positive or as negative results in very different meanings for the verse and the passage. The arguments on

⁵³Manson, 147.

⁵⁴Marshall, 669.

⁵⁵De Souza, 201; see also Borg, 276.

each side seem plausible.⁵⁶ Through examination of the text we hope to uncover what the charged meaning of these images is.

One is struck immediately with the repetition of ἡμέρα in this passage. There are τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (v. 22), ταῖς ἡμέραις Νῶε (v. 26), ταῖς ἡμέραις τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (v. 26), ταῖς ἡμέραις Λώτ (v. 28), as well as ἡ ἡμέρα ὃ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀποκαλύπτεται (v. 30). The repetitive phrases echo Old Testament passages such as Amos 8:11 "Behold the days are coming," says the Lord'. This phrase generally connotes a time to come in which God will act in some great punitive⁵⁷ or restorative⁵⁸ measure. On a very basic level, then, the repeated references to days would evoke memories of prophetic oracles announcing a period to come in which God would interact decisively with his people.

The references to certain days in this passage, however, although they may recall certain Old Testament usages, are transformed to carry Jesus' specific message. Rather than references to the day of Yahweh we have references to the days of the Son of man (v. 22) which are to be compared to the days of Noah (v. 22) and Lot (v. 28).

⁵⁶See p. 32 below for a discussion of this verse.

⁵⁷Is 39:6; Jer 7:32; 9:25; 19:6; 49:2; 51:47, 52.

⁵⁸Amos 9:3; Jer 16:14; 30:3; 31:27-34; 33:14-16; Zech 8:23; Joel 3:1.

The verses create some ambiguity, especially since verse 22 contains the cryptic phrase "one of the days of the Son of man". The variety of interpretations reveals the ambiguity of the phrase: 1. Maddox⁵⁹ interprets v. 22 in light of v. 26 and 28, where the days of Noah and Lot are described. The days of the Son of man, therefore, are the days of Jesus' earthly ministry when his call to repentance was not heeded. This interpretation, however, strains the text in v. 26 and 28 somewhat. In the first place, the parallel with verse 26 breaks down. If this refers to the days of Jesus' ministry, why is the reference to days that are yet to come in v. 26: "οὕτως ἔσται καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου"? Secondly, the days of Jesus' earthly ministry did not end in a way similar to the ending of the days of Noah and Lot, as is implied by the text. This interpretation finds poor grounds in v. 26. Furthermore, although the desire to have the good old days back may be a common human desire, there is no indication that Jesus' disciples regarded the days of his earthly ministry in that light. They were days of uncertainty and doubt (9:45), of rejection (9:5; 10:3, 10, 11), and misunderstanding (9:11, 45, 49-50; 18:15-17; 34; 19:11). After the triumph of the

⁵⁹"The Function of the Son of Man According to the Synoptic Gospels" NTS 15 (1968-69), 51. In his later work, The Purpose of Luke-Acts, 125f, Maddox admits the uncertainty of knowing what this phrase means, noting only that v. 26 cannot refer to the day of Jesus' mission because those days are now in the past.

resurrection and the revelation of the Spirit, the disciples surely would not be longing for days when Jesus was "physically present". This is especially evident in that he was seen as being very much alive and present in the work and persons of his apostles and the church (Saul, why do you persecute me? Acts 9:4).

2. According to I.H. Marshall the 'least unsatisfactory' view is that the days of the Son of man refer to the messiah's reign, and one of the days of the Son of man refers to the parousia.⁶⁰ This explanation does not account in any way for verse 26.

3. T.W. Manson⁶¹ suggests that the present text is based on a misunderstanding of the Aramaic verb lachda. This has been translated as "one" (μῖον) rather than "Very much" which would result in this reading: "You will greatly desire to see the day of the Son of man." Even if Manson's theory were correct, this reading does not address what Luke would have intended when he wrote the Greek text. "One of the days of the Son of man" clearly meant something to him, something that was not obscured by the reference in verse 26.

4. B. De Souza⁶² is heading in the right direction

⁶⁰Marshall, 659.

⁶¹The Sayings of Jesus (London: SCM, 1964), 142 following Torrey The Four Gospels, 312.

⁶²"The Coming of The Lord" Studi Biblici Franciscani Liber Annus 20 (1970), 175ff, 208.

with his interpretation which is based on the Old Testament theme of the day of Yahweh. Since the prophetic writings reveal that the day of Yahweh refers to his many interventions in history, we can say that he has many days. The phrase "one of the days of the Son of man" then refers to one of the Son of man's interventions in history. This phrase is used rather than the more common "Day of the Son of man" in order to avoid the misunderstanding that he is speaking of the parousia. De Souza's explanation results in confusion about the meaning of the vv. 26 and 28, for the days there referred to are clearly not dramatic interventions in history, but average working days.

The Old Testament prophetic books, however, do indeed provide the clue to understanding this passage. Generally when "days" are used in the prophetic literature the phrase is not "the days of Yahweh" or "in his days" but a time period connoted by one of 2 phrases "the days are coming", ἡμέραι ἔρχονται or "in those days", ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις. These phrases then, are not directly linked to Yahweh, although the connotative allusion is always to the day of Yahweh.⁶³ There is one passage in the prophetic literature, however, where the "days" are linked to a specific person: This is Jeremiah 23:6; both verses 5 and 6 follow:

Behold the days are coming (ἡμέραι ἔρχονται) says

⁶³See p. 10 above.

the Lord, when I shall raise up for David a righteous branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days (ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτοῦ) Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he shall be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness'.

The use of the phrase "the days of the Son of man" therefore, in the mind of an Israelite familiar with the Old Testament, created echoes of the prophetic promise of a time period to come in which Judah and Israel were to receive salvation. These themes also reflect the words of the angel at the annunciation (1:32-33) and the song of Zechariah (1:68-79).

The messianic figure of the Jeremiah prophecy is given added dimension through identification with the Son of man figure from Daniel 7. That this passage sees the day in the pattern of suffering and vindication found in the Danielic Son of man tradition is made apparent in verse 25 and the parable following the passage.⁶⁴ There we see that the awaited day is a vindication of God's elect (8:7, 8), which must nevertheless be preceded by suffering and rejection (v. 25). As we see how the prophetic background informs the passage as a whole, the meaning of verse 22 will

⁶⁴See Juel, 158: "The eschatological setting of the verses, with explicit reference to imagery from Daniel, makes an allusion to Daniel almost certain".

also be addressed.

An understanding of the prophetic literature is necessary in order to understand not only the allusions in this passage, but also the underlying structure which give these allusions shape. It appears that Jesus is doing exactly what Amos did in his announcement of the coming day of the Lord in Amos 5:18-20; he is challenging the expectations of those who desire to see one of the days of the Son of man. Amos informed the people of his generation that rather than light, the day would consist of darkness, even actions thought to be safe would result in danger. This day would not be as expected. This is also the message that Jesus is bringing, and he brings this warning to his disciples by challenging three specific assumptions about the coming day.

In the first place, the treatment of the "days of the Son of man" reveals a challenge like that of Amos' to the current positive way of thinking about that day. The disciples will be longing for one of the days as a day of salvation for Israel (cf Jer 23:6); and so will those who so eagerly but prematurely announce its arrival (v. 23). That, however, is not what the day will be. The close juxtaposition with Noah and Lot suggest that the days are days wherein the unrighteous live very regular lives with no hint or threat of a coming crisis. Lot himself, according to the Biblical account, did not realize that he was faced