

THEOLOGY OF PRAYER IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

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Prayer materials in Luke's Gospel are rich and unique.¹ P. T. O'Brien has correctly observed that "[p]rayer is a significant motif in the Lukan writings as both the terminology and the contexts make plain."² The verb προσεύχομαι (meaning "to offer petition"), for example, is used nineteen times in the Gospel of Luke alone. In fact, thirty-five of the eighty-six NT occurrences of the term are in Luke-Acts, whereas only ten occurrences are in Mark and fifteen in Matthew. When the noun προσεύχη is included in the count, the Lukan writings use the term forty-seven times, whereas Matthew employs it seventeen times, Mark twelve, John never, the Pauline writings thirty-three times, and others three times. In Luke's Gospel alone, προσεύχομαι or προσεύχη occur twenty-two times.³ In the NT, δεόμεναι and its noun δεήσις, appear thirty-four times:⁴ Luke uses these terms nineteen times, Paul ten times.⁵ Acts also uses κράζω (twice) and προσκαρτερέω (three times) in prayer contexts, and even the adverb ὁμοθυμαδόν is used to express unity in prayer in Acts 1:14 and 4:24. These statistics, however, may be misleading, since the Gospel of Luke and Acts are longer than any other books in the NT. More important for our purpose is not the frequency of the terms, but the fact that most of Luke's prayer texts come in Lukan special material.⁶ O. G. Harris noted that Luke not only "has sixteen prayer terms where his sources do not," but also that "these terms appear at significant points in his Gospel."⁷

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the theology of prayer in the Gospel of Luke.⁸ We will begin with a survey of scholars' views regarding Luke's theology of prayer. Two themes have been suggested: (1) prayer and

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¹ The Gospel opens with God's people at prayer (1:10, 13) and closes with the believers joyfully blessing God in the temple (24:53). Other references to prayer include: 2:36-38; 3:21; 4:42; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 29; 10:21-23; 11:1-4, 5-8, 9-13; 18:1-8; 18:9-14; 21:36; 22:39-46.

² P. T. O'Brien, "Prayer in Luke-Acts," *TB* 24 (1973) 127.

³ R. Morgenthauer, *Statistik des neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes* (Zürich: Gotthelf, 1958).

⁴ While the term δεήσις emphasizes personal need, προσεύχη emphasizes the element of devotion (L. Harris, "Prayer in the Gospel of Luke," *SwTJ* 10 [1967] 59).

⁵ Beside Luke and Paul, Matthew, Hebrews, James, and 1 Peter employ the term once each.

⁶ An example of the materials common to the Synoptic Gospels is Luke 22:41, but Lukan redaction here is evident (W. F. Arndt, *The Gospel according to St. Luke* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1956] 258). Luke 6:28 is the only prayer passage from Q. It too shows editorial work.

⁷ O. G. Harris, "Prayer in Luke-Acts: A Study in the Theology of Luke" (Ph.D. dissertation; Vanderbilt University, 1966) 21.

⁸ The investigation in this paper is limited to the Gospel of Luke. Any studies related to Lukan theology must ultimately investigate Luke-Acts as a whole. But with regard to the significance of prayer, the Gospel sets up Jesus' life and teaching as model, while Acts demonstrates how the

salvation history; and (2) prayer as a model for the church (didactic prayer), though the majority of scholars admit both concepts and attempt to identify which has primacy. The subsequent sections will examine the prayer texts. Following Alfred Plummer's suggestion, we will divide the prayer passages in the Gospel of Luke as follows: (1) prayer texts related to Jesus' life and ministry (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 9:29; 22:32; 22:39–46; 23:46); and (2) prayer texts for the instruction of the disciples (Luke 6:27–28; 10:2; 11:1–4; 5–8; 18:1–8; 21:36).⁹ Of course, these two groups of texts are not entirely distinct, since some passages such as Luke 22:32 and 22:39–46 may be classed in both categories. The former has more to do with salvation history, the latter with a didactic aim. However, the analysis will show that the two are not separate foci; rather, Luke's view of the cross and discipleship harmonizes them into a single theological theme.

I. APPROACHES TO PRAYER IN LUKE'S GOSPEL: A HISTORY AND EVALUATION

It was W. Ott who first called attention to the fact that prayer plays an important role in the overall scheme of Luke-Acts.¹⁰ Ott proposed that Luke's purpose was didactic, which accounts for the emphasis on the exemplary character of prayer in the life of Jesus and of the early church.¹¹ For Ott, Jesus' own prayer life reflected continual reliance upon God as a way of dealing with temptation.¹² The temptations that began with his passion would continue in that "the church would remain in the world for an indefinitely long period of time, and its members needed to be on guard so that their faith would not be stifled."¹³ In his second volume, Luke portrays the Church as following her Lord's example by persevering in the faith.¹⁴

church and apostles applied the model to their situations. Thus, the most significant aspects of Luke's understanding of prayer are encapsulated in the Gospel, while specific aspects of the model are interpreted and practiced in Acts. According to Fitzmyer, the Twelve are to engage in "prayer and ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). Noting the order of the terms, he claims that "Luke clearly suggests that prayer is as important for the life of the Christian Apostles as 'the ministry of the word,' i.e. the preaching of the Christian message" (J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 2 vols. [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981] 246).

⁹ A. Plummer, *St. Luke* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901) xlv. Two passages are missing in my classification (Luke 1:10, 13, and 2:36–38). Both references are connected with the age of salvation that will be brought by Jesus. Thus, they link the OT idea of prayer to the eschatological understanding of Jesus' ministry through prayer (as to the OT connection, see H. Conn, "Luke's Theology of Prayer," *CT* 17 [December 22, 1972] 6). These two passages are not directly relevant because our purpose is to investigate Jesus' prayer in the Gospel of Luke.

¹⁰ Ott noted that although Luke had rightly been called "the evangelist of prayer, the exact significance of this had not been assessed" (W. Ott, *Gebet und Heil: Die Bedeutung der Gebetsparänese in der lukanischen Theologie* [München: Kösel, 1965], 13).

¹¹ *Ibid.* 60.

¹² *Ibid.* 94–99.

¹³ The quotation is O'Brien's summary of Ott's view, esp. Ott, *Gebet und Heil* 85–90 (O'Brien, "Prayer in Luke-Acts" 111). In these pages, Ott exegetes Luke 22, stating his dependence upon H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) 80–83. Trites also recognizes Ott's dependence upon Conzelmann, especially with reference to the "delay of parousia" ("Prayer Motif" 169, n. 3).

¹⁴ Ott, *Gebet und Heil* 124.

Ott's study of Luke's theology of prayer thus demonstrates that prayer plays an important function in the overall scheme of Luke-Acts: Jesus prayed constantly and taught his disciples to do likewise.

Ott's view has been widely accepted, although the majority of subsequent scholars accord the issue less significance.¹⁵ In spite of this agreement, there is a problem with Ott's study. Ott does not discuss "the explicit prayer texts" of Luke-Acts, that is, those that deal with the prayer life of Jesus; he limits his examination to Luke's paraenetic material (Luke 11:1–13; 18:1–8; 21:34–36; 22:31–34, 39–46), while neglecting the material in Acts.¹⁶ Consequently, Ott ignores the fact that the prayer motif occurs at key junctions in the life of Jesus (such as the Baptism of Jesus, the selection of the Twelve, Peter's confession, the Transfiguration, Gethsemane, and the cross). This arrangement reveals that more than Jesus' constant prayer life is at issue. In fact, half of Ott's work is spent on Luke 18:1–8,¹⁷ which, he argues, includes the key to Luke's idea of prayer, namely that it is to be perpetual.¹⁸

O. G. Harris first argued that Luke viewed prayer as an important means by which God "guides the course of redemptive history (*Heilsgeschichte*)," and that this is Luke's "controlling and distinctive idea of prayer."¹⁹ Hence, he showed how prayer is closely related to important moments in *Heilsgeschichte*. The theological implication is that by prayer God guides the course of redemptive history through its three stages (as Luke presents them): the period of Israel, the period of Jesus, and the period of the church.²⁰ Harris divides the Lukan prayer texts into two categories. The first group includes those texts in which "Luke has composed the material, thus indicating his own interest."²¹ The second group contains material Luke accepted uncritically from tradition and thus does not represent Luke's own view. Based on the first group, Harris stresses two characteristics of prayer in Luke: prayer is to be constant and it is related to salvation history. Thus, his thesis is:

The primary significance of prayer in Luke's thought is that it serves as an important way in which the divine plan of salvation is made known. Constant prayer is the way to reveal the salvation historical significance of Jesus'

¹⁵ Smalley states that "his argumentation is true as far as it goes" (S. Smalley, "Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer in Luke-Acts," *NovT* 15 [1973] 60).

¹⁶ He limits his discussion of Acts to a mere thirteen pages.

¹⁷ Ott, *Gebet und Heil* 19–72.

¹⁸ Ott showed that the early church heeded this injunction to unceasing prayer (Acts 2:41–42), thus following the example of her Lord (*Gebet und Heil* 128). The second volume, like the first, pointed to the necessity of this prayer "for the preservation of faith" (cf. O'Brien, "Prayer in Luke-Acts" 112).

¹⁹ O. G. Harris, *Prayer in Luke-Acts* 98.

²⁰ This is based on Conzelmann's view that Lukan theology is "salvation history" (Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*).

²¹ O. G. Harris, "Prayer in Luke-Acts" 195–196. These examples are: Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28–29; 11:1–13; 18:1–8; 22:39–46; 23:34, 46; Acts 1:14, 24–25; 2:42; 4:23–31; 7:59–60; 8:14–24; 9:11; Conversion of Cornelius; the Church's prayer for imprisoned Peter; the Antioch Church's prayer for the commission [13:1–3]; 22:7.

prayer. Luke believes that through prayer God has guided the ministry of Jesus and the course of the early church."²²

While Harris's work is helpful, he overstates his case by saying that Luke was not concerned with the content of prayer nor with how, where, and when one prays, that is, the didactic nature of the prayer texts.²³ In addition, his evaluation of Luke's use of tradition with reference to the prayer material is incorrect. For instance, while Luke 11:2–4 and 22:39–46 belong to the tradition according to him, it is clear that Luke has made some significant editorial changes in these passages.

Most subsequent scholarship on prayer in Luke-Acts has served to emphasize the insights of Harris and Ott. O'Brien, Trites, and Fuhrmann have affirmed Ott's view that prayer in Luke-Acts primarily has a didactic purpose.²⁴ Smalley, Conn, and Plymale have agreed with Harris.²⁵ Of these, noteworthy are Trite, who explores important texts such as Luke 11:1–4 more fully than Ott and Harris did, and Plymale, who expounded on eleven such passages, the so-called "explicit prayer texts" (Luke 2:29–32; 10:21–22; 11:2–4; 18:9–14; 22:42; 23:34; 23:46; Acts 1:24–25; 4:24–31; 7:59–60). Moreover, Fuhrmann's work is helpful in that he observes that Luke's tendency to connect prayer texts and salvation history is not unique to Luke, since in antiquity prayer often was the response to crises. It would have been more significant if Luke had not made this connection.

Max Turner is among the few who depart from previous scholarship when he insists that "[a]ll attempts to reduce it [prayer] to a single motif are soon enough discovered for the reductionism they are."²⁶ Turner's aim is to figure out the significance of prayer for Luke by laying out the various contents of the prayers without identifying an overarching motif.²⁷ He concludes, "The texture of Luke's portrait of prayer is too exotic to sum up in any epigram; for him prayer is not a technique for achieving some object or goal, it is man relating every aspect of his life (and that of his neighbor) to God and to his gracious salvific will and purposes freshly revealed in the good news."²⁸ In spite of this assessment, which has some validity, two factors validate our investigation of the theology of prayer in Luke. First, as most scholars point

²² O. G. Harris, *Prayer in Luke-Acts*, 221 [emphasis is the author's]. Harris follows a suggestion made by Conzelmann: "Prayer, to which Luke attributes a special importance in Jesus' life, represents a timeless form of the relationship [between the individual and the saving event]" (*Theology of St. Luke* 208).

²³ S. F. Plymale, *The Prayer Texts of Luke-Acts* (American University Studies 7; Theology and Religion 118; New York: Lang, 1991) 5. See also Trites, who explains in detail the prayer paradigm in Luke's Gospel (A. Trites, "The Prayer Motif in Luke-Acts," in *Perspectives on Luke-Acts* [ed. C. H. Talbert; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978] 169).

²⁴ O'Brien, "Prayer in Luke-Acts"; Trites, "The Prayer Motif in Luke-Acts"; C. Fuhrmann, *A Redactional Study of Prayer in the Gospel of Luke* (Ph.D. Dissertation; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981).

²⁵ Smalley, "Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer"; Conn, "Luke's Theology of Prayer" 6–8; Plymale, *The Prayer Texts of Luke-Acts*.

²⁶ M. Turner, "Prayer in the Gospels and Acts," in *Teach us to Pray: Prayer in the Bible and the World* (ed. D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990) 75.

²⁷ Turner, "Prayer in the Gospels and Acts" 60–72.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 75.

out, Luke's editorial work regarding prayer texts is so thorough that one can hardly deny the existence of a certain principle, if not the single main motif. Second, the prayer texts in Acts correspond to those in the Gospel that do more than simply describe various roles of prayer in the life of Jesus.

In summary, the thrust of the scholarly discussion regarding the Lukan theology of prayer has been on target. For Luke, prayer is related to his redemptive historical perspective, yet he certainly includes it for didactic purposes as well. The majority of scholars admits both concepts and attempts to identify the more important of the two. The problem with making the didactic purpose primary is that it does not convincingly explain the placement of Jesus' prayers in Luke's Gospel. That prayer crops up at key points in Jesus' life is not a coincidence. The problem with the salvation history view is that it does not cogently explain the relationship between Jesus' prayers at important junctures of his ministry and Jesus' teaching on prayer.

Indeed, the placement of prayer at the important junctures of Jesus' ministry must not be ignored. However, it is an overstatement that such placement proves that Luke's theology of prayer emphasizes God's guidance in salvation history. As Fuhrman points out, it would be surprising if Luke had not introduced prayer at the major turning points in the ministry of Jesus. Therefore, while Luke employs a salvation history perspective, it is doubtful that Jesus' prayers in Luke explicitly guide redemptive history. Rather, prayer is aligned with the important turning points in Jesus' ministry.

II. PRAYER IN THE LIFE OF JESUS IN LUKE'S GOSPEL: PRAYER AND THE CROSS

In this section, we will explore the passages related to Jesus' prayer life (Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 9:29; 22:32; 22:39–46; 23:46). These texts have often been used in favor of a "salvation history" view. Most examples do not represent materials that are unique to Luke (e.g. parables). Yet Luke's notices that Jesus prayed in a variety of ministry contexts are less important for our investigation than Luke's own material that deals with teaching on prayer. Indeed, this also includes the result of Luke's editorial work that reveals Luke's own theology of prayer.

For Luke, prayer is aligned with salvation history. The careful arrangement of prayer texts, which depicts the persistent prayer life of Jesus, makes this clear. These prayers confirm that Jesus is proceeding in the right direction and strengthen him to complete his work; thus they are solemn acts of Jesus to focus his life on the will of God. Nonetheless, Luke hardly conceives of prayer as guiding salvation history. The following investigation will show that all of the texts portraying Jesus' prayer life are associated with the cross, by which salvation history reaches its culmination and the Kingdom of God is established.

1. *Luke 3:21 (at Jesus' Baptism)*. In this scene, Jesus begins praying after his baptism and continues until he hears the voice from heaven.²⁹

²⁹ The use of the present tense for the prayer signifies this aspect (BDF, 404.2; cf. Plummer, *St. Luke* 99).

Interestingly, for Luke prayer is more intimately linked with the Spirit. Luke's use of the present participle προσευχομένου, "praying" (in contrast to the aorist βαπτισθέντος, "baptized"), emphasizes that the descent of the Spirit was coincident with Jesus' prayer, not with his baptism.³⁰ The fact that Luke highlights Jesus' prayer during his preparation for the public ministry (i.e. baptism) attracts our attention. Oscar Cullmann argues that the real meaning of Jesus' baptism was not completely established until his death and resurrection. Since Jesus prays before his crucifixion as well, his baptism not only inaugurates his public mission, it also proleptically indicates his death and resurrection.³¹

An exploration of the OT background of the voice from heaven helps us understand the importance of Jesus' prayer (Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα; Luke 3:22 // Mark 1:11). Many point to Ps 2:7 and Isa 42:1 as the most likely background. It is not surprising that Ps 2:7, a Royal Psalm, is used, because Jesus' baptism is understood as his inauguration to service as the messianic king. It is paradoxical, however, that the voice also alludes to the Servant hymn of Isaiah (esp. Isa 42:1; 52:13ff.). LXX Isa 42:1 reads, Ἰακωβ ὁ παῖς μου ἀντιλήμψομαι αὐτοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου προσεδέξατο αὐτὸν ἢ ψυχὴ μου ἔδωκα τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ' αὐτόν κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐξοίσει. The Hebrew word יְיָהוָה (my chosen/elected), though translated in various ways in the LXX, is here translated as ἐκλεκτός μου. In this way, the LXX attaches a messianic significance to παῖς. Thus, the voice from heaven at Jesus' inauguration includes this theme of the Suffering Servant. Although the Messiah manifests glory as the Son of God, he must also endure suffering and even death. The voice encapsulates the aim of Jesus' mission. Therefore, Jesus' baptism by John is only the starting point of a process that ends with his cross and resurrection.

A further connection between prayer and the cross is seen through the relationship between prayer, the Spirit, and the Kingdom of God.³² All three Synoptics indicate that the Holy Spirit descends during Jesus' baptism. It is only Luke who highlights heaven opening while Jesus prayed at his baptism. A parallel occurrence appears at the death of Stephen. James Dunn recognizes a present-future tension in the teachings of Jesus regarding the kingdom, with the coming of the Spirit being a characteristic of the presence of the kingdom of God. He argues that "Jesus' proclamation of the imminence of the Kingdom was balanced by His consciousness that in His possession of the Spirit the presence of the Kingdom had been realized."³³ In Acts 1:3–8, the Spirit appears in conjunction with the kingdom twice, and the presence of the Spirit depicts the "present aspect" of the kingdom. The presence of the Spirit at Jesus' baptism prayer and Stephen's death prayer thus

³⁰ John Martin Creed, *The Gospel according to St. Luke* (London: MacMillan, 1953) 57.

³¹ Oscar Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament* (SBT 1; Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1950) 19.

³² The same link is also found in Luke 11:13; Acts 4:31; 8:15–17. For details, see Smalley, "Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer."

³³ "Spirit and Kingdom," *ExpT* 82 (1970–71) 36–40. E. E. Ellis also recognizes such a link, stating that "[p]rior to the parousia the kingdom is actualized only in the eschatological, miraculous works of the Spirit" (*Gospel according to Luke* [NCC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966] 163).

indicates that the process of establishing the kingdom of God by including the Gentiles (cf. Acts 1:8) began with Jesus' baptism and was catalyzed by the martyrdom of Stephen. In this way, in Luke's mind prayer and the expansion of the kingdom are linked.

2. *Luke 5:16 (routine prayer)*. In this verse, Luke notes the regularity of Jesus' prayer life: "Jesus was (in the habit of) retiring . . . and praying."³⁴ Jesus' purpose in praying in this context, according to Marshall, was to avoid fame:

Jesus was unwilling to yield to the temptation to stay on in any given place after he had preached to the people lest he might become their popular idol or even their servant; the mainspring of his life was his communion with God, and in such communion he found both strength and guidance to avoid submitting to temptation.³⁵

This custom of praying, however, is also associated with the ultimate aim of Jesus. It is worth noting that Luke omits Jesus' retiring for prayer in 4:42 (cf. Mark 1:35). If Luke 5:16 only reveals Jesus' rejection of fame, there would have been no reason for Luke to omit the reference in 4:42 and place it first here. According to F. Danker, since Jesus was headed for a series of conflicts in the events that followed, Luke makes clear that before Jesus faced opposition he spent time with God.³⁶ The first conflict over the healing of a paralytic man follows (Luke 5:17–26). Then the controversy over Sabbath keeping (6:1–10) comes after Jesus' own announcement of his purpose (5:27–39), followed by his rejection by the people (5:39). The second conflict (6:1–11, esp. 6:11) is more intense than the former (5:17–26). Another reference to Jesus' prayer introduces the story of the selection of the Twelve (6:12).

It was probably Luke who combined the conflict that leads him to the cross (6:11) with the notice of Jesus' customary prayer (Luke 5:16). Through prayer, Jesus not only copes with the present conflicts but also prepares himself for his destiny of taking up the cross. This interpretation also explains why he did not want to excite the people but sought solitude. He wanted to focus on the cross. In this way, the role of prayer in Luke 5:16 echoes the role of Jesus' prayer in the baptism (3:21). The context of Luke 5:16 shows that Jesus did not want to be distracted by the "unnecessary" praise of the people (5:15). Instead, Jesus withdrew in order to focus on the goal of his ministry which was contrary to the people's expectation.

3. *Luke 6:12 (before choosing the Twelve)*. According to this verse, Jesus prayed the entire night.³⁷ The verse may play a pivotal role, perhaps

³⁴ Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke* I:575.

³⁵ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 210.

³⁶ F. W. Danker, *Jesus and New Age: A Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 120.

³⁷ Also, this prayer is on the mountain. For Luke, a mountain may refer to the place of revelation (Danker, *New Age* 134–135); otherwise, it suggests being close to God (Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke* 1.616; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke* [BECNT 3A; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994] 540).

constituting a frame with Luke 5:16. Between these two verses, conflicts increase the tension between Jesus and his opponents (6:11). After the controversy over the Sabbath, the Pharisees became furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus. Thus, in Luke 6:12 Jesus prays in a life-threatening situation. Yet, this prayer is even more intimately related to the following event, the calling of the disciples.³⁸ This prayer before the selection of the Twelve is peculiar to Luke. According to O'Brien, "By this the Third Evangelist emphasizes the momentous issues of the choice which was to be made."³⁹ The calling of disciples stresses the continuation of Jesus' work after his death. Since the entire context of Luke-Acts develops how the disciples follow Jesus' way, Jesus' prayer has to do with the life of the disciples.

In addition, Jesus' prayer in this passage is also related to the cross. Luke 6:16 makes this clear. In the list of the Twelve, Judas' name, unlike the other eleven disciples, has a comment attached, "who became a traitor." This emphasis on the role of Judas is not a coincidence. Jesus selected the Twelve in a life-threatening situation in order to train and commission them to continue as his successors. The insertion in Luke 6:16 suggests that Jesus' unusually long prayer before choosing the twelve disciples is an anticipation of the betrayal of Judas which leads to the cross.

4. *Luke 9:18–27 (Peter's confession)*. Luke places an important event in Jesus' ministry, the confession of Peter, in the setting of prayer (9:18). Compared with Mark's Gospel, there are two major differences. Luke's special understanding of Jesus' prayer can be grasped through the investigation of these changes.

First, Luke omits Peter's erroneous protest and Jesus' rebuke (cf. Mark 8:32–33). Most scholars think that Luke does not want to introduce any events in which Peter and the apostles seem to be blameworthy.⁴⁰ Indeed, among the four Gospel writers, Luke depicts the apostles in the most positive light, undoubtedly because he recognized that they were the leaders of the early church.⁴¹ Luke's intention, however, may go beyond this. Instead of showing Peter's mistake, Luke attempts to show that the prayer of Jesus had been effective, since the Father had revealed to Peter the secret of his messianic person and dignity. Based on this confession, Jesus proceeds to teach on discipleship.

³⁸ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1997) 257.

³⁹ O'Brien, "Prayer in Luke-Acts" 115.

⁴⁰ Fitzmyer states, "This he [Luke] has done because he undoubtedly considered the rebuke unflattering to Peter" (*Gospel According to Luke* 1.771–773). Marshall mentions that "[the omission] is an understandable procedure if, for Luke, Peter's confession already contains an implicit reference to the passion" (*Luke* 367).

⁴¹ Richard Longenecker, "Taking Up the Cross Daily: Discipleship in Luke-Acts," in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 56–57. As to the positive picture of the disciples in the Lukan Passion Narrative, see Carroll and Green, "The Death of Jesus in the Gospel according to Luke," in *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995) 65–66, 75–76.

Secondly, Luke includes a saying about the imminent coming of the kingdom of God ("I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God").⁴² Thus, the section begins with prayer and ends with the announcement of the coming kingdom, which constitutes the frame. The kingdom of God here probably refers to the establishment of the kingdom of God by Jesus' resurrection rather than the parousia. In between the prayer and the announcement are Peter's confession, the first passion prediction, and a discipleship saying, all of which are related to the cross. Jesus' prayer in this passage prepares him to face the passion without wavering.

In general, Lukan redaction establishes a connection between the cross (the coming of the kingdom) and discipleship. Longenecker argues that Luke 9:23 is a summary of the concept of discipleship in the Gospel of Luke. Luke adds "daily" to the Markan text and, by so doing, makes it clear that Jesus' cross is the pattern for discipleship: "taking up one's cross daily." Likewise, Jesus' prayer, which prepares him for his passion and the coming kingdom, is the model for the disciples who will take up their cross daily after him. By omitting Peter's misunderstanding about Jesus' passion, Luke provides a smoother connection between Jesus' cross (v. 22) and the disciples' cross-bearing (v. 23).⁴³

In sum, Jesus' prayer is linked with bringing the kingdom of God through taking up the cross, which is also the pattern for discipleship ("taking up one's cross daily"). This demand of discipleship is valid during the period between his resurrection (v. 22; cf. v. 27) and the second coming (v. 26), and continual prayer is suggested as the means for fulfilling it.⁴⁴

5. *Luke 9:28–36 (the transfiguration)*. It is interesting that Luke also places the event of the transfiguration within the context of regular prayer on the mountain (cf. Luke 6:12). Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a mountain to pray (Luke 9:28). In this verse, the infinitive "to pray" is purposive, and the immediately following clause ("the appearance of his face is changed," v. 29) indicates that Jesus was transfigured while he was praying.⁴⁵

This story, too, provides information on Luke's view of Jesus' prayer. Unlike Mark 9:2–8, Luke inserts a conversation between Jesus and his disciples

⁴² Cf. Mark: "you will see the kingdom coming in power."

⁴³ Marshall states that "the omission enables Luke to link together more closely the prediction of Jesus' own suffering and his call to the disciples to take up the cross and follow him" (*Luke* 367). Bock also posits the combination of Jesus' suffering and discipleship in Luke 9:21–27, which become the main topic in the central section, the so-called journey narrative (Luke 9:51–19:27).

⁴⁴ As to the referent of v. 27, Marshall (*Luke* 378), Danker (*Jesus and New Ages* 114–115), and Ellis (*Luke* 141) regard it as "resurrection." The view of "future consummation" is not convincing because the verse contains the idea of the "Kingdom's inauguration" (Bock, *Luke* 860). Fitzmyer links v. 27 with the following transfiguration in which disciples saw the glory of Jesus (Luke 9:32). But, the transfiguration previews the ultimate glory of the exalted Christ, which will happen in his resurrection and ascension (Bock, *Luke* 860). Smalley thinks that v. 27 expresses "Jesus as one stage in the dynamic realization of the kingdom of God" ("Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer" 65).

⁴⁵ O'Brien, "Prayer in Luke-Acts" 115. Hamman also agrees that "it is as if the Transfiguration is called forth by prayer" (Hamman, *Prière* 81).

regarding his departure (Luke 9:31). The verse reads, “They spoke about his departure (ἔξοδος), which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.” This verse highlights Luke’s understanding of the Transfiguration by linking it to the passion. In fact, through the Transfiguration, Jesus assists the disciples in developing a right understanding about his passion (3:21; 5:16; 9:18–27)⁴⁶ by allowing them to preview the glory of Jesus’ exaltation after the cross. Marshall summarizes various views concerning the “departure” and states his preference that the term refers to “the entire death-parousia career of Jesus,”⁴⁷ though it seems likely that the focus falls on his death.⁴⁸ This is confirmed by the fact that the voice from heaven in the scene echoes the voice of the baptism which, as was noted above, alluded to Jesus’ suffering and death.

6. *Luke 22:32 (intercession for Peter)*. The prayer of Jesus here is priestly intercession for Peter (“I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail”) and all the disciples.⁴⁹ This prayer accords well with other prayer texts we have observed, because the context includes the ideas of the death of Jesus, the kingdom, and discipleship. Verse 34 previews the cross and Peter’s failure. Verses 29–30 show that the reason Jesus interceded for Peter’s weakness was so that he would inherit the kingdom of God. Further, Jesus mentions (v. 32b) that his intercessory prayer enables Peter (and all the disciples) to be involved in his ministry during the period between Jesus’ resurrection/ascension and his second coming, for he equips the disciples to keep praying for the consummation of the kingdom during their ministry.

7. *Luke 22:39–46 (at Gethsemane)*. In this section, Luke considerably abbreviates Mark 14:32–42, reducing the threefold repetition of Jesus’ prayer into one, making the reference to the disciples more general (omitting Mark 14:33) and their weakness less explicit,⁵⁰ and removing the human fear of Jesus (Mark 14:34–35). Luke then adds vv. 43–44.⁵¹ The effect of these changes is to place the emphasis of the story on Jesus’ statement, “pray not to fall into temptation,” which appears at the beginning and the end of the section (Luke 22:40, 46).⁵² Thus, our concern is first to explain the reference to temptation, *πειρασμός*. Marshall states, “The thought of *πειρασμός* links with 22:28–38, and indicates that temptations are now at

⁴⁶ This may be the reason why the disciples are viewed less negatively at the end. The disciples were with Jesus until the end, though they did not protect him, nor stand with him (Luke 22:28; 23:49).

⁴⁷ Marshall, *Luke* 385.

⁴⁸ As to the departure as one’s death, see 2 Pet 1:15; Wis 3:2; 7:6.

⁴⁹ If the plural of “you” in v. 31 refers to all the disciples, as most commentators suppose, then this is an instance of Peter’s representative role (O’Brien, “Prayer in Luke-Acts” 115–116).

⁵⁰ Marshall, *Luke* 830.

⁵¹ Having been informed that Jesus went nightly to the Mount of Olives (Luke 21:37), recognizing that Jesus is to face a moment of crisis and knowing Luke’s emphasis on prayer, particularly at moments of decision, the reader understands that the “custom” refers to Jesus’ practice of retiring for prayer (Plymale, *Prayer Texts in Luke-Acts* 59).

⁵² Regarding the redaction history, see J. Warren Holleran, *The Synoptic Gethsemane: A Critical Study* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1973) 170–198; Joel B. Green, “Jesus on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39–46): Tradition and Theology,” *JSNT* 26 (1986) 30–37.

hand; the absence of the article forbids a reference to *the* great, eschatological temptation."⁵³ The term thus probably refers to the immediately following series of events, the arrest, the trial, and the crucifixion of Jesus.⁵⁴ Holleran observes that the Gethsemane event employs an open structure in which each of the two exhortations (Luke 22:39–40 and 45–56) in turn is followed by a revelatory action: the first by the agony of Jesus' prayer (22:41–44), and the second by his passion. Therefore, vv. 43–44 anticipate Jesus' passion, and his victory in the prayer at Gethsemane previews his triumph in the passion.⁵⁵ In addition, Marshall thinks that Luke 22:35–38 is a Lukan addition that prophesies Jesus' death (esp. v. 37).

Moreover, the prayer concerns discipleship. Jesus' question and command in v. 46, employing plural references, extend to all the disciples and not to Peter alone. Also, in v. 39 Luke adds, "the disciples followed him." The term ἀκολουθεῖν is a technical term for discipleship which "also implies participation in the fate of Jesus."⁵⁶ In this instance, "the disciples follow Jesus by sharing in his trial," though not at this particular moment.⁵⁷ Consequently, in Gethsemane, the prayer prepares both Jesus and the disciples for the impending crisis, the cross. The prayer also prepares them for the kingdom of God (22:29–30), as the appointed time is approaching (22:36–37).

8. *Luke 23:46 (on the cross)*. Most scholars understand the cry of Jesus in v. 46 as a prayer of trust.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the prayer is clearly related to the kingdom of God. Vv. 39–43 is Lukan material in which the assurance of Jesus' rule in his kingdom is affirmed by a criminal (v. 41). Jesus' reply assures him of immediate entry into paradise. The solemn affirmation of Jesus to the request of entry into the kingdom, using the ἀμὴν λέγω formula with singular σοι, clearly indicates that his death/departure and the coming of the kingdom are successive. Thus Jesus corrects the request of the criminal with reference to the time of entry. While the criminal expects life at the parousia (the unspecified future), Jesus grants entry "today." Although the meaning of "today" and "paradise" is debated,⁵⁹ what Jesus promised is clear. The kingdom is either present at, or immediately follows, the death of Jesus.⁶⁰

⁵³ Marshall, *Luke* 830. By contrast, Conzelmann sees πειρασμός and Satan as the end of the "Satan-free" period, thus for him the temptation is cosmic.

⁵⁴ Scholars have seen in the Gethsemane prayer "the critical point, the watershed, in the fateful progression of events leading to the cross" (Robin S. Barbour, "Gethsemane in the Tradition of the Passion," *NTS* 16 [1969–70] 231–251). Green also thinks that it is the most important Lukan theological theme of the passage (Green, "Jesus on the Mount of Olives" 38).

⁵⁵ J. Warren Holleran, *The Synoptic Gethsemane: A Critical Study* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1973) 216–218. Holleran also points out a parallel between ἀναστάς ἀπὸ τῆς προσευχῆς (Luke 22:45) and Jesus' rising from death (Luke 24:7, 46, ἀναστήναι).

⁵⁶ TDNT 1:241.

⁵⁷ Fuhrmann, *Redactional Study* 143–144; 215. Holleran states that although there is a gulf that separates the prayer and the passion of Jesus from those of the disciples, "Luke's agony of Jesus on the Mount of Olives is a paradigm of the passion of Jesus and his church" (*Synoptic Gethsemane* 220).

⁵⁸ Bock, *Luke* 1861; Marshall, *Luke* 876; Plymale, *Prayer Texts* 1, 65–67. The hour of Jesus' death was the ninth hour, which Luke elsewhere clearly states is a time of prayer (Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30).

⁵⁹ It is likely that "paradise" refers to heaven (Bock, *Luke* 1857; Marshall, *Luke* 873).

⁶⁰ Ellis, *Luke* 66; Fitzmyer, *According to Luke* 1510.

Thus, the prayer/cry in v. 46 is delivered at the moment of the coming of the kingdom. Marshall states, "The use of *σήμερον* thus presents no problem; it refers to the day of crucifixion as the day of entry into paradise."⁶¹ The prayer on the cross represents the intervention of God's reign into the human realm.

In addition, Jesus' prayer at his death implies the opening of the mission to the Gentiles. Luke makes two major changes in Mark's depiction of Jesus' death. (1) He omits Mark 15:34–36, which might portray weakness in Jesus; and (2) the curtain of the Temple is torn into two pieces *before* Jesus' death (v. 45). The second change is noteworthy for the present study. By placing Luke 23:45 before Jesus' final prayer, Luke more tightly links the prayer with the following responses of the centurion and the people (vv. 47–48). As to the meaning of the tearing of the curtain in Luke's Gospel, Green interprets it from a socio-religious perspective: "the torn veil at Jesus' crucifixion signifies the end of the temple as a sacred symbol of socio-religious power," and "the symbolic world emanating from the architecture and theology of the temple has thus been compromised so as to open the way fully to a mission to all people."⁶² This interpretation accords with vv. 42–43 and especially with the reference to "today," which brings the future expectation into the present. Therefore, Jesus' prayer on the cross equips the people present, as well as the disciples (vv. 47–48), for the continuing mission. In this way, Luke connects Jesus' prayer with discipleship during the period of the two dimensions of the kingdom of God.

Accordingly, Jesus' final prayer is not a cry of agony or doubt.⁶³ It is a peaceful yielding of his life in the sense of "it is finished" (*τετέλεσται*), as we see in John 19:30.⁶⁴ This prayer is a firm declaration that the kingdom of God has been established by the completion of Jesus' ministry and also anticipates the work of Jesus' followers for the expansion of this Kingdom.

9. *Summary.* A majority of scholars claim that salvation history represents the Lukan theology of prayer. It is true that a salvation history perspective undergirds Luke's Gospel in general and the prayer passages in particular, since Jesus often prays at the important moments of his life. But it is unlikely that salvation history is the organizing principle of Luke's prayer passages. The common denominator in the passages we have observed is the connection between Jesus' prayer and the cross (Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18–27; 22:39–46; 23:46). The purpose of the cross is to establish the kingdom of God (9:28–36; 22:39–46), and thus Jesus' prayer points to the consummation of the kingdom (9:26; 9:28–36). Luke's theology of prayer, which primarily connects the cross and the prayer, pursues a prac-

⁶¹ *Luke* 873.

⁶² J. B. Green, "Demise of the Temple as 'Cultural Center' in Luke-Acts: An Exploration of the Rending of the Temple Veil," *RB Luke* (1994) 495.

⁶³ Here Ps 31:5 is used. "Interestingly, Ps 31 was used in later Judaism as an evening prayer. God was asked to care for and protect during sleep" (Bock, *Luke* 1862; *b. Ber.* 5a; SB 2:269; Marshall, *Luke* 876; Jeremias, "Das Gebetsleben Jesu," *ZNW* 25 [1926] 126, n. 3). Also, Luke, unlike Mark, uses *φονέω*.

⁶⁴ Cf. Bock, *Luke* 1862.

tical purpose that links discipleship with prayer (6:12; 9:23–25; 9:28–36; 22:32; 22:39–46). As Jesus prepares his way through prayer, so the disciples are to pray during the period of the two dimensions of the kingdom of God (i.e. between the resurrection/ascension and the parousia; Luke 9:18–27). In the following section we will analyze the Lukan prayer texts intended as instruction for the disciples. This will show that the prayers at significant life junctures and the teachings on persistent prayer are connected by the notion of “cross-bearing discipleship.”

III. JESUS' TEACHING ON PRAYER IN LUKE'S GOSPEL: PRAYER AND DISCIPLESHIP

In this section we will explore five passages that present Jesus' teaching on prayer (Luke 10:21–24; 11:2–4; 5–8; 18:1–18; 21:36). Two are parables derived from his special source (11:5–8; 18:1–8), two from Q (10:21–24; 11:2–4), and the other from Mark 13:33 (21:36). The last has been altered by Luke through the insertion of “to stand before the Son of Man.” Of these five passages, Luke 18:1–8 has received much scholarly attention in the history of interpretation. Ott and others treat this parable as the key to understanding Luke's theology of prayer. Interestingly, these five passages, taken together, offer a complete paradigm for prayer. The two parables show how to pray (persistently), the Lord's prayer shows what to pray, and in Luke 21:36 Jesus teaches the disciples why they should pray persistently. Prayer is required because in the interim period between the conquest of evil by Christ and the annihilation of evil at the end, evil is still at work and must be combated. Through prayer, the believers can remain awake and not fall into temptation (cf. 22:39–46). Therefore, the passages in this section provide a full paradigm of Christian prayer: the manner (11:5–8; 18:1–18), the content (11:2–4), and the reason for prayer (21:36).

This didactic concern in the prayer passages in Luke's Gospel is linked to discipleship in the context of the teaching on the kingdom of God. In this sense, Jesus' teaching on prayer has to do with Jesus' prayer life. Discipleship is one of the key motifs in Luke's writing, but it is not necessarily presented together with the so-called “delay of the parousia.” Rather, Luke's view of eschatology acknowledges a tension between the present kingdom and the future and emphasizes Christian living: the present kingdom enables discipleship that is characterized by hope for the final consummation.⁶⁵ Thus, Luke's presentation of Jesus' teaching on prayer characterizes discipleship as existence in the tension between the two aspects of the kingdom of God.

1. *Luke 10:2, 21–24 (prayer after the mission of the seventy)*. Although the Gospel of Luke records much about Jesus' prayer life and his teachings on prayer, the Gospel does not present many examples of Jesus' prayers.

⁶⁵ Both present (Luke 1:31–33; 7:28; 11:20; 13:18–21; 17:21–22) and future aspects (9:27; 11:2; 13:29 [table in the Kingdom of God]; 14:15; 19:11; 21:31–32; 22:16, 18, 29–30; Acts 1:6–7; Son of Man passages [Luke 21:36; 22:29–30]) are found in Luke's use of the kingdom of God.

Luke 10:21–24 is one of the few examples Luke gives us. Although the passage is not explicitly called a prayer, scholars agree that it represents Jesus praying.⁶⁶ The literary context of the passage includes a command to pray for the harvest (Luke 10:2, δεήθητε ὅπως ἐργάτας ἐκβάλλῃ εἰς τὸν θερισμὸν αὐτοῦ), which together with vv. 21–24 constitutes a frame for the section (10:1–24), not only because of the placement, but also because of the thematic parallelism (both deal with eschatological restoration). In addition, the theme of the kingdom of God appears together with prayer. Luke 10:9, 11 explicitly announces the arrival of the Kingdom of God (cf. 11:20) in the ministry of Jesus, and Jesus himself blesses its arrival (vv. 21–24).⁶⁷ It is the consensus that Luke 10:9, 11 are examples of the presence of the kingdom. Moreover, the eschatological nature of vv. 21–24 implies that God's reign in the world has salvation as its purpose.⁶⁸

The passage is also didactic in that it instructs the disciples who will engage in the harvest based upon the “already” present Kingdom. Jesus' command to pray in Luke 10:2 represents the “harvest in process” because the harvest has already started but is “not yet” completed (v. 12 especially sees the judgment as still in the future).⁶⁹ The verse shows that the prayer of the disciples is to bring God's harvest (that is, the Kingdom) to completion. In addition, by implication, the stress on the eyewitnesses (10:23–24) prophetically indicates the role of the disciples as witnesses in the expansion of the kingdom.⁷⁰ In sum, although the passage does not have an explicit indication of the passion or the cross,⁷¹ it deals with the present kingdom and prayer, relating prayer to the disciples. Prayer is the distinctive lifestyle of those who enter the kingdom which has already been defined as “taking up the cross daily” (cf. Luke 9:23).

2. *Luke 11:1–4.* The Lukan Lord's Prayer is a model prayer given to the disciples upon their request (11:1). Thus it “summarizes the central feature of Jesus' teaching on prayer and sets them forth for emulation by disciples in one glorious paradigm.”⁷² There are two thou-petitions and three us-petitions. The second petition, “thy kingdom come,” forms a part of the

⁶⁶ Smalley, “Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer” 64; Plymale, *Prayer Texts* 46–50. As to “Father” of Luke 10:21, Marshall acknowledges that it is a “prayerful expression” (*Luke* 430, 348).

⁶⁷ Marshall states, “What the disciples see are the signs of the era of salvation, the mighty works done by Jesus, the indications that the era of fulfillment has come (which men of the past were unable to see)” (*Luke* 438).

⁶⁸ Plymale, *Prayer Texts* 48.

⁶⁹ More often the word is used in the NT in the sense of “the process of harvesting” (Matt 13:30, 39; Mark 4:29; John 4:35). In Luke 10:2 the notion of “the final gathering of God's people” is implied (Marshall, *Luke* 416).

⁷⁰ P. Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1972) 254; cf. Marshall, *Luke* 438.

⁷¹ The connection can implicitly be made through the context. The preceding sayings, especially Luke 9:51, point to the death and resurrection of Jesus (Plymale, *Prayer Texts* 48).

⁷² Trites, “Prayer Motif” 179. Its didactic purpose is acknowledged by Talbert. He states, “In a *Sitz im Leben Jesu* the Lord's Prayer functions as a call to petition God for an immediate shift of the ages. In the context of the third Gospel, the model prayer serves a didactic purpose.” Charles Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1992) 131–132. See also Bock, *Luke* 1050–1051.

paradigmatic nature of the prayer (vv. 2, 9) and makes the link between prayer and the kingdom of God explicit. The vocative "Father" suggests an access and intimacy that presuppose that the supplicant is already in relationship with God and that this relationship exhibits the presence of God's kingdom. The second thou-petition, then, requests that the kingdom come in fullness with the assurance that victory has already been won. Thus Plymale asserts that "the Lord's Prayer is a rehearsal of the salvation experience and a request for more of the same."⁷³ For him, the petitions are based on the fact that such needs have been met repeatedly in the past.

It is true that the Lord's Prayer in Luke, compared with the original form of the prayer as reconstructed by Jeremias, has a distinct emphasis on the present.⁷⁴ But that does not mean that Luke removes completely the future sense of the kingdom as Plymale contends. The second petition, for instance, includes the idea of the future coming of the kingdom. Thus Stein states, "For Luke God's kingdom was already realized both in Jesus' coming (Luke 11:20; 16:16; 17:20–21) and in the Spirit's presence (11:13; 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1–2)." Yet as the "Thou petitions" reveal, "the church also longs for the consummation of the kingdom, for only then will the divine plan be completed."⁷⁵ The future sense of the prayer also becomes explicit with Luke 11:13, the concluding verse of the section (i.e. 11:1–13): the gift of the Spirit which represents the coming of the kingdom of God is viewed as a future gift. Thus the Lord's Prayer includes the tension between the kingdom which has "already" and "not yet" come. As to the meaning of the prayer, it concerns discipleship that recognizes total dependence upon God, during the period of the "tension."⁷⁶ To address God as Father is to express the dependence of a child upon a parent. Such a thematic link between dependence and the kingdom of God is frequent in the Gospel of Luke. Indeed, Luke's presentation of the kingdom has more to do with discipleship than with offering a conceptual definition as we see it in Matthew 13.⁷⁷

In short, Luke portrays prayer as an important practice of the disciples during the interim period; it requires a total dependence upon God and through it one can inherit the kingdom of God.

3. *Luke 11:5–13.* This parable teaches persistent prayer: the request at midnight is outrageous, yet persistence is rewarded. The parable (vv. 5–8) is probably a "how much more" story.⁷⁸ If a reluctant friend who does not want to answer a neighbor's request will do so simply because of his neighbors' shameless persistence, how much more will God, who is eager and willing,

⁷³ Plymale, *Prayer Texts* 55.

⁷⁴ Joachim Jeremias, "The Lord's Prayer in Modern Research," *ExpT* 71 (1960) 141–146.

⁷⁵ Robert Stein, *Luke* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman, 1992).

⁷⁶ Cf. Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1997) 440. Dependence upon God and confidence in prayer are also suggested in the two passages that Luke places after the Lord's Prayer, "the friend at midnight" (11:5–8) and "assurance of answered prayer" (11:9–13; Plymale, *Prayer Texts* 56).

⁷⁷ Matthew often uses a formula "the kingdom of heaven is like . . ." although he also does not provide a stock definition of the phrase.

⁷⁸ Talbert, *Reading Luke* 132.

answer your prayers? Luke 11:9–10 also makes the point that one should make a habit of asking, seeking, and knocking because God is certain to answer prayer. Nevertheless, the indefinite subject in v. 9 (“it will be given to you”) shows that what will be given is not necessarily what one asks for, yet it is always “good” in an ultimate sense. Interestingly, Luke 11:11–13 stresses that Father will give the Holy Spirit (cf. Matt 7:11 “good things”). This link between the Holy Spirit and prayer is seen also in Acts 1:14 where Luke portrays the disciples praying before they receive the pentecostal gift of the Spirit in Acts 2.⁷⁹ The gift of the Spirit represents the coming of the kingdom of God. Thus, persistent prayer is possible because the kingdom of God is already established, and the Holy Spirit sustains prayer.

4. *Luke 18:1–8*. In this parable a connection between prayer and the kingdom of God is also evident. The believer is to identify with the widow’s persistence in praying for the decisive coming of God’s justice in the kingdom’s full expression (18:1, 8). Luke presents the point of the narrative at the beginning (v. 1) as “always to pray and not to lose heart.” Though the presence of such a verse at the outset is uncharacteristic for Luke,⁸⁰ it is important for understanding the meaning of the parable. The teaching of 18:1–8a is evident: God will hear and speedily (ἐν τάχει) answer the cries of his people who are persistent and faithful in prayer. A difficulty is raised in connection with v. 8b, the teaching about the coming of the Son of Man, which concludes the parable. The question is why and how Luke combines the general theme of “persistent prayer” with the specific idea of “eschatological encouragement.”

It is noteworthy that the parable is given within the context in which Jesus answers the Pharisees about when the kingdom of God would come (Luke 17:20). Blomberg thus points out that “[i]n the context of Luke 17:20–18:8, the primary prayer in view is probably that which seeks the completion of the kingdom’s coming.”⁸¹ Luke 18:8 elaborates Jesus’ answer in Luke 17:21–22. He states that there will be an interval before the parousia, but the sense of imminent expectation cannot be abandoned. The parable about prayer is located between the two answers about the time of the coming Kingdom (17:20 and 18:8b). According to the parable, during the interval persistent prayer is demanded as the kind of behavior that the Son of Man wants to see in his disciples at his return: “the Son of Man wants to find the one who is faithful in prayer.”⁸² While the parable recognizes that there must be a time interval, it affirms, nevertheless, that God will respond quickly to requests, and faithfulness in prayer is required for disciples who are looking for the kingdom of God. Thus, persistent and faithful prayer is

⁷⁹ Thus, Talbert states: “Indeed, the evangelist would see this promise of Jesus in Luke 11:13 as the basis for Pentecost” (ibid. 133).

⁸⁰ Craig Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990) 271.

⁸¹ Ibid. Green sees an *inclusio* between 17:20 and 18:8 (*Gospel of Luke* 637). Therefore the link between the coming kingdom and prayer becomes explicit.

⁸² Marshall explains that vv. 6–8a turn the parable into a lesson about the character of God. Then v. 8b is a final application of the parable to the disciples: as God is faithful, the disciples should continue to be “faithful (and therefore prayerful) right through until the parousia of the Son

not only what is expected for the future, but also is required now in order to share in the kingdom. Again, therefore, prayer is introduced as one of the main characteristics of discipleship both for the life in the “already” established kingdom and for preparation for the coming kingdom.

5. *Luke 21:36*. Here, prayer is presented as a means by which one can be watchful all the time (*ἀγρυπνεῖτε δὲ ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι*).⁸³ Thus it also has to do with the theme of persistent prayer. Ott argues that just as in *Luke 18:1–8*, the verse expresses the Lukan motif of prayer for strength to persevere to the end.⁸⁴ It also suggests that prayer is demanded for disciples who live in the eschatological tension. It is worth noting that only Luke connects prayer with the appearance of the Son of Man (*Luke 18:8; 21:36; Acts 7:56, 60*). While the last reference points to the present, *Luke 21:36* is associated with the consummation (the coming kingdom of God) because the verse posits “at all times men must be ready for the parousia.”⁸⁵ Thus the exhortation to watchfulness in “persistent prayer” is a demand for the disciples who live between the present kingdom and the future one.

In summary, a didactic purpose is evident in these five prayer passages in which discipleship is affirmed. Jesus’ teaching on prayer in these texts presents a full paradigm of prayer, including “how to pray” (persistently), “what to pray for” (the Kingdom to come), and “why pray” (to gain strength). More importantly, all the five passages deal with the significance of prayer in conjunction with the teaching on the kingdom. Thus, prayer is presented as the model for the disciples in the Gospel of Luke, especially during the period of the “already present” and “not yet” completed kingdom.

IV. CONCLUSION

There is a shift of focus between Jesus’ prayer life and his teaching on prayer. In the former, the focus is on the cross, the initial establishment of the kingdom. By contrast, in the latter, Jesus teaches persistent prayer through which the disciples are instructed how to live in the kingdom and to prepare for the coming kingdom. As to the former, scholars argue that “salvation history” represents Luke’s theology of prayer, whereas I propose that Luke’s understanding of Jesus’ prayer is directly related to the cross, discipleship, and the kingdom of God. Of course, the cross is one of the central ideas in salvation history. But I depart from previous scholarship in my use of the term “salvation history.” Ott and his successors mistakenly see the kingdom of God primarily with a future reference and link it with the notion of the “delay of the parousia.” Ott argues, based on Conzelmann’s work, that

of Man” (*Luke 670*). The unusual use of πίστις with article in v. 8b probably renders “faithfulness, expressed in unfailing prayer” (Marshall, *Luke 676*). On the contrary, Blomberg understands τὴν πίστιν as “the faith” which means that “Christ is referring to the specific kind of faith just illustrated” (Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables 272*).

⁸³ The participle δεόμενοι is used circumstantially, meaning “by means of prayer.”

⁸⁴ Ott, *Gebet und Heil 73–75*.

⁸⁵ Marshall, *Luke 783*.

Luke's prayer texts are didactic, introduced for those living during the period of the "delay of parousia." For Conzelmann and Ott, the kingdom expectation in prayer "consistently" points to the future. This understanding, however, needs correction. Conn rightly observes that Luke's view on prayer should be understood in the context of his eschatology, which is not always "futuristic." Schnackenburg also points out that the "watchfulness" that is an important theme in Luke cannot be truly sustained in a "futurist" eschatology.⁸⁶ Likewise, Carroll suggests that Luke wrote in opposition to those who held a "futuristic" view of the eschaton, *contra* Conzelmann, because Luke held to an imminent eschaton.⁸⁷ There are, in fact, several passages that show that the kingdom has already come (Luke 11:20; 14:16–25; 17:20; etc.).

Nevertheless, it is more accurate to say that both "present" and "future" aspects of the kingdom in Luke's Gospel show that Luke held to a two-dimensional view of the kingdom of God. If the kingdom of God has "already" been established in the ministry of Jesus (by the cross and resurrection), the "delay of parousia" must have not been a dilemma for the audience of the Luke's Gospel. As E. E. Ellis states, "because the eschatological reality is present, the length of the interval until the consummation is of no crucial significance."⁸⁸ Jesus prays to prepare himself for the cross, and likewise his followers pray to prepare to suffer. Prayer is the activity of the Messiah himself to complete his mission of the kingdom of God and thus it should be the activity of the disciples during the interval of the present and the future kingdom. In this way, Jesus' prayer life in Luke's Gospel is linked with the cross and discipleship.

J. M. Creed wrote regarding Luke's theology that "[t]here is no *theologia crucis* beyond the affirmation that the Christ must suffer, since so the prophetic scriptures had foretold."⁸⁹ He understood the term *theologia crucis* in terms of Paul's doctrine of atonement. C. K. Barrett, however, points out that the fundamental definition of *theologia crucis* for Luke represents a pattern of daily life, in which the believer practices the daily discipline of cross-bearing. This transposition of Luke, according to Barrett, is due to his pastoral concern for the instruction and development of his readers.⁹⁰ Indeed, most of Jesus' teachings on the kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel are

⁸⁶ Rudolf Schnackenburg, "Die lukanische Eschatologie im Lichte von Aussagen der Apostelgeschichte," in *Glaube und Eschatologie: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. E. Grässer and O. Merk; Tübingen: Mohr, 1985) 261–262.

⁸⁷ Delay, therefore, serves for Luke the opposite function of that identified by Conzelmann. Delay does not oppose but undergirds expectation of an imminent end in Luke's own situation (John T. Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke-Acts* [SBLDS 92; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988] 166).

⁸⁸ E. E. Ellis, *Eschatology in Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972) 19. See also O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time* (3d ed.; London: SCM, 1962) 84–94; idem, *Salvation in History* (London: SCM, 1967) 174, 242–243; Dennis J. Ireland, *Stewardship and the Kingdom of God* (NovTSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 1992) 210.

⁸⁹ *St. Luke* lxxii.

⁹⁰ In order to support his view, Barrett investigates several passages (Luke 9:23; 9:57–62; 14:27; 22:28; 23:26; Acts 20:35). Among these, Luke 9:23 is the key verse. In this verse, there are three major

located in the central section (Luke 9:51–19:27) where the major concern is discipleship in the light of the death and the resurrection of Jesus.⁹¹

If, then, for the disciples prayer is looking forward to the coming kingdom of God, it also is a looking back on the cross through which the kingdom of God has already come. Thus Luke's presentation of Jesus' prayers certainly also includes a didactic purpose. As Jesus' prayers prepared him to face the cross and inaugurate the kingdom, so the disciples' prayers remember the cross and prepare them to enter the kingdom. Jesus urges the disciples to take up their cross daily. Persistent prayer is the way in which they do so as they live between the two dimensions of the kingdom of God.

Therefore Luke's theology of prayer should be understood in the context of discipleship of the kingdom, the key conception of which is "taking up the cross daily" (Luke 9:23). Prayer texts that show Jesus' prayer life are consistently associated with cross bearing. Prayer texts that show Jesus' teaching on prayer have explicitly to do with kingdom establishment. Because cross bearing in Luke's mind involves primarily a didactic concern, the two categories of the prayer texts cannot be separated. As a whole, persistent prayer is proposed as a means for the disciples to live out this demand during the period between the two aspects of the kingdom of God.

changes. (1) The words that follow are addressed πρὸς πάντας, who are presumably contrasted with οἱ μαθηταί in v. 18. They are intended not for the small group consisting of the Twelve (9:10, 12, 16) but for all Christians. (2) The aorist infinitive ἐλθεῖν is changed into the present ἔρχεσθαι—what is in mind is not the once-for-all decision to follow Jesus to the cross but the regular, continuing life of discipleship. (3) This is doubly underlined by the addition of καθ' ἡμέραν. Luke's changes of Mark 8:34, which contains a challenge to the disciples to accept crucifixion with Jesus in the literal sense, show Luke's understanding of the cross as the life-pattern (C. K. Barrett, "Theologia Crucis—in Acts?," in *Theologia Crucis—Signum Crucis: FS für Erich Dinkler zum 70 Geburtstag* (eds. C. Anderson and G. Klein; Tübingen: Mohr, 1979) 76). In this verse there are three major changes (Barrett, "Theologia Crucis" 75–76).

⁹¹ In the central section, there are four sections teaching on the kingdom of God (10:1–24; 11:14–20; 13:18–30 [13:31–14:24]; 17:29–37), together with the frame (9:51–62; 19:11–27). Each section repeats and develops the idea of the kingdom of God. The dual aspect of the kingdom of God, as already present kingdom and yet imminent, creates a tension for the readers/audiences. It urges a decision to accept the call and stresses the present ethical life of the disciples. All these teachings are reinforced by reference to the imminent kingdom of God which will include judgment. Thus the kingdom of God should grow and includes a surprising replacement of those who reject it with those who accept it.