

The Theology of Two Friends: Paul and Luke

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PREFACE

The materials included present the theologies of two friends, Luke and Paul. We know Paul best from the rich resources we have about his life, ministry, religious experience, and theological reflection. Much of this information is discussed here. We know Luke very little, except through his literature. Luke, is identified as the author of the Gospel and Acts. by tradition and is identified as the associate of Paul, mentioned in Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, II Timothy 4:11. In Acts, the second of the companion pieces, there are sections where the author talks about what "we" did, including himself in the events (16:10-17, 20:5-21:18, and 27:1-28:18). Thus if this is not merely a literary device, Luke played a role in these portions of Paul's ministry, perhaps even having something to do with the "vision of a man of Macedonia" which called Paul to Macedonia.

We meet Paul as a mature person and missionary. Though Acts and some brief information in his epistles tell us something of his earlier years, all of his literature comes from at least 14 years after his conversion. We know nothing of his long ministry in Tarsus. By the time of his epistles we meet a Paul who has worked through the implications of his conversion experience, the nature of the mission in which he is engaged, and his understanding of ethics and theology. Though we do not know much of his understanding of things before his first letter, the resolutions to which Paul has come indicate a process behind his maturity. He has spent some time sorting out the meaning of his conversion experience. He recognizes the limited nature of religious knowledge (I Cor. 13). He has a theory regarding the communication of the Gospel (I Cor. 2). And he recognizes that whatever the depth of his religious experience, his humanity will never leave him. The transcendent power he has in his earthen vessel (II Cor. 4:7) and no prayer can take away the thorn of his flesh, his humanity (II Cor. 12:7-9).

If we can draw conclusions from the "we" sections of Acts, Luke encounters Paul at Troas and is a part of the vision Paul has which calls him to Macedonia. There Paul leaves him, to pick him up again on the third missionary journey. Luke is new to Christianity and thinks primarily of the possibilities of his new found faith from the images and paradigms of his Hellenistic background, the Mystery Religions. His primary paradigm is the resurrection and the power of the Spirit, not the cross. In Acts he expresses great expectations of what the power of the Spirit can do and speaks of early Christians as proclaiming the resurrection, not the cross. He even eliminates the significance of the cross from Paul's sermons in Acts. His naive optimism will be challenged in the tragic events of the seventh decade, the deaths of Peter and Paul and the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus in the later revision of his Gospel he becomes more realistic. His use of the image of David, and God's promise to David, is his particular way of dealing with God's inclusiveness and desire to transform the predicaments of persons and society. This is not a prominent image in Paul, though Paul would agree that the presence of the Spirit in a person's life is the presence of God and of God's Kingdom. In Paul's thinking the world is hurrying on to its end and there is little concern for social transformation, except within the church. For Luke, Jerusalem has been destroyed and the end did not come. Though he still looks into the future for the coming of the Son of Man, he is now more focused on the present, the time of the Spirit and the era of the church.

Two friends, from different backgrounds, with different perspectives, whose life processes were not synchronized but quite individual, represent for us the nature of Christianity. Faith and its expression in theology are part of the individual journey of each. There is one God, one Spirit, one Baptism, one Lord, but the individual reflections of this, through the prism of the oneness of our source, play upon the walls in many colors.

THE PERSONAL NATURE OF THEOLOGY

Life as Journey

The adult stage of life often used to be seen as a single stage after education, the entry into marriage and adult responsibilities. As an adult one's development was essentially complete, except for the physical decline characteristic of the aging process. Roger Gould well expresses this:

Like a butterfly, an adult is supposed to emerge fully formed and on cue after a succession of developmental stages of childhood Equipped with ... wisdom and rationality, the adult supposedly remains quiescent for another half century or so. While children change, adults only age.¹

This perspective has interesting social and political implications. It assumes a standard model of the adult and helps to maintain social order.

With this perspective it would be hard to view adult life as going somewhere or having distinctively individual characteristics. This has often been presumed within the church, namely, that somehow all Christians ought to be somewhat alike and they ought to be able to fit themselves into the theological, liturgical, and institutional systems of the church and then these should be able to satisfy the needs of all.

What I wish to do today is to indicate how two good friends, sharing the same mission and related to the same stream of developing early Christianity, had very individualized and different expressions of Christianity. Moreover their expressions of Christianity were not just *different*, but in *process*. Each was learning from their experience with God and with life, and their insights were gradually transformed in the light of their experience.

There is no century such as ours that has so consciously and analytically explored and theorized about the stages of development, and most of this over the last twenty years. Though psychological and sociological studies initially focused on the development of children, Jung, Erikson and others view all of the adult period of life not as physical decline or a mature sameness, but as having its own tasks and opportunities.

Jung's work on personality type, developed by Katherine Briggs and Isabel Briggs-Myers into the MBTI, has pointed up the uniqueness of each individual, something Paul knew long ago as he spoke of the variety of gifts within the Church.

In I Corinthians 12 Paul speaks supportively of the legitimacy and value of variety, in the same letter in which he has dealt with the difficulties that variety can produce for the church. The source and purpose of variety can be deceptive. Variety can cause one to think that the phenomena in the variety are merely the expression of the life of the person for the good of the person, thus producing differences without responsibility to origin and social context.

In I Corinthians 1 Paul points to the source from which diversity comes and the purpose which it serves. There is a misunderstanding of the church when one says: "I belong to Paul, or I belong to Apollos, or I belong to Cephas." It is even wrong to say, "I belong to Christ."² By such words one forgets the *source* of the life which manifests itself in Paul, Apollos, Cephas and even in Christ. The church does not belong to any of these, but to *God*.³ God is

¹ Roger Gould, "Adult Life Stages: Growth Toward Self-Tolerance," *Psychology Today*, Feb. 1975, p. 78. Quoted in Kenneth Stokes, *Faith Is A Verb*, Mystic, CN: Twenty-Third Publications, 1989, p. 51

² I Cor. 1:11-12

³ I Cor. 1:2

Journey p. 3

the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; therefore, as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord."⁴

It is *God* who gives growth and "we are *God's* fellow workers; you are *God's* field, *God's* building,"⁵ and in the end Christ will return all things to *God*.⁶

In the church's variety it is the *same* Spirit which gives gifts, it is the *same* Lord that the variety serves, and it is the *same* God who works in all persons with regard to all things. All of this is not merely for the individual, but for the "*common* good."⁷ To illustrate this Paul draws upon the metaphor of the body with its many members, each of the same value and sharing the same life.⁸

Variety contributes to the common good and is only destructive or misused when its common source in and responsibility to the origins of life (in biological and psychological variety) and God (in spiritual variety) are neglected. Variety is produced both by individual differences and by cultural differences which call out one's potential in varying ways. If one takes seriously the activity of God in the origins of variety, then the Transcendent is another factor, bringing into being that which the nature and mission of the Transcendent calls forth.

In dealing with the appropriate forms into which the Gospel is to be cast, Paul believes variety needs to be addressed and respected. His concern to address the Jew as a Jew, the Gentile as a Gentile, and the "weak" as "weak" is a clear expression of this. Jew and Gentile express cultural differences, but the "weak" evidence a difference in or limitation of understanding: a different way of seeing things.⁹

How much pain and suffering would have been avoided if only we had remembered that all are not cast from the same mould and all cannot be forced into the same pattern. Political, social and religious systems have struggled with the legitimacy of variety, often seeking to bind persons together by conformity to some authority. Though the religious traditions with which all of us live express standardized and corporate traditions and perspectives, the individual cannot incorporate and integrate the Gospel into personal life unless it becomes in some sense individualized.

David Kiersey and Marilyn Bates, who discuss differing personal temperaments, begin their book Please Understand Me with an eloquent plea for the respect of differences:

If I do not want what you want, please try not to tell me that my want is wrong.

Or if I believe other than you, at least pause before you correct my view.

Or if my emotion is less than yours, or more, given the same circumstances, try not to ask me to feel more strongly or weakly.

Or yet if I act, or fail to act, in the manner of your design for action, let me be.

I do not, for the moment at least, ask you to understand me. That will come only when you are willing to give up changing me into a copy of you.

I may be your spouse, your parent, your offspring, your friend, or your colleague. If you will allow me any of my own wants, or emotions, or beliefs, or actions, then you open yourself, so

⁴ I Cor. 1:30-31. The quotation is from Jer. 9:23-24 where "Lord" is "Yahweh."

⁵ I Cor. 1:6-9, italics mine.

⁶ I Cor. 15:28.

⁷ I Cor. 12:4-11, italics mine.

⁸ I Cor. 12:14-31, Romans 12:3-8.

⁹ I Cor. 9:19-23.

that some day these ways of mine might not seem so wrong, and might finally appear to you as right - for me. To put up with me is the first step to understanding me. Not that you embrace my ways as right for you, but that you are no longer irritated or disappointed with me for my seeming waywardness. And in understanding me you might come to prize my differences from you, and, far from seeking to change me, preserve and even nurture those differences.¹⁰

Faith Development

Kenneth Stokes, in his excellent popular summation of the results of faith development studies, characterizes faith as a verb.¹¹ This presents well the dynamic and developmental aspects of faith. We are often used to thinking of faith as a noun: what we believe in. But this does not consider *how* we believe and the *life circumstances* which call forth various aspects of faith, nor the *personality structure* by which we approach our believing.

James Fowler, in Stages of Faith, defines faith in such a way as to apply inclusively to those outside as well as within religious traditions:

Faith is not always religious in its content or context. Faith is a person's or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relationship that make up our lives. Faith is a person's way of seeing him- or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose.¹²

He quotes Wilfred Cantwell Smith (The Meaning and End of Religion) who defines "religions" as "cumulative traditions" and faith as "the person's or group's way of responding to transcendent value and power as perceived and grasped through the forms of cumulative tradition."¹³ Smith indicates that until the 16th century faith had the primary meaning of "to set the heart upon". He summarizes the change which culminated in the nineteenth century perspective as a "shallowing" of faith:

There was a time when "I believe" as a ceremonial declaration of faith meant, and was heard as meaning: "Given the reality of God, as a fact of the universe, I hereby proclaim that I align my life accordingly, pledging love and loyalty." A statement about a person's believing has now come to mean, rather, something of this sort: "Given the uncertainty of God, as a fact of modern life, so-and-so reports that the idea of God is part of the furniture of his mind."¹⁴

The active and constantly developing nature of faith is now characterized according to various models. James Fowler uses the constructive model of Piaget and Kohlberg and characterizes faith in stages which begin with the family, continue in the impact of the faith community, become individualized (if that is allowed)¹⁵ and eventually move on towards greater appreciation of the forms of faith and religious experience of other traditions. James and Evelyn Whitehead describe faith according to the psychosocial stages of Erik Erikson.¹⁶

¹⁰. David Keirse and Marilyn Bates, Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types, DelMar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis Books, 1978, p. 1.

¹¹. Kenneth Stokes, Dynamics of Adult Faith Development: Faith Is A Verb, Mystic, CN: Twenty-Third Pub., 1989.

¹². James W. Fowler, Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981, p. 4.

¹³. Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁴. Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁵. Some religious traditions do not allow individualized expressions of faith and some persons find it threatening to move beyond traditional perspectives.

¹⁶. Faith Development and Your Ministry, The Princeton Religion Research Center, Based on a Gallup Survey conducted for the Religious Education Association, n.d..

Coles, Robert, The Spiritual Life of Children, Boston: A Peter Davison Book, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1990.

Thus to talk about one's faith it is also necessary to tell one's story for faith, if allowed, develops in particular ways within one's history and context..

Image of Journey

In various ways the image of journey is a good one by which personal, spiritual and theological development can be understood. Though other images may be chosen, it is important to have an image of life to live with, a symbol which has its own energy and ability to provide a structure for experience but which may also grow and be transformed by experience. Above all, it should not be a rigid symbol which tells one what one has experienced or should experience. A woman who is a mother and professional found helpful the image of a wheel with a hub. God was the hub out of which and around which her many activities moved. This, she felt, better described the complexity and non-directionality of her experience than "journey" would. The image of improvisation will also be treated briefly as another alternative.

In some of the great spiritual classics adult life has been understood as an internal journey, such as in Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle,¹⁷ or a journey from this world to the next, involving a growing detachment from the world. The issues of these journeys lay in the difficulties one encountered within or without, for both these worlds were fraught with dangers and temptations which dissuade one from the true journey.

A good portrayal of the journey from this world to the next is the great spiritual classic, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. In the spiritual formation course I use this as a paradigm, as expressed in Ralph Vaughan Williams' opera Pilgrim's Progress. This beautiful presentation occupied Vaughan Williams from 1904 to 1949, the journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City

The opera begun with Bunyan in prison, as if dreaming a dream, at the end returns again to Bunyan:

Now hearer, I have told my dream to thee.
See if thou can'st interpret it to me.
Put by the curtains, look within my veil,
Turn up my metaphors and do not fail,
There if thou seekest them, such things to find
As will be helpful to an honest mind.

Fowler, James, Life Maps: Conversations on the Journey of Faith, coauthored with Sam Keen, Word, 1978.

Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning, Harper and Row, 1981.

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, Dynamics of Adult Faith Development: Faith Is A Verb, Mystic, CN: Twenty-Third Publications, 1989. (Lay study book.)

Studzinski, Raymond, Spiritual Direction and Midlife Development, Loyola U. Press, 1985.

Whitehead, James and Evelyn, Christian Life Patterns, Doubleday, 1979.

¹⁷. See chapter four for a discussion of the Spanish mystics which includes Teresa of Avila and the Interior Castle.

This book will make a traveller of thee,
If by its counsel thou wilt ruled be.
It will direct thee to the Holy Land,
If thou wilt its directions understand.
O, then come hither,
And lay my book, thy head, and heart together.

When one listens to this opera, one cannot help but turn up one's metaphors and feel some deep call to "lay my book, thy head, and heart together." Though this journey sees the world and life in much too negative a perspective for most of us today and does not provide for the adult stage as a journey *into* life rather than *from* life, yet there are profound truths about God's care for those who journey through this world. And it is true that the final element of the journey is through the river of death to join God in another dimension. What a different perspective it places upon death to see death as "an arrow with the point sharpened with love, let easily into thy heart."

The biblical material is full of the image of journey. One only has to think of Abraham's venture for God in his journey from Ur of the Chaldees, of Moses leading his people from Egypt through the wilderness to the promised land, and of Jesus own journeys through his life, eventually to Jerusalem in a journey that took him through crucifixion back to God. The great twelfth chapter of Hebrews reminds us:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.¹⁸

The Parable of the Prodigal: The Journey Home to God¹⁹

The parable of the prodigal in Luke 15 is, from my perspective, the heart of the Christian Gospel. It is the story of a Father (God) who calls his children to the developmental process by which they may return to him. This is a journey, but it is not to somewhere. Rather is it to Someone. It is not even to somewhere or someone that we have never known or is distant. It is a journey to One who is present. The Father was always at home, waiting, in the heart of the world and in our hearts: a home which is our home. Thus the journey is a *returning* to the home for which we long, the home where we were born and yet from which we fled.

The Parable of the Prodigal is misnamed because it is really about two sons and a father, the father being the central character in the story. Though one may call the younger son "prodigal", so also is the father since the father acts out of character with the customs of his community: he allows his sons a freedom and extends to them a love that the community would judge inappropriate and foolish. The younger son by asking for his share of the inheritance before the death of his father, has effectively wished his father dead, jeopardized his father's future economic security by depriving him of part of his property, and thoroughly embarrassed him before his friends. The older son, though he remained and assumed responsibilities, seems to have no understanding of the love of his father for him, was emotionally absent to his father, and publicly embarrasses him by refusing to act as host at the banquet held for his returned brother. How the neighbors must have nodded their heads at the seeming inability of the father to manage his two children. In a society that emphasizes dignity of the elder and the maintaining of face, the father risked a great deal. To be laughed at is the worst humiliation. The father was willing to endure this for his two sons. One hears no coercion in the story. The father is able to be present fully for his children apart

¹⁸. Heb. 12:1-2.

¹⁹. This section on the Prodigal will be published in the new journal Inspiration, to be published by the Institute of Formative Spirituality, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, in April.

from local custom without personally being destroyed, because he knows who he is and what he wishes to do: i.e. he does not waver, though he undoubtedly endured deep pain.²⁰

The unique character of the action of the father is clearly illustrated by a parable, traced to Buddha, which portrays a father who receives his son back "little by little":

There was a householder's son who went away into a distant country, and while the father accumulated immeasurable riches, the son became miserably poor. And the son while searching for food and clothing happened to come to the country in which his father lived. And the father saw him in his wretchedness, for he was ragged and brutalized by poverty, and ordered some of his servants to call him.

When the son saw the place to which he was conducted, he thought, "I must have evoked the suspicion of a powerful man, and he will throw me into prison." Full of apprehension he made his escape before he had seen his father.

Then the father sent messengers out after his son, who was caught and brought back in spite of his cries and lamentations. Thereupon the father ordered his servants to deal tenderly with his son, and he appointed a laborer of his son's rank and education to employ the lad as a helpmate on the estate. And the son was pleased with his new situation.

From the window of the palace the father watched the boy, and when he saw that he was honest and industrious he promoted him higher and higher.

After some time he summoned his son and called together all his servants, and made the secret known to them. Then the poor man was exceedingly glad and he was full of joy at meeting his father.

Little by little must the minds of men be trained for higher truths.²¹

The Context

Though in a sense the parable has its context in the whole of the Gospel and is related to Luke's understanding of the Gospel, the immediate context is Luke 15. This chapter contains three interrelated parables preceded by a brief historical setting. The tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to hear Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes complained that "This man receives sinners and eats with them." Here it is important to keep in mind that "sinners" did not mean to the Pharisees "someone who has done something terribly wrong to someone". It merely meant someone who did not know or did not obey all the Law. Thus it was almost a synonym for the common and uneducated folk. The issue then was that Jesus associated with those who were regarded as unclean by the religious establishment. One must be kind to the Pharisees, however, because they felt that those who did not obey the Law were jeopardizing the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. This anxiety was augmented by the tragedies of Israel's history which they interpreted as due to Israel's unfaithfulness and impurity, much as an individual who experiences a number of tragedies wonders why "God is doing this to me", and tries to evade further tragedy.

To answer their accusation, Jesus replies with three parables which are cleverly arranged to move the Pharisees to confrontation with the central issues of the situation. The first two parables are told in such a way that the Pharisees would basically agree. One is about a lost sheep and another is about a lost coin. The point of each parable is essentially that "there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who

²⁰. For many today there is difficulty in identifying God as "Father" because of childhood abuse or because of the patriarchal implications. And yet it must be remembered how radically this father separates himself from cultural roles and how radically he exists for his children.

²¹. Robert M. May, *Physicians of the Soul*, NY: Crossroad, 1982, p. 136.

repents". The Pharisees, though rejecting contact with sinners, would have been willing to accept that a repentant sinner was a different matter. They could understand the joy of God and the religious community over one repentant. However, the third parable is different. Though the younger son plans to give to his father his half-hearted repentance, the father receives him before he gets a chance to repent and the joy of the father is not dependent on the repentance. The elder brother also fails the father by refusing his wishes, his proper place at the feast, and above all by not understanding his father's love. The father speaks of his love without asking repentance from either.

Thus the father accepts both children prior to and without repentance. Whereas the Pharisees could agree with the first two parables, they could not with the third. We might wonder how long it took them to realize that the third was different from the first two, or whether they were nodding their heads in approval when suddenly they realized Jesus did not mean what they thought he meant. It is important to note that the older brother only enters as a significant character at the end of the story. Thus the Pharisees could not realize the direction of the parable until its end. His protestation of faithful service to his father and disowning of his brother make him the paradigm of the Pharisees. Suddenly, at the end of the story, they find themselves.

The stories of the younger and elder brothers are not finished in the parable. We don't know whether the younger came to truly relate to and understand his father and we don't know what the elder brother finally did. For the sinner and the Pharisee the parable is unfinished, for the listener must complete it. Thus the whole complex of introduction and parables leads to a climactic story in which the listeners find themselves and where the completion of the story is up to them. It is masterfully conceived.

The Parable

What follows now will be an interpretation of the parable which is based in the parable, but which is also affected by contemporary response to the parable. It is an interpretation as I see it and respond to it. Perhaps this moves somewhat beyond the historical meaning, but that is what interpretation must always do to be a "creative remembrance" of the tradition about Jesus.²² I will interpret the parable as not only speaking of younger and older brothers as separate persons, but as a part of each person, our personal styles sometimes being weighted in the direction of the younger or the elder.

The father is asked by the younger to give him his share of the property that would fall to him at the death of the father. He must be free to go away, to find himself, to express his inner drives and needs, to do all that he cannot under the wing of the father. The story says that the father then divided his property between "them" (the two). This means that he split his property, probably selling part of it or allowing the younger son to sell part of it. To fully understand this one must sense the feelings for property in the Ancient Near-East and its relationship to the ancestors from whom it had likely been inherited. The elder brother then became master of the rest. The text indicates that the father divided "his living", which makes clear that this act jeopardized his economic security. The fact that the rest of his property was given to the elder brother indicates that he really placed himself at the mercy of this son, of which the son, to his credit, did not take advantage. Thus the father risks his existence and because of his action publicly embarrasses himself before his community. This is the nature of his love. It is also important to note that the father is psychologically and spiritually free of his estate, able to divest himself of it. The children are of more value than the estate.

Why did the children have such difficulties with a father who loved them in this way? Why did they not realize his love sooner? One might guess that part of the reason is the developmental process of each person which necessitates some form of freedom and rebellion towards parents in order to gain identity. But part of the problem was the estate which provided the context for their life. This context included the opportunities and obligations of property, a community with its customs and restrictions, a family with its dreams, expectations and traditions. Our contexts, besides providing us with a home, may entrap us. They

²². Creative remembrance is a term sometimes applied to the handling of the Jesus' tradition in the Johannine community, which has a consciousness of the Spirit's role in remembering the tradition : e.g. John 16:12-15.

determine and limit what we become and present various types of issues. In real life one must live somewhere, and the context into which we are born is never chosen, only given. New contexts, even if chosen (or fled to), present issues of their own, as the younger child discovered. The father was free of his context. He stayed in it by choice, but freed himself of it by divesting himself of it. He found a way of being himself in it. By being himself in it, he helped pose for his two children the most crucial question: what would they do with their father? For their home was not a place, but Him.

The German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, at the conclusion of his highly autobiographical novel, The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge, describes the burden of context. The love which existed in his and in many a home is the love of expectation which by its demands smothers life. He says:

It would be difficult to persuade me that the story of the Prodigal Son is not the legend of a man who didn't want to be loved. When he was a child, everyone in the house loved him. He grew up not knowing it could be any other way and got used to their tenderness, when he was a child.

But as a boy he tried to lay aside these habits. He wouldn't have been able to say it, but when he spent the whole day roaming around outside and didn't even want to have the dogs with him, it was because they too loved him; because in their eyes he could see observation and sympathy, expectation, concern; because in their presence too he couldn't do anything without giving pleasure or pain. But what he wanted in those days was that profound indifference of heart which sometimes, early in the morning, in the fields, seized him with such purity that he had to start running, in order to have no time or breath to be more than a weightless moment in which the morning becomes conscious of itself.

The secret of that life of his which had never yet come into being, spread out before him. Involuntarily he left the footpath and went running across the fields, with outstretched arms, as if in this wide reach he would be able to master several directions at once. And then he flung himself down behind some bush and didn't matter to anyone. He peeled himself a willow flute, threw a pebble at some small animal, he leaned over and forced a beetle to turn around: none of this became fate, and the sky passed over him as over nature. Finally afternoon came with all its inspirations; you could become a buccaneer on the isle of Tortuga, and there was no obligation to be that; you could besiege Campeche, take Vera Cruz by storm; you could be a whole army or an officer on horseback or a ship on the ocean: according to the way you felt. If you thought of kneeling, right away you were Deodatus of Gozon and had slain the dragon and understood that this heroism was pure arrogance, without an obedient heart. For you didn't spare yourself anything that belonged to the game. But no matter how many scenes arose in your imagination, in between them there was always enough time to be nothing but a bird, you didn't even know what kind. Though afterward, you had to go home.

My God, how much there was then to leave behind and forget. For you really had to forget; otherwise you would betray yourself when they insisted. No matter how much you lingered and looked around, the gable always came into sight at last. The first window up there kept its eye on you; someone might be standing there. The dogs, in whom expectation had been growing all day long, ran through the hedges and drove you together into the one they recognized. And the house did the rest. Once you walked in to its full smell, most matters were already decided. A few details might still be changed; but on the whole you were already the person they thought you were; the person for whom they had long ago fashioned a life, out of his small past and their own desires; the creature belonging to them all, who stood day and night under the influence of their love, between their hope and their mistrust, before their approval or their blame.²³

²³. Stephen Mitchell, The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, Vintage Books, Random House, 1989, pp. 107-109.

Each person engages in a different life journey. For some the journey is more like the younger or the older brother, but there are ways in which we can identify with the experience of both. If we have not left home as the younger brother, there are parts of ourselves that long to be free of the responsibilities and constraints of context, to live our humanity and individuality to the fullest, experiencing what responsibility and limit have prevented. If we leave home and live with greater freedom, there are inner longings for the voices of childhood and the home to which we once belonged with its security and structure. *Fundamental to all human issues is the need to come to terms with the longing for a home and a foundational relationship.* Development leads us away from and returns us to this. The soul remains restless until returning, in some way, to the source from which it was born.

The father loves each child and gives each the freedom to be what they can, but he cannot give them freedom they will not take nor adequately understand. The father seems to realize, beyond the customs of his society, the need of his children to be themselves. But he also knows their need for his love and a "home". Thus he provides a place to be loved and come back to while each goes on a journey, the younger going physically away and the elder going psychologically away. Though the younger rehearses repentance, the father goes to meet him and sweeps him into his arms before he has a chance to repent and calls for a feast. He rejoices that his child is found. To the elder he says, "Son you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours." *That the father so loves his children gives them the power and freedom to complete the stories of their lives.* How their stories will be completed is up to them. The fact that the parable is not completed makes it certain that the father's love is not dependent upon an appropriate completion of the story. The father's love is only dependent on himself and remains part of his character. As Shakespeare says in a Sonnet: "Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds."

If we see some of each child in us all, then we will understand how some of the issues of later life are determined by how we have earlier reacted to our context. It has been indicated that in human development there is often a crisis in which we long for what we have not chosen or been allowed to choose. The one who has left home longs for the home that has been left. The one that has stayed longs for the freedom and life experiences missed.

The essential message of the parable is that whatever our issues, whatever the path we have taken, whatever we feel we have missed when we choose to re-view our life, whatever in us is incomplete, there is a home to come back to or rediscover. Because the father divested himself of the estate, the home is no longer the place to which we reacted. We are also called upon to divest ourselves of the issues related to our early life context. The home is not a place, but in the heart of the father. We are called upon to allow ourselves to be swept up by the arms of the father and clasped to his breast, as portrayed in oil so movingly by Rembrandt. This is the home from which our soul came forth into the world.

Perhaps one significance of the unfinished nature of the story is that for most of us the story is never finished. We never completely leave behind the influences of our childhood or the consequence of past choices, nor do we lose the ambiguity of our desire for structure and freedom. Moreover, the need continually to remake the choices we once made is never left behind. Life and its issues draw us to our home and draw us away from our home, and we constantly confuse life contexts with our home. But the Father is always there. As we become more rooted in his heart, however we are drawn away, we carry him in ours. And home becomes where we are.

At some point in our journey to the Father we need to begin to become for others what the Father is for us. This is part of our maturing and what is meant by "love.". I have been intrigued with the way some, in meditation upon this parable, are drawn to identify with the Father. A friend said to Henri Nouwen, "Whether you are the younger son or the elder son, you have to realize that you are called to become the father."²⁴

²⁴ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, N.Y: Doubleday, 1992, p. 19. In this excellent presentation of the parable. and his meditation on Rembrandt's portrayal of *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, Nouwen presents us with a significant personal model for the spiritual journey.

Improvisation as an Image

It is interesting to review the image of journey which appears within the Great Commissions which appear in some form at the end of every Gospel. In Matthew life and discipleship is bounded by the commandments of Jesus who, in fulfillment of the Law, takes the place of Moses. There is a call to journey in making disciples of all nations, but no personal journey which shapes and transforms life. All they need to know is already there in the commandments of Jesus. However, in Mark life in the future is not defined so simply. The young man at the tomb, who bears witness to the women of Jesus' resurrection, reminds them of how he said that he would again go before them, as a shepherd goes before his sheep.²⁵ The implication is that they will only find what to do when they follow where he is going. The details of the journey are completely open. However, many feel that the image of journey is no longer appropriate in our modern world because of the way it has often been used. In our changing world it is not so clear where we are going and the way that we must travel to get there. It is not so easy to identify the possibilities of the future with the traditions of the past. Moreover, some have identified the images of journey often used to describe spirituality as distinctively masculine.²⁶ One image more suitable to women and others who are experiencing the disintegration of previous definitions of roles and clear directions within society is that of improvisation. Mary Catherine Bateson, in Composing A Life, develops this image and illustrates it through the biographies of five women.²⁷ Though she uses this image to describe a life process rather than a spiritual journey, I find her approach helpful to those seeking a more flexible image appropriate to our modern context.

In speaking of the quest/journey image she says:

... there is a pattern deeply rooted in myth and folklore that recurs in biography and may create inappropriate expectations and blur our ability to see the actual shape of lives. Much biography of exceptional people is built around the image of a quest, a journey through a timeless landscape toward an end that is specific, even though it is not fully known. The pursuit of a quest is a pilgrim's progress in which it is essential to resist the transitory contentment of attractive way stations and side roads, in which obstacles are overcome because the goal is visible on the horizon, onward and upward. The end is already apparent in the beginning.²⁸

Regarding her approach to life, she says:

This is a book about life as an improvisatory art, about the ways we combine familiar and unfamiliar components in response to new situations, following an underlying grammar and an evolving aesthetic. It started from a disgruntled reflection on my own life as a sort of desperate improvisation in which I was constantly trying to make something coherent from conflicting elements to fit rapidly changing settings. At times, I pictured myself frantically rummaging through the refrigerator and the kitchen cabinets, convinced that somewhere I would find the odds and ends that could be combined at the last minute to make a meal for unexpected guests, hoping to be rescued by serendipity. A good meal, like a poem or a life, has a certain balance and diversity, a certain coherence and fit.

²⁵. The ending of Mark has been much tampered with. I understand it to originally have ended at 16:8 and that the words "there you will see him" in vs. 7 were a later ending as are the longer and shorter endings added to vs. 8. When these words are removed this no longer refers to a Galilean resurrection appearance, as is clear when the words that Jesus originally spoke are examined (see Mk. 14:28).

²⁶. Classical images have been journey (Abraham, Moses, the Exodus), climbing a mountain (such as Moses going up the mountain or Jesus' Mount of Transfiguration), and climbing a ladder (for example, Jacob's ladder), now often viewed by feminist theologians as masculine images which present a structured, aggressive, and individualistic approach.

²⁷. Mary Catherine Bateson, Composing A Life, NY: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1989.

²⁸. Ibid., pp. 5-6.

.... I believe that our aesthetic sense, whether in works of art or in lives, has overfocused on the stubborn struggle toward a single goal rather than on the fluid, the protean, the improvisatory. We see achievement as purposeful and monolithic, like the sculpting of a massive tree trunk that has first to be brought from the forest and then shaped by long labor to assert the artists vision, rather than something crafted from odds and ends, like a patchwork quilt, and lovingly used to warm different nights and bodies. Composing a life has a metaphorical relation to many different arts, including architecture and dance and cooking. In the visual arts, a variety of disparate elements may be arranged to form a simultaneous whole, just as we combine our simultaneous commitments. In the temporal arts, like music, a sequential diversity may be brought into harmony over time. In still other arts, such as homemaking or gardening, choreography or administration, complexity is woven in both space and time.²⁹

As life is a day-by-day process of self invention, for what is searched for does not exist until found, so the past and its remembrance provide not completed experiences but the raw material which becomes part of the composing of a life.³⁰

The process of improvisation that goes into composing a life is compounded in the process of remembering a life, like a patchwork quilt in a watercolor painting, rumpled and evocative. Yet it is this second process, composing a life through memory as well as through day-to-day choices, that seems to me most essential to creative living. The past empowers the present, and the groping footsteps leading to this present mark the pathways to the future.

Doing Theology

Literally "theology" means a "logos" of God, something that speaks God and communicates God. For the Christian this "logos" has its origin in the Gospel, the "good news" of Jesus Christ, although behind this "good news" there are the powerful streams of Old Testament tradition. This good news is understood not as merely a complex of descriptive words, but as embodying a reality: it *is* "the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith", (Rom. 1:16). Its primary value lies not in the details of what it says, but in what it mediates. When it is given the freedom to be, it is hope-full, life-ful, joy-full, and God-full. If we forget that theology *speaks God* and conclude that it is only descriptive, i.e. that it speaks to us only *about* God, we have lost the heart and mystery of theology. It then lies dead before us as something to be analyzed and dissected, something to be understood rather than experienced. It no longer exercises its power over us. The construction of theological systems has often been done upon the remains of theology with little thought as to how it functions as a living organism.

In the light of the Synoptic description of the historical Jesus, the Johannine affirmation of the "Word" as incarnate (John 1:14), and of Paul's attempts to express theology in two cultures (I Cor. 9:19ff), we become aware that theological expression is always bound up with history and culture. Thus our attempts to describe, though hopefully faithful to God, will also in some ways conceal God because they are situationally and culturally bound. Actually, there is no other way this can be, for we exist within history and culture. But it also is no tragedy because God prefers to be "relevant" in this fashion.

It is important not to let God as Godself be "bound" by our language, be limited to our words and descriptions, nor to make idols out of our language (against the first two commandments). We need to know that we now know only in part and that it is only in the end time that we will know God as God now knows us (I Cor. 13:12). We must also avoid an approach to knowledge which allows it to inflate our egos, to "puff us up," rather than opting for love which builds up (I Cor. 8:1). Even when we have developed our theologies, it is important to remind ourselves of what Paul says at the end of his grand schema of salvation history in Rom. 9-11:

²⁹. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

³⁰. Ibid., pp. 28ff.

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen.

Theology is only rightfully done, according to much of the New Testament, when the traditions, the words, thoughts and creeds of former generations, are subjected to the re-interpretation and re-forming activity of God's Spirit in the living context of the present. God never abdicated God's sovereignty to words once spoken and thoughts once expressed. God still speaks in a living voice to those who will hear and God still communicates Godself. Theology then is never finished as long as time exists and history, culture and personal experience change. Moreover, it is the re-forming of tradition and listening to the God of the present which integrates theology into the fibre of our existence.

Ultimately, theology is devotional. Its words reflect and introduce us to the God and life realities which they re-present. They are God-mediating and life-producing. They are a sanctuary in which we may meet God and respond in faith, hope and love, and from which we may move into life. If they do not do this they are only a historical and philosophical exercise. Theology then goes hand in hand with mysticism and ethics. The devotional nature of theology calls for the maintaining of a "free and holy space" where God may act and we may respond, surrounded by our theological traditions but not bound by them. The integrity of this free space must be preserved, for it is at the heart of religious life.

Lastly, theology is not the task of a professional elite, but that of every Christian, and every Pastor, who must struggle with understanding life and God and make sense of their own existence. It is the task of every person who would meet God in the words of our tradition and allow their lives to be transformed. To be too concerned about theology being "right" makes it the preserve of the expert and deprives the laity of its life-giving qualities. *It is not as important that it be right as that it be done, for its purpose is fulfilled not as much in its rightness as in its drawing us closer to the God from whom life comes.* There are always consequences of theological views, and sometimes bad consequences of some bad theology, but these are risks worth taking. If theology is also understood as always in process, misunderstandings may be fruitfully worked out as one lives with one's theology and everyone does not have to understand everything at once. Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf said that the problem with the theologians of his time was that they wanted to understand everything at once. He believed that God will disclose to us what we need to understand when we need to understand it, and God only asks of us what God has given us.

Theology done by experts, as much as it is needed, when handed to us as finished, merely to be understood, may neither belong to us nor affect our lives. As religious professionals, it is our responsibility to help laity to understand that in their reflection on life and God they are certainly doing theology and that God encourages this. Certainly a God compared to the Father of the two uncomprehending sons in the Parable of the Prodigal (Luke 15) can tolerate a little errant theology in our journey home to God. And the purpose of theology, like the purpose of the parable, *is* to bring us home to God.

PAUL'S LIFE

Fortunately, we know a great deal about Paul because of the extensive literature he has left us and because in Acts, from about chapter 9 on, he is the major character.

Our sources then are:

Acts, a history of the early church covering the years 30 (or 31, the Resurrection/Ascension of Jesus) to 62 A.D., when Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment. Here one has to deal with the issues related to Acts historical value.

Paul's letters. Biographical information is contained in many, but especially helpful are: Galatians 1-2, Phil. 3:4-14, II Cor. 11:21-12:10. Some Pauline letters are not generally accepted as authentic, but these usually are. The Pastorals (I and II Timothy and Titus) provide information about activity beyond the period described by Acts, if their information can be considered authentic. I accept II Timothy and Titus as authentic and believe I Timothy is based upon an earlier authentic letter to which additions were made.

Paul's Early Life

(Acts 9, 22, 26; Phil. 3:4-6; Rom. 11:1, Gal. 1:13-14)

Paul may have been born around the same time as Jesus, though we have no information on this.

Born in the Roman Province of Syria-Cilicia (Asia Minor), in the city of Tarsus. He probably received his early education in Tarsus, a highly cultured city, and then later studied with a famous Rabbi, Gamaliel, in the city of Jerusalem. He and his family were related to the Jewish religious group known as the Pharisees, one of the strictest. We later find that he had a sister in Jerusalem. His zeal for the Jewish Law causes him to become a persecutor of the developing Christian Church. As was the case with most Jewish males, whatever their place in life, he was taught a trade, that of tentmaking. He and his family had Roman citizenship, something unusual for persons in the Roman Provinces in those days. This provided him with special protection and meant that officials had to treat him according to the privileges of Roman law.

Paul's Life and Ministry as a Christian

30-31 A.D. *The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus*

30-31 *Martyrdom of Stephen* (Paul participating). Paul was given letters to persecute Christians at Damascus. *His conversion takes place* on the Damascus Road (primary accounts of Paul's conversion are in Acts 9, 22, 26; Gal. 1:11-17; Phil. 3: 7-11; I Cor. 15:8). Paul was active then for a while in the Damascus area and Gal. 1:17 mentions a trip into Arabia.

The conversion experience was central for Paul. In Gal. 1:11-17 he makes it clear that it is within this experience (and likely his later reflection upon it) that he came to understand the Gospel. It does seem that this experience introduced him into the possibility of religious

experience. II Cor. 12 mentions an abundance of revelations and the role of the Spirit came to be central in his understanding of the Christian life.

33 *First trip to Jerusalem*, spending 15 days with Cephas/Peter (Gal. 1:18), probably to gain first-hand information on Jesus' life and ministry. The Church in Jerusalem, the mother Christian community, sends Paul to Syria-Cilicia, to the area where he was born (Acts 9:30, Gal. 1:21).

33-44 *Paul's growing period*. Of course, Paul grew all his life, but this "mystery" period, about which we know little, must have been a period of testing his ministry and personal insights. It is important to know that there was this long period before we hear from him in his letters. We have nothing from this early period and *all of his correspondence and theological expression comes from this time of his maturity*.

45-46 *Ministry at Antioch in Syria*. Barnabas goes to Tarsus, finds Paul, and brings him back to Antioch where the two minister for a year (Acts 12:25-26).

46 *Second Jerusalem trip*. Sent by the church of Antioch, along with Barnabas, because of an impending famine, Paul also has informal conversation with leaders of the Jerusalem church to gain their approval of the Gospel he was preaching to the "gentiles". They approve of his Gentile mission while they affirm their continued concern for the mission to Jews. (Acts 11:27-12:25, Gal. 2:1-14).

47-48 *First missionary journey* (Cyprus, lower Galatia). The church at Antioch sends out Paul and Barnabas, Barnabas being the leader at this time. (Paul may have been apprenticing under him.) John Mark was taken along, but he deserted once they got into Asia Minor. (Acts 13-14) When they return to Antioch Paul hears of pressures on Galatian Christians to follow some Jewish practices and he has his argument with Peter and Barnabas over this. (Gal. 2:11-14)

--Galatians written after they got back to Antioch

49 *Jerusalem Council*. This was held at the mother church in Jerusalem to determine requirements on gentiles who were being converted to Christianity. Christianity was at first a Jewish sect, and Jews and some Jewish Christians felt all Christians should obey the Jewish O.T. Law. (Acts 15) Galatians says nothing about this council as it was written before it happened.

49-52 *Second Missionary Journey* (Asia Minor, Macedonia, Achaea-Greece, with a long stay at Corinth). (Acts 15:36-18:22) Paul and Barnabas go separate ways, divided over the behavior of Mark..

--I and II Thessalonians written

53-57 *Third Missionary Journey*. (Asia Minor, with a long stay at Ephesus, Macedonia and Achaia). (Acts 19:23-21:16)

--I and II Corinthians, Romans written

After each journey Paul returns to Jerusalem out of respect to the mother church there. On the third journey he brings back an offering to the Jerusalem church and also brings back some converts. (I Cor. 16:1-3)

57 *Jerusalem Arrest and Imprisonment*. (Acts 1:17-23:22) Paul is accused of bringing gentiles into the Temple.

57-59 *Caesarean Imprisonment*. Because of a threat to his life in Jerusalem, Paul is transferred to the seat of Roman government in Palestine, Caesarea, and kept there for two years. (Acts 23:23-26:32)

59(Fall) to 60(Spring) *Trip to Rome*. When Festus became governor after Felix, Paul in Caesarea exercised his right of appeal to Rome and so was transferred there during the Winter of 59, when his ship was wrecked at Malta. (Acts 27:1-28:16)

60-62 *Roman Imprisonment*. Paul was imprisoned in Rome with a type of "house arrest" for two years, given freedom to have visitors, eventually tried and released. (Acts 28:11ff) Acts ends with an affirmation of the mission to the Gentiles.

The following are called "Prison Epistles" because they were written during a period of imprisonment. Some feel they were written during the Roman imprisonment and others that they were written during the Caesarean imprisonment or an Ephesian imprisonment that is not listed in Acts. II Cor. 11:20-12:10 tells of a number of Paul's experiences not mentioned in Acts.

--Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon

This ends the story of Paul that we have in Acts. Rom. 15:28 mentions that Paul wanted to go to Spain. I and II Timothy and Titus, which are sometimes doubted as being by Paul, mention further activity in the Mediterranean area, e.g. Crete and the western coast of Macedonia. Tradition tells us that Paul died in Rome, probably sometime between 64 and 68 A.D.. In 64 Christians were persecuted by Nero because of the burning of Rome and when Paul returned again he may have been caught in this new anti-Christian feeling. II Timothy is a sad, but brave letter, in which Paul speaks of his expected death.

--I and II Timothy, Titus

Paul had many compatriots in his missionary activity, such as Barnabas, John Mark, Silas (Silvanus), Timothy, Titus, Aquila and Priscilla. In Romans 16 he greets a number of them, including many women.

Paul's Religious Experiences

Many of the N.T. traditions deal with Christianity not only in terms of *understanding* of God and *ethics/behavior*, but also in terms of *experience* of God, including *experienced relationship* with God. The Gospel of Matthew is perhaps the only great New Testament tradition which does not see experience as a normative constituent of the Christian faith, emphasizing obedience to the commandments of Jesus. The Pauline, Lukan (Luke, Acts) and Johannine (John; I, II John and Revelation) traditions all speak of the experience of the resurrected Christ, the experience of the Spirit of God, and various manifestations of this experience in terms of spiritual gifts,³¹ and finding spiritual guidance.³² All of these traditions which deal with experience were careful to balance the subjectivity of experience with various objective elements by which the truth of subjective experience might be "discerned".³³ These included:

1. loyalty to God's revelation in the historical Jesus and recognition of the historical Jesus as Lord;³⁴
2. manifestation of a quality of life and ethical action which would be produced by God's Spirit (here "love", the ability of a person to go beyond self-interest in relationship with others, was considered the primary "sign");³⁵
3. manifestation of "spiritual gifts" which contributed to the mission and good of Christ's body, the church;³⁶

³¹. E.g. I Cor. 12.

³². Speaking in tongues and prophecy - I Cor. 14, and visions and dreams - e.g. Revelation).

³³. "Discernment" has become a technical term in Christianity for evaluating the legitimate aspects of experience.

³⁴. See I Cor. 12:1-3, I John 4:1-3.

³⁵. I John 4:7-12, I Cor. 13.

³⁶. E.g. I Cor. 12.

4. and subjection of individual feelings and insights to the "discernment" of the Christian community.³⁷

It is important to recognize the variety of religious experience which one can find in some of the N.T. writers. *Paul* is a good example. Whereas as a Pharisee he would have viewed religion primarily from the perspective of his traditions and institutions - the Law, Temple and Synagogue - his conversion experience introduced him to the possibility of religious experience. He then came to understand that this experience fulfilled his traditions, though he of course reinterpreted Jewish traditions. In Galatians 3:14 Paul says that the giving of the Spirit, which means the Christian experience, is the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham. The variety of Paul's experiences included:

1. *Conversion experience* - Acts 9, 22, 26; Gal. 1:11-17, Phil. 3:7-11; I Cor. 15:8.
2. *Nature and creation*- Rom. 1:20. Paul only mentions this, but does not say that this meant much to him since Jews argued God's reality from historical experience rather than creation. This is really an accommodation to his Greco-Roman readers. In what he says, Paul does not seem to reflect an aesthetic appreciation of creation.
3. *Conscience*- Rom. 2:14-16. Again, Paul only mentions this as an accommodation to his Greco-Roman readers. Judaism believed that there were various expressions of God's basic law in the Gentile world. They often expressed this in terms of covenants with Adam and Noah. For the Jew God's giving of the Law overshadowed all this.

[Nos. 1 to 3 are what one might call "indirect" experiences of God through what God has created. It is quite likely that they were not so important to Paul because he emphasized a more direct experience of God's revelation.]
4. *"Visions and revelations of the Lord"*. These receive special treatment in II Cor. 12:1-10. Here Paul speaks of an "abundance of revelations" (vs. 7) and an experience when he was caught up to the third heaven (people in those days talked about a series of heavens) in which he did not know whether this occurred "inside" him or whether he was "out of the body". He seems to regard these as important but not for public discussion as he does not give any detail about them, something like speaking in tongues which he also says is primarily for one's private relationship with God -- not for public worship. (Paul does not speak of God speaking through "dreams", but we do know that some in the early church believed in this- Matt. 1-2).
5. *Speaking in prophecy* (which he prefers) *and tongues* (which he also does). His description in I Cor. 14 is about a Christian community gathered to seek God's will for them and to be open to God's presence among them. Prophecy expressed what they felt God was saying to them in an understandable form while tongues was a spontaneous expression of the experience with God which did not come out in an understandable language. It is important to note that besides speaking in tongues, praying and singing in tongues is also mentioned.
6. *Resource for ethical action*- In Gal. 5:16-25 Christian life is the fruit of the Spirit. Paul also sees love as the primary gift of the Spirit in I Cor. 13.
7. *Dynamic of personal growth* - In II Cor. 3-5 Paul describes his understanding of the process of Christian spiritual development. Important here is II Cor. 4:17-18.
8. *Experience of personal relationship with God*. This seems to be most important for Paul and underlies many of the other types of experience of God that he describes. "The Spirit" was a term used by both Jews and Christians which described the presence of God in life. Paul says that the giving of

³⁷. E.g. I Cor. 14:26-33.

God's Spirit, i.e. God's giving of himself, is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham which enables us to be God's children (Gal. 3:14, 4:4-7). And the Spirit of his Son (Jesus) in our hearts helps us to be aware of this relationship and give it expression in the word which Jesus used to begin his prayer: "Abba, Father". (Gal. 4:6) Paul expresses similar ideas in Rom. 8:14-17. Background for this is to be found in the sayings of Jesus in Luke 11 where Jesus gives the "Lord's Prayer" and then says that God as a good father gives his children the Spirit.

9. Understanding his experience of God in his life by doing a "*spiritual autobiography*", describing the story of his life and how God has participated in it. We don't know whether Paul kept a diary or journal. We do know that he frequently cited material out of his life experience to show how God worked in his life and how he came to understand what God was doing. A very significant passage is Gal. 1-2 where he describes his conversion experience and his contacts with others as he sought to understand it. Another significant passage is II Cor. 11-12. Some of the information on Paul's activities in Acts may also have come to Luke from Paul. Doing a spiritual autobiography and *journaling* have become significant ways today to understand and reflect on what God is doing in our lives.
10. *Guidance*. Paul certainly experienced the guidance of God in various life situations. Paul's letters are full of reference to prayer and Acts indicates how the guidance of God was experienced as Paul conducted his mission activity. When he gave practical advice to his churches he sought God's guidance, but was also aware of how difficult it is to be absolutely sure of what God is telling one. Significant examples are his advice to the Corinthians in I Cor. 7, after which he says, "And I *think* that I have the spirit of God"; and in Rom. 11:33-36 where, after developing a strategy for his mission activity based on how he thinks God is carrying out his plans for the world, Paul essentially says, "Who knows God's mind and to whom does God owe an explanation? God's ways are unsearchable."
11. God acting in our lives through *persons*. Paul would imply this in what he says about the church as an expression ("body") of Christ and the way the Spirit works in persons in I Cor. 12. Many experience God through the way the love, concern and action of other persons affect their lives.

Nature of Paul's Religious Experience

- Varied - Though Paul's religious experience is frequently identified only with his conversion experience, an examination of Paul's letters indicated that his conversion introduced him into a variety of religious experiences, at the basis of which lay his understanding (and experience) of the Spirit (the presence of God) and its role in the total Christian life. His discussion of the gifts of the Spirit (e.g. I Cor. 12) makes clear the variety within the manifestation of the Spirit which he recognized. He also speaks of an ecstatic experience and an abundance of revelations (II Cor. 12:1-10) and he prophesied and spoke in tongues (I Cor. 14).
- Mysterious - As Jesus termed the kingdom/presence of God a "mystery" (Mk. 4:11), so Paul seems to have regarded it. Religious experience was not always clear and had to be discerned (I Cor. 12:1-3); prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will pass away because of their limited nature (I Cor. 13:8-13); and we possess our treasure in earthen vessels to indicate that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us (II Cor. 4:7-12). Even his abundance of revelations was accompanied by a thorn in the flesh (II Cor. 12:7). Many of Jesus' and Paul's contemporaries expected the experience of God to be much more powerful, overcoming all problems, and thus they could not believe that God could be experienced in a world full of problems.
- Language - In I Cor. 2 Paul deals with the relationship of language and experienced reality to the communication of the Gospel. vs. 1-9 treat the approach to preaching which he developed in order that the reality of Christ and him crucified could communicate itself. He intentionally seeks to avoid rhetorical persuasiveness, merely by the power of words, allowing the reality of the Gospel to bear its own witness. In vs. 10-16 Paul indicates that communication occurs from those who have the Spirit to those who have the Spirit: i.e., from those who experientially know the reality to

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which the Gospel points to those in whose life God is active and as recipients of the communication will sense the experiential reference points for the words of the Gospel.

Paul's Discernment Process: Understanding His Experience

Paul seems to have gone through a discernment process to understand and validate his experience of Christ which produced his conversion (an experience he at first did not understand - Acts 9:4-9) and formed the basis for his understanding of the Gospel. The following were involved:

- Ananias and the Damascus Church help him interpret it (Acts 9:10-22)
- Went into Arabia to "consult" God - a retreat experience like Jesus' Temptation (Gal. 1:17)
- Went to Jerusalem to consult Peter -- and James (Gal. 1:18-24). Here remember the role which Peter played (as remembered by the tradition of the early church) in the preservation of the life and teachings of Jesus.
- Reflection on Scripture, exploring his experience in the light of Is. 49:1 and Jer. 1:15. He alludes to these passages in his self-understanding stated in 1:15. It is unclear when this happened, but he eventually went to Scripture to understand his experience and fastened upon the prophet's self-understanding in passages which dealt with a Gentile mission in their context. Gal. 1:15-16 seems to reflect these OT passages. Vs. 16 speaks of his mission to the Gentiles.
- Years by himself in the Ministry in Tarsus (Syria-Cilicia) (Gal. 1:21, Acts 9:30) This was undoubtedly a time of testing ideas, reflecting, and working out his thought and understanding of Christian life. We have no literature from him during this formative period. Our literature comes from the "mature" period of his life.
- Discusses/argues it out in Jerusalem and Antioch, with the older churches (Gal. 2:1-14)
- Paul writes about it (in Galatians and elsewhere)

Questions raised for Paul out of his experience:

- 1) What happened? Who, what did I encounter?
- 2) What does this experience say about life, God, me?
- 3) How does this experience bind me to others and obligate me to learn from others?
- 4) What does it mean for my life? What does it ask of me? How does it change things?

What Paul learned from his experience with God:

- 1) Where he previously knew about religion and practiced it, he now discovered God was "real" and participated in life. Before--religion was something he practiced, now it was something he experienced. It was integrated into his life.
- 2) He discovered that God must have been working in his life before he was aware of it (Gal. 1:15- "he who set me apart before I was born and called me".)
- 3) He experienced a personal relationship with God. God called him through his grace/love (1:15), a God whom all Christians can call "Abba, Father" (4:6- meaning in Aramaic, "dear Father"--the Lord's Prayer began with this word in Aramaic.)
- 4) The harsh realities of life don't go away because God is there (see II Cor. 4:7-12, 12:7-10; Rom. 8:18-39).
- 5) The relationship with God is dependable (Rom. 8:31-39). Nothing can separate one from his love.
- 6) When one has discovered God in life and behind the concepts and practices of religion, one sees it all differently. In Gal. 6:15, after having argued against circumcision, Paul now indicates that the new creation, the reality of religion, is more important than either circumcision or uncircumcision as "theologies" or traditions.
- 7) God works with one in a personal way, dealing with personal needs and responsibilities, helping one develop a personal life-direction and sense of meaning. This is apparent in much of what Paul says. Part of this for Paul is his sense of mission to the Gentiles which is discussed with Jerusalem leaders (Gal. 2:9) and developed as a mission strategy in Rom. 9-11.

- 8) If God really participates in life, then this is part of the dynamic out of which one lives and functions (e.g. living by the Spirit, Gal. 5).

One can examine the life and teachings of Jesus and find that Paul's insights and experiences are in continuity with Jesus. Contrary to what some scholars say about Paul not being interested in the historical Jesus, there are many indications in Paul's letters that he knew the tradition of Jesus' sayings and felt a strong sense of loyalty to Jesus. Actually, Paul is our earliest source for information about Jesus, some of his letters antedating the earliest Gospel (Mark) by 10-15 years. Paul's understanding of the meaning of the experience of God is to be found in Jesus parables, his reflection of God in his behavior towards others, and in his own life experience.

The Management of Conflicts and the Treatment of Offenders

Paul's treatment of conflicts in his churches gives one insight into him as a person of process.

The early church was as full of conflictual experience as is the modern church. This is only natural when you bring individuals with differing perspectives and backgrounds together into a community. In Philippians Paul mentions Euodia ("sweet smelling") and Syntyche ("fortunate") and entreats them to agree in the Lord and asks Syzgyus to help them. In I Corinthians there are conflicts over loyalty to different leaders (chapters 1-4), failure to deal with moral issues (chapters 5-6), differences over whether Christians could eat meat offered to idols (chapters 8-10) and what sort of separation they should maintain from their society, conflicts at the Lord's Supper (chapter 11), conflicts over gifts and expressions of spirituality (chapter 12), conflicts concerning speaking in tongues (chapter 14), and differences on the "terms of the Gospel" (chapter 15). What more could one ask for?

Paul treats each of these issues in I Corinthians in a way that provides a series of case studies in theological reflection and a glimpse into his methodology in the handling of issues. Basic to Paul's approach is always to insist on the recognition of the Source of their common life, the Energizer of the many manifestations of their spirituality. There is no lack of spirituality (1:7), but they are not mature enough responsibly to use what they have been given (3:1-3). They mistakenly see the source in their leaders and own giftedness, rather than realizing that one should only boast of the Lord (Yahweh) (1:31). They forget that the church is the church of God, no one else (chapter 1) and that all things lead to God, no where else (15:28).

The major issues in chapters 5-6 are moral, including difficulties in handling grievances with one another--with the result that it was necessary to carry their problems to public courts. Quality of life was important for Paul because he understood that the Gospel was about the power of God in life by which life would be transformed. Failure in Christian life thus was a denial of the Gospel. The wide-open nature of Corinthian society, with its lack of sexual morality, would have created difficulties for the Christian church because their value system was different from that of their society. Many of the Corinthians also seemed to have understood the freedom of the Gospel to mean "all things are permitted" (6:12, 10:23). Delivered from this age, behaviour no longer mattered (dualism can lead to asceticism or lack of ethical caring). Paul says that the person living with his father's wife (his stepmother) would not be approved even by the Corinthians (5:1).

The crux of this section is to be found in 6:9-11. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom. Though some of them previously belonged in the catalogue of "unrighteous" in 6:9-10, as Christians they had been washed of their former life, set apart for God, and justified (in the name of Jesus and in the Spirit of God probably reflect their baptismal experience of baptism in the name of Jesus and receiving of the Spirit-6:11). Thus they were called upon to behave in the light of their Christian nature and identity. This latter is also the basis for Paul's argument that they should not have sexual relations with prostitutes:

6:13- the body is meant for the Lord

6:15- your bodies are members of Christ

6:19- your body is a temple of God's Spirit

6:20- you were bought with a price

6:16- who joins himself with a prostitute makes himself one flesh with her and sins against his own body

Paul does not call for separation from society, "since then you would need to go out of the world" (5:10). God will judge the world. It is your responsibility to deal with those inside the church (5:9-13). Vs. 13 reflects the advice of Deuteronomy in 17:7; 19:19; 22:21, 24; and 24:7. To deal with the errant the early church evidently developed a process, as did the Synagogue and religious communities such as Qumran. One finds procedures in Matt. 18:15ff and Gal. 5:1ff. In 5:3-5 Paul pronounces judgement as a representative of the Lord Jesus, though physically absent (here one must remember that Paul already made many attempts to set this right). When the community is assembled they are then to carry out his judgement. "To deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh" is not as horrible as it sounds. What it means is that excluded from Christian fellowship the man now again comes under the power of Satan, the prince of this world. Experiencing in the flesh this loss of God's protection and blessings, it is hoped that he will repent and be saved in the day of final judgement.

To fully understand the pastoral care of the Corinthian congregation and the errant member, one must follow the process to its conclusion and read II Cor. 2:5-11. Here Paul recognizes the pain that has been caused to all involved and calls upon the congregation to forgive and comfort the person "or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. ... Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive."

One finds similar advice in Gal. 6:1ff about the treatment of the offenders within the Galatian and Antiochian conflicts mentioned in Galatians. He advises that if one "is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore such in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if any one thinks he/she is something, when nothing, they deceive themselves. But let each one test their own work, and then the reason to boast will be in self alone and not in neighbor. For each person will have to bear their own load."³⁸ All this in a letter where Paul says that he wishes that his opponents, who advise circumcision, would castrate themselves. (1:12)

The issue in I Corinthians 6:1-8 has to do with the inability of the Corinthian Christians to settle their matters out of court. 6:2 refers to the idea in Jewish Apocalyptic that the saints will participate in rendering judgement at the last judgement. How can they assist God in setting the world right if they can't handle their own matters. Thus the council of elders of the congregation, or perhaps a gathering of the whole community, must also have been involved in the hearing of disputes and the exercise of discipline. The procedure in Matthew 18:15ff presumes that the handling of a brother's sin begins with a private conversation, then proceeds to the inclusion of two or three witnesses, then to the church, and finally to excommunication.

³⁸ My translation.

PAUL'S INTERPRETATION OF HUMAN EXISTENCE AND GOD'S PRESENCE

AN EXAMINATION OF TWO PASSAGES: ROMANS 8-11
and II CORINTHIANS 4-5

Arthur Freeman

ROMANS 8-11

Romans was written during the latter part of Paul's career, about AD 56-57. It was intended to be Paul's introduction of his person and thought to the Romans, preparatory to a journey to Rome. Thus it is not as "situational" as other epistles. Because of its character, copies were probably made and sent to other churches (there are manuscripts without "Rome in the address and it seems that at least chpt 16 is an addition to the original letter when a copy was sent to Ephesus). Thus one might expect the contents to represent Paul's thought in a more general and comprehensive fashion. However, there are ways in which Paul "bows" to his Roman audience, particularly in Rom. 13 where he speaks of the Roman state as divinely ordained. Paul says this nowhere else in his teaching on the state. Romans 9-11, and its concern for the fate of the Jews, may also have a historical context in issues at Rome. There are indications that during the time of Claudius, when Jews were expelled from Rome, there were Jewish-Christian conflicts. This, besides the whole issue of the failure of the Jews to respond to the Gospel, would have made Paul's discussion of salvation history and its culmination in a process which included Jews, very important.

Context of Rom. 8-11

To understand our passage one must understand Romans 1-7, of which our passage is an integral part. A simplified presentation of Romans in outline would be:

1:1-15 *Prescript*

1:16-17 *The Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of all*

1-7 *The Human Predicament (our "flesh")*

1:18-3:20 *All have sinned and fall short*

(Note that 1:18-32 is an interesting section on idolatry and its consequences, resulting in a "base mind" and "improper conduct")

3:21-5:21 *God put forward Christ as an expiation, justification as a gift*

-precedence in Abraham 4

-Adam's trespass and the gift of righteousness 5 --
reversing Adam's (the human) situation

(Though there is extended analysis of the human predicament in the first part of Romans, it begins with a proclamation of the Gospel as the power of God and always has in mind what God has done in Christ to deal with the predicament. It is important to note that the predicament is always approached from the perspective of the solution already offered.)

-6:1-7:25 "What shall we say then?" What do we do with sin

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and our human predicament? "Who will deliver me
from this body of death?"

8 *The New Creation*

8:1-17 *No condemnation for those in Christ, who live according to Spirit, not flesh.*

- You are not in the flesh, but the Spirit, if the Spirit dwells in you.

Therefore you are obligated to live according to the Spirit, for you are *children of God*. (For Paul's description of those in Christ becoming "sons" of God and Abraham, see Gal. 3-4.)

8:18-25 (-27) *The groaning of creation and of the children of God.*

We suffer in the present. Creation, subjected to futility, groans as a woman giving birth. We who have first fruits of the Spirit also groan, hoping with patience (the metaphor of the birth process is important here). The Spirit, almost as a mid-wife, helps us in our weakness to groan and pray... and groans with us before God.

8:28-39 *The Cosmic Predicament: What is against us and who is for us.*

-This section portrays God as being for us and working with us for good in "everything", while natural and political forces (8:35) and cosmic spiritual forces (8:38-39) oppose. Nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus. In a sense this section is very "apocalyptic", seeing a host of cosmic forces arrayed against humanity.

9-11 *Paul's interpretation of Salvation History*, the historical process by which things will work out with Jews and Gentiles and the basis for Paul's mission strategy. Here God inclusivity is affirmed, so that any way in which God seems to have rejected Jews or Gentiles is ultimately intended so that God may have mercy on all. Central in this section is Romans 10, a reinterpretation of Deut. 30, which defines the Gospel, "the word which is near you," as the point at which one must react to God's saving righteousness.

Romans 12-15 *Ethical Section* hinged to the previous chapters by the word "therefore."

Romans 16 *Greetings, etc.* (probably a later addition when a copy was sent to Ephesus)

The letter to the Romans portrays the *human predicament*, in terms of what we are as "*flesh*", i.e. in our humanity" (with its limitations and problems -- see Rom. 7 for the fleshly struggle between the evil and good impulses, a part of Pharisaic psychology, and Gal. 5 for the "works of the flesh"), the way we are "prey" to the *cosmic forces* (described as natural, political and spiritual in Rom. 8), and the predicament created by Adam's sin (Rom. 5 - Adam sins, and death and sin come into the world). These three aspects of the predicament are central in understanding the nature of human existence. There is also a *Transcendent aspect* which is ultimately determinative. Otherwise humans could not cope with their predicament. It makes a decisive difference that God is involved in human existence through both the Christ event and in the on-going experience of relationship with God described as the "Spirit". *Life is understood as lived in relationship to the Transcendent, in process, with hope and patience, not merely determined by what it is to be human and what it is to live in this world. Romans 8 characterizes this experience of life as "groaning", but a groaning in hope.*

All those whose faith was in the God of the Jewish tradition had to come to terms with the way life was, in spite of or because of God. The Deuteronomic tradition believed that those who did good would get good, for God was powerful and was in control. By the Intertestamental period, with the tragedies of past history and the difficulties of the present, life was seen as more complex, as affected by neutral and evil forces besides God, and Satan was understood by many to be running the world. Thus one could not

expect of God what one would like to expect of God in this world. But the power of God would win over evil in the future and in a short while the world would be remade into what God wished. The relationship of God with the world was seen as remote, for the power of God was not much manifested in it yet. The sense of God's practical absence from this world (because little power was displayed) and the identification of God's coming presence with power and conquest was a common part of Jewish religion and really of human religion in general. One of the major purpose of the Greek Mystery religions was to deliver humans from the controlling powers of the world by the power of one who was greater.

Behind this understanding there was the belief in God's obligation of God's self in various covenantal relationships. There were three great covenants in the history of the Jewish people. The first was made through Abraham. Abraham was called to go from his country to the land that God would show him and promised that from him would come a great nation and that he would become a blessing (Gen. 12-18). This promise then is that of a land and a people. The next covenant is made through Moses (Ex. 24, Deut. 5) and renewed through Moses at Moab (Deut. 29-30). This covenant expects obedience to the Law God has given and promises blessings to those who obey and cursing of those who do not. It presupposes the Deuteronomic understanding of life: the good and loyal God blesses and the disobedient God punishes -- God is in control of life. The third is the covenant made with David in II Samuel 7:1-16 to raise up an offspring after him, to whom God will be like a father, and establish his kingdom, a kingdom forever (12-14). The Davidic covenant and its reshaping in the light of the Christian experience is central in Luke's theology (see the Gospel of Luke). In Paul Moses and Abraham play significant roles. Moses becomes a foil against whom the Christian understanding is played out. Moses and the Law are, of course, respected, but as Romans 10 and Gal. 3 point out, the Law could only condemn and not repair the human condition. Abraham and the covenant made with him then becomes a way of circumventing Moses, and redefining David. While the Davidic kingdom was political, the future hope of Christians was not. While Moses was interpreted as a way of righteousness and salvation, for Christians he was not. Abraham responded in trust before the Law was given, and his trust in God was reconed as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). While Judaism understood Abraham to anticipate the giving of the Law, especially in receiving circumcision, Christianity understood Abraham as a precedent for a different way, ultimately fulfilled in Christ (Rom. 4, Gal. 3). Both the Davidic covenant and the Deuteronomic presentation of the Mosaic covenant had expectations of material blessings and establishment of a this world order. Though the Abrahamic covenant had some of this implication in the promise of the land, it could be more easily disconnected from the expectations of establishment and material and political blessing.

It is interesting that in the center of Paul's argument in Rom. 8-11, in chapter 10 he reflects Deuteronomy 30 in such a way as to decidedly reinterpret it. Paul does this in a way that preserves and affirms his theology of the cross and reflects the nature of his religious experience. The passage from Deuteronomy that is taken up into Rom. 10 is:

Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live(11-19)

Rom. 8:18-39

Romans 8 speaks of the hope for humanity based on what God has done in Christ and the gift of the Spirit to make humans God's children, so that they might cry "Abba, Father" (1-17). The hope for humanity caught in its predicament is not, however, naive. *Suffering* is real. It is part of the *present* nature of human existence, though it is contrasted with the *future*. There is a *glory* to be revealed (18), probably referring to the glory of God in humanity that was lost in the fall. This is Pauline and Jewish language about the *restoration of humanity*, towards a full realization of what it means to be a *child of God*. Creation watches and waits with "strained expectancy" "for the revealing of the children of God" (19) The *creation* was *subjected to futility* (20), probably understood as God's judgement upon it because of the fall... but it was subjected *in hope*, not with a view to its destruction (20-21). It is also clear that God does not intend things to stay as they are. There is a "teleology" involved in the distorted and limited nature of human existence. (Here it might be helpful to explore the two creation stories in Gen. 1-3. Paul uses that of Gen. 2-3 to interpret the situation of creation, perhaps also with reflection on Gen. 6. Gen. 3 speaks of the Fall of humanity and Gen. 6 speaks of the fall of the angels, both of which were reflected on in Jewish mythology. Gen. 1 speaks of the condition of the world as unfinished and the struggle between chaos and order, light and darkness. It is interesting that the interpretation of the Gen. creation narratives in John 1:1-18 does not deal with the fall of Gen. 3 at all, but only speaks in terms of light and darkness and the failure of the world to grasp the light. This presents an alternative to the mythology of the fall with which Paul is working.)

All creation GROANS as a woman in childbirth, and we groan as we await adoption as "children", something we can't see but in which we believe. *We hope and wait in patience* (22-25). Because of the nature of our process *hope* and *patience* become virtues.

In our weakness the Spirit groans with us, helps us to pray, and intercedes before God--all of which may be understood as *God's participation in the "groaning"* which looks to the future (26-27). The Spirit then becomes mid-wife to the birthing of a new humanity and new age.

Romans 8 ends with a famous passage from which Christians have often gained confidence in the face of a difficult existence. In vs. 28, which in the KJV was translated "all things work together for good" (oddly enough followed in the NRSV), the most appropriate contextual translation is "We know that in all things God works for good together with those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose." It is not that everything will turn out all right in this world, but that God will work for good in all circumstances, which include natural and political/military disasters (35) and spiritual powers (38-39). God will bring to completion in us what God started in us (29-30). No one can bring any charge against God's elect (33) nor separate such from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (35,39).

It is important to note that the difficulties of life do not deny God's presence, which seems no longer so much connected with manifestations of absolute power. God will not, in love, let us go, but God cannot now save us from life. But in Christ, in the Spirit, and in us God is in life.

Limitations of the Passage

The passage in the original expresses its truth in male language, though this is modified in the NRSV translation. Though Paul affirms that in Christ there is neither male or female (Gal. 3), the maleness (i.e. "sons") of this language indicates that Paul is expressing himself in traditional terms. We cannot expect him to be sensitive to our issues. Yet the reality transcends the language, and women (and men) today must "groan" somewhat over the inadequacy of language and the way it limits the full expression of God's future. However, the significance of the feminine metaphor of birthing is intriguing in its implications.

The passage also does not have an adequate view of creation. It limits creation to "the place where human existence is lived out". It does not much respect creation apart from humanity, although it is said that "the whole creation is groaning". The lack of an adequate role for creation, and for "flesh", is probably both because of real perceptions about our struggle with human existence and because of the negative and dualistic presuppositions of Apocalyptic Judaism. Much of the New Testament view of creation has been affected by this. Thus humans are primarily set over against creation and its negative forces, even though

Paul in Rom. 1 speaks of God as known in creation. Must we also "groan" through to a different perception of world and creation, while recognizing the legitimate perceptions about its destructive and sometimes demonic nature? Would it be better to speak of creation neutrally (as Paul seems to speak of elemental spirits in Gal. 4), while dealing with possibility that there are evil forces in the cosmos? Paul, in dealing with the powers of the cosmos, also implies that they are ignorant (I Cor. 2:6ff). Christians often border on either dualism or a paranoia about the world.

Romans 9-11

In Romans 9-11, the significant passage which was not only Paul's view of salvation history but also the mission strategy he followed, Paul expands on the human predicament in the light of a particular concern, the predicament of Israel. Paul would die for his people and is in unceasing anguish for them (1-3). Israel has much from God: the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To Israel belongs the patriarchs and from them comes the Messiah (4-5). But their failure does not mean that the word of God has failed. Not all Israelites are Israelites, but those who are the children of the promise by God's election (6-18). Even if God had determined some for wrath (note the "What if" in vs. 22), God had that right (19-29). The Jews have stumbled over the stumbling stone of faith (30-33).

Chapter ten then reflects the Deuteronomy 30 passage. Paul uses it partly historically ("Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law" 5) and partly sees in it another meaning. It is almost as if "Moses" did not know of what he spoke. Paul continues:

But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say?

"The word is near you,
on your lips and in your heart"

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim; because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (6-9).

Paul continues that no one can believe except they have heard, and thus "How beautiful are the feet of them who bring good news!" (15) But this is not really the problem with Israel (18-21).

God has not rejected Israel (11:1). There is a remnant, but chosen by grace and not works (2-6). The rest were hardened (7), but have not stumbled so as to fall (11).

But through their stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous (11) I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all (25,32).

What Paul has done is to affirm the love and loyalty of God in the midst of difficult historical circumstances. God never deserted Israel. The rejection of God by both Israel and the Gentile world was so that ultimately God might have mercy on all for all were disobedient (30-31). This is God working for good in whatever is (8:28). In the midst of a complex world God will never desert those God loves. In a sense this follows the Deuteronomic expectation that all will work out rightly, but here this is only in the end of time. But the difficulties of the present can never deny the reality of God's presence and participation. How could one speak of God's absence after Christ? How could one speak of God's absence after the experience of the Spirit? The present is the presence of God in a mystery (compare Mark 4:11 "to you has been given the mystery of the Kingdom"). To speak of it as a mystery is to say that even when one knows it to be true, even when one experiences something of it, much of it still remains mystery.

Thus Paul ends with:

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

"For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?"
"Or who has given a gift to him,
to receive a gift in return?" (Is. 40:13, Job 35:7)

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.
(11:33-36).

II CORINTHIANS 4-5

Paul has worked out, perhaps more clearly than any other New Testament writer, an understanding of suffering, forged in his own experience, and reflected especially in II Corinthians, a letter that comes to grips with suffering and the limits of human existence, balancing hope with reality.

It is usually true that the opening prayer of a letter telegraphs its concerns. In this prayer, which is in the form of a "Benediction," Paul says:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.
(II Cor. 1:3-5)

This must have been a difficult time in Paul's life. He says, "we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself." (1:8)

Paul believed in the Gospel and the possibility of human transformation. He knew the reality of the Spirit and the resurrection of Jesus. But along with believing in these "powers" which could effect human change, he knew that the Gospel was "veiled" (not believable to all) (4:3) and that spiritual treasure was possessed in earthen vessels (the weakness of our humanity) (4:7). Paul and other early Christians were undoubtedly tempted to "oversell" or "hard sell" the Gospel, making it more powerful, persuasive and eloquent than it was. But, he says, "we have renounced disgraceful and underhanded ways; we refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word..." (4:2). So he had previously commented in I Corinthians 2 which contains his explicit theory for communicating the Gospel: "...I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (I Cor. 2:2)

What can then be expected of the "power" of the Gospel as we face circumstances in life which might make us also "despair of life"?

In II Corinthians 4:6 Paul speaks of the significance of the Christ event in the light of language borrowed from the creation story:

For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Or as he previously said in 3:18:

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another ...

Jewish theology had indicated that in the fall humanity lost the glory of God which had been part of its original nature. To speak of the restoration of glory is to speak of the restoration of creation.

It is likely that Paul, following his conversion experience, had figured that the power of this experience would completely transform his life and rescue him from suffering and the limitations of human existence. He soon learned this was not true. Chapters 4 and 5 of II Corinthians are Paul's most mature presentation

of the limits of human transformation and the reality of suffering, knowing still the power of God. Paul's solution is to see God's power as present within our human limits, transforming our human situations but leaving us human. It is only when the body itself is destroyed and we are given a body by God (5:1) that the conditions of human existence will be changed. For the present time the Spirit is given us as a guarantee, a down-payment of the future (5:5). Though longing for our "heavenly dwelling" (5:2), "we are always of good courage" (5:6). Even our perspective on life has changed, for "from now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; ... if any one is in Christ, he (she) is a new creation ...". (5:16-17)

The way of living in the present, within our limitations but with firm faith in the reality of the Transcendent, is well expressed in that jewel of a passage for which most of II Cor. 1-9 seems to be a setting:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believe, and so we speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. (4:7-18)

To grasp the meaning of this passage for us we need to come before it with the same awareness of the paradox of human limitation and transcendent power which was Paul's experience. We each bring to this passage our own pain, our own struggle to exist, our longing for transformation and healing -- and our awareness of the Transcendent, of the presence of God in the midst of our limits. Most of us would like a theory of suffering, a map and techniques for human transformation, special direction or intervention to regain health -- so that we can live more easily and realize the ideals of our society (health, wealth, success, enthusiasm and joy) characterized by the mask-like smiling faces and images of success that meet us on billboards. Though there are successes and transformations, much of life is not like that. Theories and wild heroics seem to make less sense than the quiet but firm affirmation that our bodies are earthen and life is limited, but alongside this we experience the Transcendent. In the mystery of life what is more meaningful than to be able to assert that though we cannot grasp it all, God is there -- even though it seems that God, as life, has limits? And so perhaps our best reaction is to love life as it is -- and to worship rather than to think, praying with Paul:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (1:3-4)

And having so prayed, "to comfort those who are in any affliction."

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

The Gospel of Luke as an Early and Independent Line of Tradition

Luke, author of the Gospel and Acts, by tradition is identified as the associate of Paul, mentioned in Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, II Timothy 4:11. In Acts, the second of the companion pieces, there are sections where the author talks about what "we" did, including himself in the events (16:10-17, 20:5-21:18, and 27:1-28:18). There are some difficulties in reconciling Paul's and Acts' accounts of early Christian history and there are some who would see Acts as written in the second century CE and not by an associate of Paul. For reasons indicated below I see Acts, and therefore an early form of Luke, as being early, written before the Gospel of Mark. I also feel that most of the differences between Paul and Acts, though not all, can be resolved. Thus I accept the traditional explanation of the authorship of Luke-Acts. I will argue below that Luke has an independent line of tradition from that of Mark and Q. Thus Luke brings to us early and valuable witness independent of Mark and Matthew (who used Mark, Q, and his own sources).

The problem with the old four source theory of the Gospels (Mark, Q, M and L) is that it assumes a great deal which does not always seem to be borne out when one examines the materials. For example, the material often assigned to Q (largely sayings material), when compared in the forms in which it exists in Matt. and Luke, seems as if it could not have come from the same source. One has only to examine the materials in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) and the Sermon on the Plain or Level Place (Luke 6:20-49) to see that the materials which are in each Gospel have their peculiarities which are difficult to account for on the basis of the editorial work of the evangelist. It would seem more logical to assume that the tradition came to them in different forms. Regarding Matthew and Luke's use of Mark, it is apparent that Matthew and Luke must have used Mark differently (if both used him), and thus some have posited two editions of Mark, Matthew using one and Luke using the other. It can be argued with good evidence that Matthew used Mark, but can this be done with Luke? Where they have parallel accounts, Luke's account always has its own peculiarities (e.g. the Triumphal Entry and the Cleansing of the Temple) and Luke omits large sections of Markan material which would have supported his concept of Christ's universal mission (e.g. Mark 7-8 which concern Jesus ministry to Gentiles). Thus I would feel that the similarities of narrative material in Luke and Mark are a result of common elements within the early church's oral tradition, which Luke possesses in a form somewhat different than Mark. The similarities of sayings material between Matt. and Lk. (often assigned to Q) really are a result of common elements in the oral traditions also, which each Gospel has in its particular form. The section often called The Great Interpolation in Luke (9:51-9:27), inserted into the narrative structure between ministries in Galilee and Jerusalem, contains about ten chapters of sayings materials with some narratives, some of which is uniquely Lukan and some which is shared with Matthew, but Luke has this in different form. Thus Luke would seem to represent a line of tradition independent from that of Mark and Matthew (or Q). Even in Luke's historical framework for his materials he seems to have had his own form, differing some from Mark.

More than this, Luke also gives indications of a process of development which may make it, in its original form, the earliest Gospel (the Proto-Luke theory). Luke has natural beginning points at chpts. 1, 2, and 3. There are indications that it once existed without including the idea of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. Also, its companion volume, Acts, shows no knowledge of the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), and no knowledge of the deaths of Peter and Paul (mid 60's A.D.). It argues that Christianity was never found offensive by the Romans, something that would make no sense after the deaths of Peter and Paul and the persecution of Christians under Nero (64 A.D.). Thus the original form of the Gospel's date would be affected by the necessity to date Acts before these events. I would feel that the earliest form of the Gospel of Luke and Acts came into being to assist with Paul's defense at Rome. Luke was probably assembling this material while Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea. The Gospel then went through later developments

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as it was applied to other uses (e.g. the addition of chapter 2 and then later the addition of chapter 1). Though one may reconstruct how the three versions of Luke began by merely dropping off chapter 1 and then chapter 2, it is not so easy to reconstruct the the rest of the Gospel at its various stages. It would seem legitimate to conclude that if there were unique theological characteristics of the later "prologues" to the Gospel, these (like the prologue to John) should be utilized to understand how the tradition within Luke as it now stands should be read. Each new stage would not necessarily mean extensive changes within the body of the Gospel, but a new way of reading the tradition, perhaps accompanied by some additions to support the new way of reading. In the Gospel of John the theology of the later semi-Gnostic perspective of the tradition appears in the Discourses of Jesus, that of the latest appears at least in the Prologue and in chapters 20-21, while many of the narratives are much like the Synoptic tradition.

The Editions of the Gospel of Luke and the Lukan Infancy Narratives

Both because of indications within the Gospel of Luke and because of the need to date Acts, the second and companion volume to Luke, early, it seems that there were several editions of Luke-Acts. This seems also to be supported by the great number of textual variants in Manuscripts of Luke-Acts. Proto Luke-Acts were then produced to aid in the defense of Paul at Caesarea and Rome, and then this valuable collection of traditions found other usage, finally being revised to support and supplement information received by Gentile converts in their catechesis (Luke 1:1-4). Proto Luke-Acts should be dated about 62 and the final edition, in the 80s.

PROTO LUKE - starts chapter 3 about 62 A.D.

The compass of this was independent from but similar to Mark, which was written about the same time. It began with chapter 3, which located Jesus in history and started the witness to him with the story of his baptism by John the Baptist. This also included the genealogy. It is important to note that the genealogy in Luke is not a part of the Infancy narrative, but is located after the baptism of Jesus. The emphasis on the Spirit coming on Jesus in his baptism as a personal experience (so Mark, but public in Matt.) and continuing to reside on him during his ministry (e.g. 4:1-18) is similar to the Markan emphasis of God being in Jesus through his Spirit, beginning with the baptism.

SECOND LUKE - starts chapter 2 later 60s A.D.

With the growing interest in Jesus infancy and youth, Luke adds chapter 2 and may have made other revisions in his Gospel. Chapter 2 describes Joseph and Mary traveling to Bethlehem for a census. Such a trip would only have been possible for a married couple and would have been socially unacceptable for a betrothed couple. In 2:5 some Manuscripts read "wife" and others read "betrothed wife" (probably an attempt to recognize that some MSS read "wife" and others read "betrothed"). Thus the addition of chapter 2 would say nothing about a Virgin Birth. The focus of this chapter is on events surrounding the birth of Jesus and one event from his youth at the time of his age of accountability.

THIRD LUKE - starts chapter 1 80s A.D.

At the final stage of the development of Luke chapter 1 is added and perhaps other modifications are made, such as the description of the actual destruction of Jerusalem in 21:20-24. Chapter 1 includes the statement of Luke's purpose (1:1-4), the story of the birth of John the Baptist (information on the Baptist is also included in the Johannine "nativity story," Jn. 1:1-18), and the announcement of the birth of Jesus to Mary and her reaction. This chapter is clear that the birth of Jesus will happen by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, but only implies a Virgin Birth (1:34). In the light of chapter 1, 2:5 may have been changed to "betrothed" (some MSS read "wife" or "betrothed wife") or this might have been changed after the time of Luke. Luke would only have had to change this if he implied a Virgin Birth in chapter 1. If he did not, then the later church made this change. At some point the parenthetical comment in 3:23 was inserted in the genealogy to harmonize this with the idea of the Virgin Birth, indicating that Joseph was only supposed to have been the father of Jesus.

It is important to note that Luke did not regard the Infancy narrative as an essential part of the Apostolic witness (Acts 1:21-22), but probably saw it as introductory and in the nature of a prologue.

Luke's Understanding of the Kingdom

It is interesting to review Luke's understanding of how the promise made to David of an eternal kingdom (II Samuel 7:1-16) was to be reinterpreted in Jesus, introducing us into the heart of some of Luke's theology.

There were three great covenants in the history of the Jewish people. The first was made through Abraham. Abraham was called to go from his country to the land that God would show him and promised that from him would come a great nation and that he would become a blessing (Gen. 12-18). This promise then is that of a land and a people. The next covenant is made through Moses (Ex. 24, Deut. 5) and renewed through Moses at Moab (Deut. 29-30). This covenant expects obedience to the Law God has given and promises blessings to those who obey and cursing of those who do not. It presupposes the Deuteronomic understanding of life: the good and loyal God blesses and the disobedient God punishes. God is just. The third is the covenant made with David in II Samuel 7:1-16 to raise up an offspring after him, to whom God will be like a father, and establish his kingdom, a kingdom forever (12-14). The Davidic covenant and its reshaping in the light of the Christian experience is central in Luke's theology. It has potential for development in terms of social transformation (if its traditional political ramifications are ignored), and there are themes of grace which emerge from the story of David: God grants the future out of God's own graciousness and David's tarnished life remind one that God can love us in our humanity..

To understand the role of the promise to David in Luke one only has to consult a concordance. The stage is set in Luke's birth narrative. In 1:26 ff, when Gabriel comes to Mary, it is said that she was "engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David." (27) When Gabriel announced the coming birth of the child, he says "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (32)

In 1:68-70, old Zechariah, filled with the Spirit, says:

Blessed by the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on
his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a mighty savior for us
In the house of his servant David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, ...

In chapter two for the census "Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David, called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David." (4) In the words of the angel to the shepherds he says,

Do not be afraid: for see -- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. (10-11)

In the genealogy of the third chapter Luke begins with Jesus and goes back, through Joseph (whose son he was thought to be) to Adam as son of God (instead of starting with Abraham as does Matt.) and traces decent from David through Nathan rather than through Solomon. This genealogy is itself a significant reinterpretation of traditional expectations.

In 6:1-5, where Jesus' disciples were accused of plucking grains of wheat on the Sabbath, Jesus answered:

'Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the

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priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions? ' Then he said to them, 'The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.'

In chapter 18 as he approached Jericho he was addressed by a blind man, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!"

A very significant passage, though it does not mention David, is the Triumphal Entry (19:28-40). It is only in Luke that the disciples say, "Blessed is the *king* who comes in the name of the Lord." (italics mine)

The last mention of David in Luke is during Jesus last days in Jerusalem while he is teaching in the Temple. He says,

How can they say that the Messiah is David's son? For David himself says in the book of Psalms
The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool.'
David thus calls him Lord; so how can he be his son? (20:41-44)

To understand the significance of this last passage as the climax of the sayings about David it is important to note that the chapter in which this is contained is preceded by the Triumphal Entry and the Cleansing of the Temple, and includes: the question about his authority, the parable about the tenants of the vineyard who killed the owner's beloved son, the question about paying taxes to Caesar, and the Sadducees question about who would have in the after-life the woman who had seven husbands. The last is developed differently here than in Mark and Matthew and becomes an extended discourse on those considered worthy of a place in the new age, who don't die anymore because they are like the angels and are children of God and of the resurrection.

Keep in mind that though the Kingdom promised to David may have originally meant the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom, and though it did not completely lose its political connotations, as it developed by the time of the New Testament there was despair as to what could happen through human and historical processes. This world seemed so resistant to God that it was understood to be ruled by Satan. With the intertestamental development of viewing the world and humanity through the Fall (of humans and angels) and understanding flesh (the substance of the human body) as problematic, Apocalyptic thought understood that when the Kingdom came there would have to be a new heaven and earth for this world could not fulfill God's purposes. In Apocalyptic literature the earthly rule of the Messiah was understood as temporary and preliminary to the establishment of God's final rule (which already existed in heaven), often through the Man from Heaven, the Son of Man. Thus there was a spiritualization and depoliticalization for some of the expectations for the fulfillment of the promise to David. It is important to note that for Luke and his understanding of Jesus the prophetic, historical and social role of the Kingdom of David is somewhat restored, though not identified with the restoration of the state. For Luke and his Jesus, God's Rule cannot just be what will happen in the future by God's intervention. It would transform the present.

Luke's understanding of the Kingdom of David could then be described in the following ways:

1) For Luke the Apocalyptic hope of an imminent end (held in much of Judaism and early Christianity) no longer was at the fore. He still retained Apocalyptic material (e.g. Luke 21; 17:22ff), refined to his taste, but as Hans Conzelmann pointed out in his work on Luke's theology, Luke defers this to a more distant future and takes *present history seriously as the era of the church and Spirit*. The *centrality of the Spirit* in the life of Jesus and the history of the early church (Acts) is significant because then the present is not merely the time of the development of the church as an institution, but is the time of God's transformative action. In the language of Judaism and early Christianity, "the Spirit" was one of the significant terms for talking about God's presence within history. In Luke 11:13, the Spirit is the gift of our heavenly Father who knows how to give more than *things* to his children: he gives the Spirit, *God's self*. For Luke this is seen most idealistically in

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the mother church at Jerusalem (of which his portrayal in Acts is probably unrealistically romantic) and the ongoing work of the Spirit (which accompanies the Christian mission in Acts). Acts, originally written in 62 C.E., is overly-optimistic; for it was written in an optimistic period of the history of the church. Acts assumes that God's Spirit is irresistible and neglects the "realism" imposed by taking seriously Jesus' crucifixion which is so significant in Pauline theology (see I Cor. 1). Thus Luke had to learn from the experiences of 64-70 A.D.: the deaths of Peter and Paul, the persecutions of Christians under Nero at Rome, and the Fall of Jerusalem to Roman armies. These tragedies were also the realities of life in Luke's bold "new age."

2) *The transformation effected by the Kingdom and Spirit was to change both persons and society.* It involved the gift of God's grace which was to become the basis on which people understood themselves (not merit or status). It also involved confrontation of the existent social and cultural situations on the basis of this gift and on the basis of God's righteousness. This will become clear with the listing below of the significance of various passages in Luke's Gospel. *It is thus in Luke that Jesus' address to the social situation is best preserved, while in Matthew it is spiritualized* (one has only to examine the beatitudes where in Luke the "poor" are the poor, whereas in Matthew they are the "poor in spirit").

Luke's portrayal of the Kingdom as presented in the Gospel is manifested in:

- 1 The birth of Jesus through Mary - the exaltation of the humble through god's gift and action.
Mary is presented as a model of one who bears the Spirit.
- 3:15-22 Jesus baptized, bearer of the Spirit.
- 4:1-15 Jesus, full of the Spirit, tempted with temptations to be the traditional Messiah of power.
- 4:16ff Jesus fulfills God's Jubilee (the time when all rights are to be restored - Lev. 25-27)) with all of its social implications (this is placed at the beginning of Jesus' ministry to announce its meaning). Jesus states this as an interpretation of Is. 61.
- 6:20ff The Beatitudes, accompanied by a balancing group of "Woes," directed towards the issues of poverty, hunger, suffering.
- 7:18-23 Jesus' words to the disciples of John the Baptist reinforce what he says in 4:16ff about his mission. In 4:16ff he quotes Is. 61 and here he refers to it.
- 7:36ff Woman forgiven and accepted, not because of her righteousness, but because of her love and faith.
-note also the role of women in the Gospel. See also:
 - 1 Elizabeth and Mary
 - 7:11 Widow at Nain
 - 8:1-3 Women accompanies Jesus
 - 8:19-21 Who are Jesus mother and brothers? Luke greatly softens the harshness of this passage as it appears in Matt. and Mark so that there is no rejection of Mary.
 - 8:40ff Jairus' daughter.
 - 10:38ff Mary and Martha.
 - 13:11ff woman healed.
 - 15:8ff A woman and a lost coin.
 - 21:1ff A poor widow.
 - 23:53-24:11 Women at the crucifixion and at the tomb, receiving announcement of the resurrection first(A few of these incidents are in other Gospels, but a number are particular to Luke.)
- 10:25-37 The Good Samaritan - being a neighbor.
- 10:38-42 One thing needful: to be with and listen to Jesus.
- 11:1-13 God is a "Father" who knows how to give good gifts to God's children, especially the Spirit (i.e. God's Self). The Lord's prayer which includes petitions for hallowing God's name and the coming of God's kingdom.
- 11:20 The Kingdom comes in the casting out of demons.
- 12-Be ready for the coming of the Son of Man, watch.
- 13-Bear fruit. The Kingdom is like a mustard seed and leaven.

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- 14-15 The value of persons. This begins with parables of banquets where the poor, lame, maimed and blind are to be invited. Then come three parables about the "lost," first a sheep, then a coin, and climatically, two sons.
- 16:16-17 The Kingdom is now preached. The Law and the Prophets were until John the Baptist and belong to the old order. With difficulty the old order passes away. This is then followed by some rather radical statements on the nature of the new order of the kingdom, including the parable of Dives and Lazarus, dealing with the failure of the rich man to care for the poor.
- 17:11ff An encounter with lepers in Samaria (remember Jewish hostility to Samaritans). There are several Samaritan stories in Luke, including the Good Samaritan in Chpt. 10.
- 17:20ff The Kingdom is in your midst and is not coming with observable signs. As for the coming of the Son of Man, this will happen suddenly in a world continuing as usual.
- 18 Parable of Pharisee and Publican-who is justified before God. The Rich Ruler-problem of the rich getting into the kingdom of God. Salvation is only possible with God.
- 19 Zacchaeus, the tax collector-the lost is saved. A parable about "kingly power," Parable of the Pounds. The issue is recognizing the kingship of the king, wanting his rule, and exercising responsibility towards him.
- 19:41ff Jesus weeps over Jerusalem because it does not know what makes for peace, and then predicts its destruction.
- 20..Conflicts with Jewish leaders. Denial that Messiah is David's son and therefore denial of the political and military function of the Messiah. The Messiah is David's Lord.
- 24:44-53 The fulfillment of Scripture is Christ's sufferings and resurrection and the preaching of repentance and forgiveness in his name to the nations.

What is given above is not a complete presentation of relevant materials from the Gospel of Luke about his understanding of the Kingdom, but it is suggestive of his approach. It is amazing that he was able to proclaim this sort of radical social transformation in the context of his involvement in the mission to the Gentile world. Jesus was able to function as prophet to his society because he functioned within the limits of a rather small society and geographical location and within the context of a people with a prophetic tradition. In much of the early church one discovers that as the church moved from its original context in Palestine into the vast Greco-Roman world it came to realize that it could not affect societal change. This was beyond its power. It therefore sought to create *within the church* a new society where there was neither Greek or Jew, slave or free, male or female (Gal. 3:28) and dealt with such issues as slavery only where the opportunity provided itself (I Cor. 7:17-24). Paul, utilizing the cross as well as the resurrection and experience of the Spirit as his paradigm of human experience, knew well the resistance and harshness of life in the world (I Cor. 4:8-13; II Cor. 4:7-5:5; I Thess. 1:6). Thus he developed a "realism" towards historical possibilities, though always affirming the transformative power of God's word and Spirit.

Luke started out in his Christian life as an incurable optimist. His presentation of the mother Christian church in Jerusalem is overly idealistic and his presentation of the development of the Christian mission in Acts is overly-optimistic. The power of God's Spirit moves the church in its witness and all obstacles are overcome. Whenever Christians appear before Roman officials they are recognized as not dangerous and acquitted. One has the feeling that within a life-time the world might be evangelized.

In A.D. 64 the persecution of Roman Christians by Nero occurred and Peter was put to death. Paul died in the late 60's. In A.D. 70 Jerusalem was destroyed by Roman armies and the mother church of Christianity was driven out of Jerusalem, no longer to occupy the role it had within developing Christianity. With the separation of Christianity from Judaism that occurred by A.D. 70, Christianity no longer enjoyed the protection of the special Roman laws which granted privilege and protection to Jews. The harshness of life then must have come home to Luke. The earliest form of Luke and Acts were originally written in the early 60s to assist with the defense of Paul in Rome. Both underwent later revisions, but little change seems to have been made in the optimism of Acts. One can more clearly find changes in the Gospel which would indicate awareness of this new realism. One such change might be the addition of Luke 17:22-37. Here it is said that "the Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed ... for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you (or within you)." Jesus says that the world will continue as usual until the Son of Man comes. Then in 18:1ff he encourages them to call to God for vindication and raises the question of faith. It is important to realize that Luke 17:22-37 is an

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Apocalyptic section unique to Luke, not existing in the other Gospels as a body but with some parallels in Matthew 24, the Little Apocalypse.

It is possible that this "realism" is also reflected in the addition of Luke 1, or possibly in the addition of Luke 1 and 2 (the original Gospel started at Chapter 3). Luke 1 includes the struggles and humanity of those who are to be the carriers of the transformation created by God. Mary fears, doubts, and ultimately accepts in faith. In Luke 2 events of Jesus' birth and early life (circumcision and experience at 12 yrs. in the Temple) are included to give perspective to the human process which produced the bearer of the promise made to David. Jesus is born in a manger and visited by shepherds (not wisemen as in Matt.). And old Simeon's blessing includes also the sword that will pierce Mary's soul, perhaps a prophecy of the crucifixion. Mary then becomes for Luke an important paradigm for the life of the Christian: to receive the promise of God and the gift of God in faith, to allow one's life to be overshadowed by God, to become "handmaiden" to the Lord, to doubt and fear and to bear the pain while trusting in what is born and the future which is in the hands of the one who can make creation new. How important it is, not only for women, but for men, to have the model of Mary.

The role of Mary provides us with a metaphor for the Kingdom we might call *birthing*. It is she who births the fulfillment to the promise to David. The angel tells Mary that she has found favor with God and will bear a son. When Mary asks how this shall be, the angel replies:

The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. (1:35)

The word "overshadow" is very important in understanding what Luke is saying by this story. It comes from the narrative about the presence of God at the tabernacle during the journey of the Hebrews out of Egypt (Ex. 40:34-38). A cloud, indicating God's presence, covered the tent and the glory of God dwelled within. The words of the angel mean that the presence of God (the Spirit) will come upon Mary and the glory of God will dwell within her. *Her womb will become the temple of God, and the child to be born will be holy, will belong to God.*

This event is not only significant to Mary. The angel had implied that it would continue to be significant to all of God's people. Thus Luke places it in the first chapter of his Gospel as an introduction to all that he is to say. The clue to how this event was to be significant to all is to be found in Luke's understanding of the Spirit throughout both the Gospel and its companion volume, Acts.

The Spirit comes upon Mary (1:35); Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, was filled with the Holy Spirit (1:41); the Spirit comes upon old Simeon in the Temple who announces that God's salvation has now appeared in the infant Jesus (2:25-27); the Spirit descends upon Jesus in his baptism (2:22); Jesus begins his ministry full of the Spirit (4:1,14); in the Nazareth synagogue Jesus announces that "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me" (4:18). Jesus then promises the coming of the Spirit (24:49, Acts 1:8), and the Spirit comes upon the Church in Acts 2, the experience of Pentecost. From the perspective of Luke, the history of the early church, as written in Acts, is the story of the Spirit.

The coming of the Spirit upon Mary and the birth of her child then becomes the model, the paradigm, of the Christian life. *It is not merely the story of Mary but the story of how God comes to us and what God may birth within us. It is the birth which produces many births.*

*Strange birth!
Who could have guessed
What life could be
Without a Word from God?*

*Mary trembled
Woman
Poor
From Nazareth*

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*O'er-shadowed by God's Spirit
As creation
Or Exodus,
Bearer of old David's hope,
Salvation-history narrowed
To fragile womb
Birthing and
Growing child.*

"How can this be?"

*"Behold
Thy handmaid.
Let it be to me,"
She said.
Straightway
Womb thought cursed
by Eve's mistake
Tabernacled
God's Glory.*

*Tiny child,
Bearer
of chaos and creation
of humanity's despair and hope,
Probe life's dimensions
Till you and I
Cradling God within our breast
Know what can be.*

*Beloved Mary,
With you I
Magnify the Lord
in flesh exalted,
Bow
With shepherds, sheep and ox
Before the manger's song;
And bear within my heart
The pain and hope
Which pierced your own heart too.*

Outline of the Gospel of Luke

1:1-80 Introduction to Third Edition

1:1-4 Purpose and historical methodology

Transmission of the tradition, others have compiled, intention to create an orderly account that you (Theophilus = lover of God, or God-fearer = a Gentile who was interested in Judaism and hence Christianity) may have certainty about what you previously received as oral information.

1:5-80 Prebirth Narrative

1:5-25 Promise of child to Zechariah and Conception of John the baptist

1:26-38 Promise to Mary of the holy child, the inheritor of David's kingdom

1:39-56 Mary's visit to Elizabeth and Mary's Magnificat

1:57-80 Birth of John and prophecy of Zechariah; time of salvation; child to be prophet of Most High

2:1-52 Introduction to Second Edition

2:1-20 Birth Narrative

2:1-7 Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem because of census, in time of Augustus and Quirinius

2:8-20 Angel announces to shepherds birth of Savior

2:21 Circumcision and Naming

2:22-38 Purification in Temple and redemption of Jesus as first-born; Simeon: child is salvation for Gentiles and Israel, but opposition within Israel and sword will pierce Mary's heart; Anna the prophetess

2:39-40 Return to Nazareth

2:41-50 Trip to Jerusalem and Temple incident when Jesus was 12 "I must be in my Father's house"

2:51-52 Return to Nazareth; Mary kept these things in her heart, Jesus increased in wisdom and stature

3:1-38 Beginning of the First Edition.

[This probably cannot be called an Introduction. In Acts 1:21-22 Luke is clear that the story of "the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us" began with the Baptism by John and ended with the Resurrection/Ascension. Thus the essential compass of the Gospel story is what appears in the Gospel of Mark. John the Baptist has such a firm role at the beginning of the Gospel that Luke here dates everything from his ministry rather than the beginning of Jesus'.]

3:1-20 The Ministry of John the Baptist

3:1-6 Located in the time of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate, etc.; fulfills prophecy of Is. 40:3-5: prepare way of the Lord

3:7-14 Ethical message: judgement and call for repentance; to have Abraham as father is not enough

3:15-17 Was John the Christ?

3:18-20 John imprisoned

3:21-22 Jesus baptized. The heavens open (a vision), the Spirit descends on him, a voice says, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased" (a conflation of Ps. 2:7, a royal psalm interpreted Messianically in Jesus day, and Is. 42:1, part of the Servant material).

3:23-38 Jesus' genealogy through Joseph ("as was supposed"), back to Adam (called son of God), through David via Nathan, not Solomon

[Some of Judaism (e.g. Philo) interpreted the creation stories of Genesis as speaking about two Adams: Gen. 1 dealt with an ideal heavenly Adam after the pattern of which the earthly Adam of Gen. 2-3 was made. This then left the Original Adam in heaven as a possible redeemer. Since Adam = Man in Hebrew and son of man was a periphrasis for Man, the term Son of Man as used by Jesus may have this connotation. In II Esdras it did have the connotation of the heavenly Man, who is also called son of God. Son of Man seems to be used that way in John. Thus tracing Jesus genealogy back to Adam, son of God, may be more than indicating that Jesus is to be redeemer of all human kind. It may connect him with the expected Man from heaven.]

[GALILEAN MINISTRY]

4:1-44 Jesus Ministry Defined

4:1-13 Full of the Spirit, tempted by the devil. In Matthew and Luke the same Temptations are described, though not in the same order. The Temptations seem to have to do with traditional understandings of the Messiah as a powerful and conquering ruler. Jesus rejects these and in doing so indicates his loyalty to God by quoting from Deut, 6 and 8, passages located near the Shema in Deut. 6:4-5. This means that traditional Messianic expectations are seen as misleading if not demonic.

4:14-15 In the power of the Spirit into Galilee (note Lukan emphasis on role of Spirit in Jesus); report went out (note how oft this is said).

4:16-30 Nazareth Synagogue- announcement of program of social transformation and justice for lowly in light of Is. 61:1,2; 58:6; prophecy of opposition (no prophet acceptable in own country) and salvation of non-Jews; anger of those in Synagogue. Because of its importance Luke places this at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. In Mark and Matthew the incident at Nazareth is later and does not include the passage from Isaiah as the announcement of Jesus' program.

4:31-37 Capernaum on Sabbath - man with unclean demon exorcised, authority over demons; reports went out

4:38-39 Simon's mother-in-law healed

4:40-41 Many ill and possessed healed

4:42-44 People seek him, but he must preach good news; was preaching in Synagogues of Judea (MS variant is Galilee)

[Particularly the material in chapter 1 on Jesus as inheritor of the promise made to David of whose kingdom there will be no end (1:33), the identification of the presence of God's Kingdom with the Spirit which comes on Jesus and others, and the definition given to the social transformative expression of this Kingdom in Jesus use of Isaiah in 4:16-30 -- all of these are developed throughout the Gospel. Because Luke is responsible to the tradition he has besides the theological intent with which he organizes and edits it, it is difficult to outline the material so as to show the development of argument, and thus I will not much attempt this. However, the mentioned themes should be kept in mind. Also significant is inclusivity of the poor, the sinners/unreligious and the Samaritans in Luke. When one considers the contemporary social role of women, the major role women play in Luke is significant: beginning with Mary in chapter 1 as a paradigm of those who bear the Spirit.]

5:1-11 Miraculous catch at Lake of Gennesaret; Peter: I am sinful; become fishers of persons.

5:12-16 Leper healed, report.

5:17-26 Pharisees and teachers from every village of Galilee and Judaea and from Jerusalem; paralyzed man: sins are forgiven, rise-walk; Son of Man has authority to forgive.

5:27-39 Levi called. Pharisees and scribes accused Jesus of eating with sinners and tax collectors, and not fasting like disciples of John and Pharisees. New garment and new wine.

6:1-11 Two sabbath incidents: plucking grain and healing man with withered hand.

6:12-16 After prayer all night, chose 12 apostles from disciples.

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6:17-49 The Sermon on a level place (some material similar to Sermon on Mount in Matthew 5-8).

6:17-19 Multitudes from Judea and the coast of Tyre and Sidon come to hear and be healed, not just disciples are present.

6:20-26 Beatitudes and Woes, deal with social issues: poor, hungry, weeping, persecuted.

6:27-36 Love your enemies. Be merciful.

6:37-38 Judge not, forgive, give.

6:39-42 Blind can't lead blind; take log from your eye before neighbor's speck.

6:43-45 Good tree bears good fruit.

6:46-49 Everyone who comes, hears, does: Parable of houses on rock and without foundation.

7:1-17 Two healings of non-Jews (seems to relate to what Jesus said in 4:24ff in Nazareth synagogue, which specifically mentions Elijah did for non-Jews, including a widow whose son he raised).

7:1-10 Healing of centurion's servant. "...not even in Israel have I found such faith."

7:11-17 Raising of Widow's son in Nain

7:18-35 John the Baptist

7:18-23 John asks "Are you he?" Jesus replies using Is. 28:18-19; 35:5-6; 61:1. This is similar to Is. passages Jesus uses in Lk. 4:18-19

7:24-35 Who is John? More than a prophet. Fulfills Mal. 3:1. People and tax collectors respond who were bapt. by John, but not Pharisees and scribes. This generation is like playing children. They say John has a demon and the Son of Man is a glutton, drunkard. "Yet wisdom is justified by all her children."

7:36-50 Jesus eats at Simon's, a Pharisee. Weeping woman anoints his feet. Why doesn't he know she's a sinner? Parable of two debtors. Who's forgiven little loves little. Forgives woman's sins.

8:1-3 Goes through cities and villages preaching good news of Kingdom. Twelve and woman with him (including Mary Magdalene).

8:4-18 Parable of Sower and the secrets of the Kingdom. This is a variant of the tradition about the discourse of Jesus on parables in Mark 4, but quite different. Focus is on different responses of soils to the sown Word of God, but "nothing secret that shall not be known". To who has will more be given.

8:19-21 Jesus' mother and brothers are those who hear word of God and do it.

8:22-25 Jesus stills storm. Who is this?

8:26-39 Gerasene demoniac. Healed, he went away proclaiming what Jesus did.

8:40-56 Heals daughter of Jairus, a ruler of synagogue. Woman with flow of blood touches him and is healed by her faith.

9:1-6 Mission of the twelve, preaching and healing. Herod heard.

9:7-17 When return they withdraw to Bethsaida, crowds follow, Jesus feeds 5,000, with 12 baskets of pieces left (Symbolizing gathering of the 12 tribes? In Mark 8 the symbolism of the baskets gathered in two feedings is developed.)

9:18-22 While praying alone (note how frequently Luke mentions prayer), "Who do people say I am?" Peter answered: "The Christ of God." The Son of Man must suffer, be killed, rise.

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9:23-27 If follow, take up cross. Who is ashamed of me, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when comes in glory. Some here will not taste death until Kingdom.

9:28-36 Transfiguration. Eight days after they went to pray on mountain. Moses and Elijah present. Disciples saw Jesus' glory. Voice: "This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him" (seems similar to voice at Jesus' baptism).

9:37-45 Jesus heals man's son with demon. "...the Son of Man is to be delivered..." They did not understand.

9:46-48 Argument about who greatest. It is who is least.

9:47-50 Man casting out demons in Jesus' name. "...he that is not against you is for you."

[JOURNEY TOWARDS JERUSALEM]

[Here begins a long section of Luke, sometimes called the Great Interpolation because it is a large insertion into a supposedly determinative Markan outline. It extends to 19:27 and is presented within the framework of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. One has to wonder what the *frequent mention of Jerusalem and the journey towards Jerusalem* have to do with the centrality of Jerusalem in the life of the church in Acts. It is unclear just where to begin and end this section, but it contains many brief narratives and sayings materials which are not always clear as to sequence and location, except to be located with that journey. Some events in Samaria are presented here. Jews and Samaritans were traditionally hostile. It seems that the evangelists located significant traditions which they cannot place elsewhere between Jesus' Galilean ministry and his last days in Jerusalem, partially as a convenient location. The Markan material here is quite short. For Luke it is almost ten chapters. Luke would have included materials because of their role in his presentation of Jesus' meaning, but he would also have included some materials because he found these traditions available and was hesitant to leave them out. Note his purpose as stated in 1:1-4, to present an orderly account of traditions handed down, against the background of other attempts.]

9:51-56 Goes toward Jerusalem and Samaritans don't receive him.

9:57-62 Many say they will follow, but excuses.

10:1-24 The mission of the Seventy: Heal and say "The Kingdom of God has come near to you." Woe to the places which reject you. Who hears you hears me. The Seventy return with joy. "I saw Satan fall..." In 10:21-22 "...no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." [This passage and Matthew 11:25-30 sound very much like the Johannine Jesus.] Many longed to see and hear what you do.

10:25-37 Lawyer: "...what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Parable of the Good Samaritan. Neighbor is one who shows mercy.

10:38-Mary and Martha and the one thing needful: to be with Jesus.

11:1-13 Prayer

11:1-4 The Lord's Prayer - Jesus asked to teach them to pray. (Note that this version is shorter than the more liturgical version in Matt. 6.)

11:5-13 Parables: A friend responds when bothered. Ask, seek, knock. The father who knows how to give good gifts. God gives the Holy Spirit (God's self).

11:14-23 He casts out demons by Beelzebul. "If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

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11:24-26 More demons will move into an empty person if life not filled.

11:27-28 Blessed those who hear and keep Word.

11:29-32 No sign but the sign of Jonah (? Jesus in the grave three days like Jonah in the belly of the whale?).

11:33-36 Be full of light, without any darkness.

11:37-54 At dinner with Pharisee, did not wash . Cleanse inside besides outside. Woe to Pharisees. Woe to lawyers. Scribes and Pharisees press him hard.

12:1-12 Multitudes gather. Says to disciples: Beware of leaven of Pharisees; nothing hidden; fear God rather than those who kill; Son of Man will acknowledge those who acknowledge Jesus (here seems to speak of Son of Man separate from himself); blasphemy against Holy Spirit not forgiven; in trial Spirit will teach you.

12:13-13:9 Anxiety and the coming Kingdom.

12:13 One of multitude asks Jesus bid brother divide inheritance. Parable of rich man and his barns.

12:22-31 Don't be anxious about life, food, clothing. "Seek his kingdom and these things shall be yours as well."

12:32-34 Your Father's pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell. Treasure is where heart is.

12:35-40 Parable about readiness for the master. The Son of Man is coming.

12:41-48 Parable of servants who did and did not do master's will.

12:49-54 I cast fire upon the earth. Division in families.

12:54-56 Interpret the signs of the time.

12:57-59 Settle with the accuser.

13:1-5 Repent or perish.

13:6-9 Cut down fig tree if it does not bear.

13:10-17 Woman freed from infirmity. Ruler of synagogue indignant, because sabbath. Take ox or ass to water, why not heal?

13:18-21 What is Kingdom like? Mustard seed. Leaven.

13:22 On his way toward Jerusalem, asked, Will few be saved? Enter by the narrow door before the householder shuts it. "...some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

13:31-35 Pharisees warn of Herod. How often Jesus would gather Jerusalem's children, but they would not.

14:1-24 Dined at house of Pharisee. Healed man with dropsy on sabbath. Parable about humbling self at banquet. Do not invite friends or kinsmen or rich, but the poor. Parable of banquet of Kingdom: invited make excuses and lowly are gathered.

14:25-33 Hate family. Bear cross. Count cost. Renounce all.

14:34-5 Salt is no good if loses saltiness.

15:1-32 Jesus accused of eating with sinners. Tells three parables: Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Parable of Prodigal [really parable of loving father of two sons] These parables are arranged to move to a climax. In the first two heaven rejoices over a repentant sinner, but in the third the father loves and receives the sons before repentance.

16:1-9 Parable of Dishonest Steward, commended for shrewdness in preparing for future.

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16:10-15 Be faithful and serve God, not wealth. Pharisees who love money hear.

16:16-17 Law and prophets 'till John. Now good news of Kingdom preached. Hard for Law to pass away. [This seems to be a variant saying of Matth. 5:17-18, but with quite a different meaning. While in Matthew Jesus comes to fulfill the Law in a new Law of his commandments, in Luke the Law is at an end, though Jesus opens their minds to how he fulfills it -24:44-53.]

16:18 Who divorces and remarries commits adultery.

16:19-31 Parable of Rich Man and Poor Lazarus. After death the rich man is in agony and Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom.

17:1-4 Woe to the one by whom temptations come. "If your brother sins...", forgive him seven times a day.

17:5-6 If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could uproot tree.

17:7-10 Servants do what the master expects.

17:11-19 On way to Jerusalem, between Samaria and Galilee, ten lepers healed, only Samaritan returns with praise.

17:20-37 When is the Kingdom coming? Not with observable signs, "for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of (or within) you." Don't be fooled by those who say "here". Son of Man must first suffer. As in Noah's time and Lot's all will go on as usual. When it comes, drop everything and don't turn back.

18:1-8 Pray and don't lose heart. Parable of the widow who bothered judge for vindication. God will vindicate his elect. "Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

18:9-14 Parable of Pharisee and tax collector in Temple. Who exalts self will be humbled.

18:15-17 To such as children belongs the Kingdom.

18:18-30 Ruler calls Jesus "good teacher" and asks what to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus says no one is good, but God. Sell all and give to poor. Hard for rich to get into heaven, but not impossible with God.

18:31-34 To the twelve: we go to Jerusalem and everything prophesied of Son of man will be accomplished.

18:35-43 Blind man near Jericho: "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!"

19:1-10 Passed through Jericho. Zacchaeus, tax collector, has Jesus as guest and restores what defrauded. Son of Man came to save lost.

19:11-27 Near Jerusalem Jesus told parable because they supposed Kingdom to appear immediately. Parable of nobleman who gives pounds to his servants. His citizens did not want him to return and reign over them. To who has will more be given.

[IN JERUSALEM]

19:28-40 Going to Jerusalem, near to Bethphage and Bethany. Sends for colt and rides into city. "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord." The word "king" appears here only in Luke and may have to do with his reinterpretation of Davidic expectations. Thus Jesus is announced as king in the entry.

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19:41-44 Weeps over city because did not know things that made for peace. Did not know time of visitation.

19:45-21:38 Teaching in the Temple

19:45-47 Cleanses Temple - My house a house of prayer. Taught daily in Temple.

20:1-8 By what authority do you do these things?

20:9-18 Parable of the Vineyard let out to tenants who kill the beloved son; the rejected stone which will crush those who fall on it.

20:19-26 Attempt to trap Jesus by asking whether tribute should be paid to Caesar (a question raised by Jewish revolutionaries of Jesus' time).

20:27-40 Sadducees ask about who would have woman who had seven husbands in the after-life. This initiates discussion not only of there not being marriage in the after life, but that those worthy of the age to come cannot die any more and like the angels are children of God. Unlike this passage in Mark, the primary concern here is really the nature of the after-life.

20:41-47 The Christ cannot be David's son, for David (Ps. 110) calls him Lord. This passage must be significant in Luke's reinterpretation of Jesus fulfillment of the promise to David. The promise is fulfilled in Jesus, but the Christ is David's Lord. Thus David does not define the Christ.

20:45-47 Beware of the scribes.

21:1-4 The poor widow who contributed out of her poverty.

21:5-36 The Little Apocalypse

21:5-7 Days will come when not one stone left in Temple. When?

21:8-11 Signs of the end.

21:12-19 Persecution and your witness.

21:20-24 Jerusalem sieged and destroyed until time of Gentiles over (note Daniel 7:25, 12:7; see Rev. 11:2)).

21:25-28 Signs and the coming of the Son of Man.

21:29-33 Parable: leaves of fig tree are signs of summer. This generation will not pass away till all takes place.

21:34-36 Watch and pray for strength.

21:37-38 Every day he taught in Temple and stayed on Olivet.

22:1-6 Feast of Unleavened Bread, Passover, near. Betrayal arranged with Judas.

22:7-18 Preparation for Passover

22:14-23 The Last Supper [Note that some of the MSS tradition of Luke has two cups.] Jesus vows not to eat Passover again or drink wine until the Kingdom comes.

22:24-30 Dispute about who is greatest: not the one who is served, but the one who serves, not by exercise of Lordship. Jesus assigns them a place in the Kingdom.

22:31-34 Peter will deny Jesus, but when he turns he should strengthen others.

22:35-38 Now disciples should take purse, bag, sword. Scripture to be fulfilled: reconed with transgressors.

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22:39-46 To Mount of Olives. Prays: remove cup, but your will be done. Disciples sleep.

22:47-65 Jesus betrayed. Slave injured and healed. "...this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Peter's denial in house of high priest. Jesus mocked and asked to prophesy.

22:66-71 Jesus tried by Sanhedrin. Son of Man/God to be seated at right hand of God.

23:1-5 Accusation before Pilate.

23:6-12 Pilate sends Jesus to Herod.

23:13-25 Jesus tried and sentenced by Pilate. Barabbas released.

23:26-31 Simon of Cyrene carries Jesus' cross. Jesus warns Jerusalem.

23:44-49 Jesus crucified at sixth hour and dies at ninth. Temple curtain rent. "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" Centurion: "Certainly this man was innocent." Disciples and women stood at distance and saw (thus were witnesses).

23:50 Joseph of Arimathea puts Jesus' body in his tomb. Women see where the tomb and his body were and prepare spices for anointing after sabbath.

24 The Resurrection and Ascension

24:1-12 Women find tomb empty early on first day. Two men tell them he rose and remind them of his prophecy of his resurrection. Women (Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James and other women) return to disciples and tell them.

24:13-35 Two disciples travel to Emmaus and encounter Jesus, unrecognized, along the way. He eats with them and opens to them the Scriptures about his suffering and entry into glory. They return to Jerusalem to the eleven and others, and are told that Jesus appeared to Simon (Peter/Cephas) (note I Cor. 15:5).

24:36-43 Jesus appears to disciples and shows them his hands and feet and asks them to touch him. He eats with them.

24:44-53 Jesus departing message. He reminds them of how he fulfills what was written of him in the Law and the prophets and the psalms. [Note how this is also the emphasis of the ending of Acts (28:23).] He opened their minds to understand: "... the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead..." and repentance and forgiveness should be preached in his name to all nations, starting in Jerusalem. "You shall be (or are -- the verb is understood, not stated, in the Greek text and its tense is decided in context) witnesses of these things." Promise given to clothe them with power from on high. [Note how this relates to Acts 1:8.] He blesses them and is carried to heaven.