ABSTRACT

Recasting a Fish Story: Miracle and Mission in Luke 5:1-11

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In the calling of Peter, James, and John, the Gospel of Luke incorporates three distinct traditional stories about Jesus into one narrative. The focus of this study is to understand the way this arrangement is heard by Luke's model readers. The method is be broadly narrative critical, with reference to classical rhetorical criticism. This study makes three contributions to the study of the gospels generally and to this passage in particular. First, Luke's version of the calling of Peter, James, and John is analogous to Aelius Theon's description of *chreia* expansion as well the *paraphrasis* section of later elaboration exercises. This expansion of a *chreia* into a narrative serves as a commentary on the original. In Luke 5:1-11, the expansion of the *chreia* clarifies the meaning of its metaphors and builds a unique picture of the Church and its mission. Second, the metaphor of fishing for people carried a negative connotation in both Greco-Roman and Jewish literature. This negative image is overcome in the Gospel of Luke through the combination of the three traditional elements into one narrative. Third, Luke 5:1-11 paints a more open picture of the Church through its use of the symbol of the Boat.

There is evidence that the boat had already come to symbolize the Church in the gospels. In Matthew and in Luke the story of Jesus preaching from the boat symbolizes the gulf between the Church and the crowds on the shore. By connecting this setting to the miracle of the great catch and the call of the first disciples, Luke has used the symbol of the boat to present an outward facing Church that is focused on bringing the outsiders in.

The dissertation consists of three main sections. The first focuses on the *chreia* as a unit of gospel tradition. I hope in this section to establish that traditional stories about Jesus circulated among early Christians (including the audience of the Third Gospel) in a form that was similar to what Greco-Roman rhetoric defines as a *chreia*, and that the incorporation of these units into the Gospel of Luke is analogous to the incorporation of *chreiai* into Greco-Roman biography. The study reviews previous attempts at reading New Testament texts as *chreia* elaborations, and suggests an alternative model which is more consistent with the production of narrative. The goal is to better understand how the model audience might view the adaptation of units of tradition with which they were already familiar into a narrative form. The second focuses on the symbolic content of the various aspects of the story, in particular the concept of fishing for people and the use of the boat as a symbol of collective fate. Special attention is paid to the way that the Gospel of Luke modifies the symbolism of these aspects of the story through its arrangement of the material. The third section returns to the text of the Third Gospel. The goal is a close reading of our pericope within its narrative setting in Luke. The narrative elements of the text including setting, characters, and plot are considered.

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by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of Religion

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W. H. Bellinger Jr., Ph.D., Chairperson

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2016

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the Religion Department of Baylor University for opening this opportunity to me. The investment that has been made in me as a scholar compels me to work to provide dividends to the Church and the community of New Testament scholars. My advisor, Dr. Mikeal C. Parsons, deserves special thanks for his encouragement and guidance throughout the process. I would also like to thank my second reader, Dr. Lidija Novakovic, for her very helpful comments on this study. I am grateful to my entire Dissertation committee for their time and insights. I would also like to thank Dr. Charles H. Talbert for his example of scholarship in the service to the Church, and Dr. Sharyn Dowd for her encouragement in the first years of my pursuit of this degree.

The greatest debt of gratitude is owed my family for their enduring encouragement. Without the continued love and support of all the members of my family this would not have been possible. Special thanks to my wife Melinda who has remained my ever faithful partner through a long and sometimes difficult process. I would also like to express my gratitude to my young sons Andrew and Alexander who have grown up in the shadow of this dissertation and have sacrificed many evenings and weekends with their father.

To Melinda
for her steadfast love

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In Luke 5:1-11, the calling of Peter, James, and John is retold in a way that is
strikingly different from the parallel accounts in Matthew (4:18-20) and Mark (1:16-18).
The short (perhaps abrupt) calling that we find in the first two gospels is expanded into a
richer narrative that centers on a miracle of Jesus. This study will attempt to better
understand how the transformation of this narrative leads to a distinct understanding of
the Church and its mission. One of the central concerns throughout will be to demonstrate
that Luke 5:1-11 functions as a commentary on the meaning of the call narrative. Rather
than primarily intending a transfer of information, the text builds on a foundation of oral
and written tradition to produce an argument for an understanding of both the call of
Peter and the mission to which he was called.

In his commentary on Luke, François Bovon writes concerning Luke 5:1-11: "the
miracle story can best be described as a midrash or further development of the existing
traditional saying."[1] This dissertation will attempt to build on this observation—that the
miracle story is an interpretation of the existing tradition.[2] It is common in gospel studies,
to explore how texts interpret Old Testament passages and play on the expectation of
audiences by casting familiar passages in a new light. It is also common to discuss how

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[1] François Bovon, *Luke: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 3 vols.
(Hermeneia: Minneapolis; Fortress Press, 2002), 1.171.

[2] While Bovon described the interpretation with the Jewish category of midrash,
this study will appeal primarily to Greco-Roman models. Nevertheless, the idea that the
narrative serves an interpretive role will be important for the study.

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gospel authors have made use of traditional elements and what this use may reveal about the author's theological agenda. Old Testament Scriptures are often understood to be the common property of both author and audience, but the gospel traditions (both oral and written) are rarely considered in the same way. It is my argument in this study that the text intends to be read against a background of gospel traditions. These traditions do not lie on the author's cutting room floor, but are alive in the memory and imagination of the audience. The interplay between a gospel and the gospel tradition in the mind of the reader is an important, if often neglected, ingredient in the making of meaning for our gospels. This study will explore that interplay as it is evidenced in Luke 5:1-11.

Another aspect of this study will focus on the metaphorical function of the miracle in this passage. This aspect is more commonly recognized by interpreters of the Gospel of Luke. There have been significant studies on the meaning of this metaphor; this study will build on the work of these studies, both going further in outlining the inherent difficulties of the metaphor and exploring the mechanics of how the text guides the reader to a particular way of hearing the metaphor against the backdrop of Jewish and Greco-Roman imagery as well as the gospel tradition itself. Modern authors have frequently noted the metaphorical nature of the miracle, but the implications of this metaphor are not fully exploited. Pre-modern writers, as we might expect, found no problem highlighting metaphorical and even allegorical meanings in this passage—many of which will be discussed in the course of the study. These writers, however, tend to neglect the unique contribution of Luke's Gospel by harmonizing the account with the other canonical gospels. This dissertation will seek to fully explore the symbolic significance of the pericope to an unprecedented extent without divorcing the text from

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its historical and literary contexts. The resulting picture will reveal the Gospel of Luke's distinct vision for the mission of the Church.

Narrative Criticism and the Model Audience

While this study will draw on a number of methodologies, the approach will be broadly narrative critical and will draw on classical rhetorical criticism for descriptions of narrative techniques that were contemporary with the production and reception of the Gospel of Luke. An effort will be made to do a close reading of the text in its final form, while attempting to ground that reading in its historical and cultural milieu.

Narrative criticism in gospel studies is an outgrowth of developments in literary criticism near the middle of the twentieth century. In secular literary criticism, the move away from the author was a clear rejection of the authority of the author over the work. The goal was the liberation of the text from the tyranny of the authors. As Rolland Barthes famously wrote, "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author."[3] While there have been works in biblical studies which embrace this radical rejection of the authority of the author, others saw New Criticism as an opportunity to escape the morass of reconstructing the psychology of biblical authors. In this way, to move away from author-focused approaches to the text was a pragmatic attempt to get around the unanswerable question of what an author meant. This concept of authorial intent which was supposed to be the final word on meaning had proved in reality to be unanswerable. Appeals to New Criticism attempted to mark out another path.

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[3] Rolland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 148.

An example of this attempt to escape the question of author is Alan Culpepper's

work, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*.[4] In his introduction, Culpepper provides a

communication model derived from Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse* which

presents the text as a closed communication system providing an *implied author* and an

implied reader which serve to exclude real authors and audiences from the model.[5] In

this way of reading, the text carries with it everything necessary for its interpretation. The

real author is lost to history and no longer determinative for meaning. The real reader is

also bracketed out in favor of the *implied reader.* The *implied reader* is a concept

borrowed from Wolfgang Iser who defines the term in this way:

> If, then, we are to try and understand the effects caused and the responses elicited
> by literary works, we must allow for the reader's presence without in any way
> predetermining his character or his historical situation. We may call him, for want
> of a better term, the implied reader. He embodies all those predispositions
> necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect—predispositions laid down, not
> by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied
> reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a
> construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader.[6]

Thus, the implied reader has all the necessary information/attitudes to make the moves

required by the text and also exists entirely within the text. Mark Allan Powell, who also

employs the category of the implied reader in approaching New Testament texts, writes

that when reading with the implied reader "it is necessary to know everything that the

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[4] Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

[5] Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 6.

[6] Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Becket* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 34.

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text assumes the reader knows."[7] As an example of this kind of knowledge, Powell

offers: "the implied reader of the Gospels surely knows that a talent is worth more than a

denarius (the text assumes this), although real readers today might not have this

knowledge."[8] This necessity for historical knowledge points to a fundamental problem

with seeing the text as a closed system. Texts build on a linguistic and cultural

foundation, and readers read from the perspective of their own linguistic and cultural

position. As recognition of this problem with text-central readings grew, the focus, first in

secular literary criticism and then in biblical studies, shifted increasingly toward the

reader. In some cases this was to jettison the concern for history and authors even more

radically than had New Criticism.

If the rejection of the author was in some sense a rejection of authority, the

privileging of the reader over the text itself shifted the balance of power further. In the

most radical of reader oriented criticism the text becomes little more than raw material in

the hands of the reader who alone has the power to create meaning. Others, however,

sought to tie the text more securely to its historical moorings without returning to the old

emphasis on the individual psychology of the author. Biblical scholars such as Charles

Talbert found an appealing compromise in the work of literary critic Peter Rabinowitz.

While still fundamentally reader-focused, Rabinowitz suggests a heuristic which

reconnects the reader to both the author and the historical circumstances which

surrounded the production of the text. Talbert described the process in this way:

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[7] Mark Allen Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 20.

[8] Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 20.

To read as authorial audience is to attempt to answer the question: If the literary work fell into the hands of an audience that closely matches the author's target audience in terms of knowledge brought to the text, how would they have understood the work? This type of reading involves trying to adopt the perspectives of the authorial audience so that one may become a member of the author's original audience's conceptual community. To do this, modern readers must gain an understanding of the values of the authorial audience and the presuppositions upon which the original text was built. We must reconstruct the conceptual world that was used in the creation and original reception of the text. This approach focuses on how members of a particular culture communicate with one another.[9]

Talbert's application of Rabinowitz's concept of the authorial audience allows him and others who take a similar approach to borrow concepts from literary criticism without abandoning the fruits of more than a century of historical-critical labor. I am sympathetic to this way of reading, and the approach of this dissertation will not be fundamentally different.

For the purposes of the study, however, another model will prove more useful. Umberto Eco, in his early work, and indeed throughout his work, is a champion of the open work, the interpretation of which is not constrained by either the author's intent, nor limited to one *correct* reading. Eco also became, however, a voice of restraint emphasizing that while interpretations are innumerable, not all interpretations are equally valid. According to Eco, "though it may be difficult to decide whether one interpretation is better than another, we can always recognize untenable interpretations."[10] As part of a strategy for distinguishing between the tenable and untenable, Eco proposes the concept of the model reader.

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[9] Charles Talbert, *Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 15.

[10] Umberto Eco, *From the Tree to the Labyrinth*, trans. Anthony Oldcorn (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 568.

To organize a text, its author has to rely upon a series of codes that assign given contents to the expressions he uses. To make his text communicative, the author has to assume that the ensemble of codes he relies upon is the same as that shared by his possible reader. The author has thus to foresee a model of the possible reader (hereafter the Model Reader) supposedly able to deal interpretively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them.

At the minimal level, every type of text explicitly selects a very general model of possible reader through the choice (i) of a specific linguistic code, (ii) of a certain literary style, and (iii) of a specific specialization-indices . . . Other texts give explicit information about the sort of readers they presuppose (for example, children's books, not only by typographical signals, but also by direct appeals; in other cases a specific category of addressee is names; /Friends, Romans, Countrymen . . ./). Many texts make evident their Model Readers by implicitly presupposing a specific encyclopedic competence.[11]

Eco goes on to explain that at times the text is itself building such competence in the model reader.

Thus it seems that a well-organized text on the one hand presupposes a model of competence coming, so to speak, from outside the text, but on the other hand works to build up, by merely textual means, such a competence.[12]

For Eco, the power of a text to "design its own model reader" is what allows text's control over interpretation.[13] And the model reader is defined by encyclopedic competence, or the knowledge necessary "to deal interpretively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them."[14] The socio-cultural encyclopedia of the model reader is the sum total of what must be known (and perhaps not known) to interpret any text.

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[11] Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 7.

[12] Eco, *Role of the Reader*, 8.

[13] Eco, *Labrynth*, 570.

[14] Eco, *Role of the Reader*, 7.

Joel Green is among the biblical scholars to have made use of Eco's concept of the model reader. His commentary on Luke takes a narrative-critical approach to the Gospel of Luke and attempts to read the text in its final form, but he argues that Eco's category helps to keep the reading historically grounded. He writes:

> Use of the category of Model Reader does not allow us to slide into apathy concerning historical questions, since Eco's model attends to what he calls 'world structures.' To put it differently, the text is present to us as a cultural product, which draws on, actualizes, propagates, and / or undermines the context within which it was generated. The Model Reader supported by this text protects the text from colonization or objectification by the Reader by allowing the text its own voice from within its own socio-cultural horizons. However, we are able to embrace the role of Model Reader the more easily because (1) so much of our humanity is shared with the world with which this text found its origins; and (2) the text itself, when read closely and with respect for its difference, as an intercultural exchange more generally, unveils much of its own socio-cultural horizons.[15]

The text alone, however, does not provide everything necessary for a competent reading. The key to understanding the model reader is the encyclopedia.

> [T]he encyclopedia, which is necessarily virtual and impossible to grasp fully due to its complexity, encompasses the conventionalized knowledge of a given society and thus breaches the boundaries of individual sign relations by virtue of the concept of the universe of discourse. Each act of sign production and sign receptions must be related to at least one encyclopedia of culturally conventionalized knowledge.[16]

Not only is the encyclopedia "culturally conventionalized" but it is a product of the text itself. The text indicates the kind of encyclopedic competency of model reader in both explicit and implicit ways.

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[15] Joel B. Green, "Learning Theological Interpretation from Luke" in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 61.

[16] Stefan Alkier, "New Testament Studies on the Basis of Categorical Semiotics" in *Reading the Bible Intertextually* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 233.

The Gospel of Luke does this in a unique way through the prologue. Here we can find a number of clues about the audience that the Gospel envisions. A number of studies have focused on the prologue, and as John Nolland writes, "the sense of almost every element of the prologue has been disputed."[17] Nevertheless, from the prologue we can begin to form a sketch for the gospel's model audience.

The style of the prologue provides some implicit clues about the encyclopedic competency of the model audience.[18] Assessment of the style of the prologue range widely. On one end of the spectrum are those who find evidence in the prologue for a well educated audience. I. Howard Marshal writes: "The preface is written in excellent Greek with a most carefully wrought sentence structure . . . It claims a place for the Gospel as a work of literature, worthy of an educated audience."[19] Others are less impressed by the author's introduction. While calling the prologue "elegantly balanced," Bovon concludes that "Luke writes with an exaggerated artistry; the long sentence in 1:1-4 illustrates effort as much as ability."[20] Whether the prologue indicates that the author soars to literary heights or sputters in the effort, the carefully balanced period[21] is at the least an indication of an aspiration to a carefully crafted text. Further, the prologue is

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[17] John Nolland, *Luke*, 2 vols. (Word: Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 1.5.

[18] First-century narrative texts were realized aurally and communally, rather than primarily in private reading. In recognition of the fact that one cultural convention of the model reader of the Gospel of Luke is that the gospel is primarily to be heard rather than read, I have opted to adapt Eco's model reader to model audience.

[19] I. Howard Marshal, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGCT: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 39.

[20] Bovon, *Luke*, 1.16.

[21] On this point, all are agreed.

formally consistent with an ancient preface typical of both literary and technical writing. For the model reader to recognize this convention it requires that he/she have a basic literary competence and be familiar with the conventions of the day.

The prologue more explicitly defines the model reader by mentioning a real reader and indicating the purpose of the text. The mention of Theophilus, who is addressed as "most excellent" (κράτιστε) further defines the model reader. While some ancient readers understood the name Theophilus, which means friend of God, as a reference to all those who love God rather than a specific individual, scholars now generally agree that Theophilus was a real person, but also that the Gospel was not addressed to him exclusively. The mention of a recipient was conventional in the ancient preface and was never meant to limit the audience to the one named. The mention of a named recipient, however, is one way that the text builds the model reader. While the social position of Theophilus is a matter of some debate, at minimum he is a person of upper median social position. This is not to suggest that the Gospel was intended only for the elite, but it does indicate that the model reader is at least basically educated and well read. We are also told in the prologue that its purpose is to make certain the things which Theophilus had already been taught. This point is of particular interest for this study. The model reader of Gospel of Luke is not coming to the story of Jesus as a blank slate. Not only does the reader bring to the text knowledge and ways of knowing from the broader culture, but the model audience of Luke brings their own experience with the developed and developing Jesus tradition. The fact that the story (and even the tradition from which it is shaped) are not new to Luke's audience is something rarely taken seriously by biblical scholars. Even those who have focused on the response of the reader have

neglected this piece of what the audience brings to the text. A quote from David Rhoads illustrates the point:

> [T]he shift in narrative criticism from author to reader/hearer makes the study of redaction somewhat limited in value, for narrative criticism seeks to recover the final story the author has created *for the reader*. A first-century audience hearing a Gospel would have experienced it as a whole and not as pieces of earlier tradition. Reader/hearers of a Gospel were surely not listening to sort out tradition from redaction. Rather, hearers were absorbed in the story as it was being presented to them.[22]

I would contend that while the audience may have been "absorbed in the story," this does not preclude them from an awareness of the narrative's use of the tradition—a tradition that did not belong exclusively to the authors of gospels, but was the common property of the Christian community. Throughout the course of this study I will argue that the audience's prior experience with the gospel traditions shaped their hearing of Luke's narrative. This is particularly significant when we attempt to hear Luke 5:1-11 with a model audience. This pericope, it is widely accepted, is composed of at least three units of tradition, each of which belongs to the treasury of the Christian communities to whom the gospels are addressed. This allows the narrative to build on or subvert the expectations of the audience through its unique arrangement of the material.

This brings us to the concept of *intertextuality*. Stefan Alkier, as a part of a larger discussion of the history and development of intertextuality as a subfield of semiotics, defines intertextuality in this way:

> *Intertextual* investigation concerns itself with the effects of meaning that emerge from the references of a given text to other texts. One should only speak of intertextuality when one is interested in exploring the effects of meaning that

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[22] David Rhoads, "Narrative Criticism: Practices and Prospects," in *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* (New York: T&T Clark, 1999), 265; emphasis original.

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emerge from relating at least two texts together and, indeed, that neither of the texts considered alone can produce.[23]

A number of studies have been produced which read biblical text intertextually,[24] but in all of these works one important group of texts have been largely neglected—the traditional stories and remembrances about Jesus and his life which circulated in the early church at the time of the production of the canonical gospels. This oversight is understandable as these stories are not texts in the tradition sense. One exception to this tendency to neglect other gospel material, both in the pre-gospel traditions and in the Gospel of Mark, is Mikeal Parsons's recent commentary on Luke. After discussing the likelihood that Luke's model audience would have known Mark and Matthew (or Q), Parsons writes:

> It is reasonable, therefore, to ask how the authorial audience would have responded to Luke's version of the Jesus story, which at times presents a significantly different account of the same story. Here we are not interested in the minute alteration of single words or slight shifts in word order (the common stock of source and redaction criticism) but rather focus on those changes that the authorial audience, familiar with Matthew (or Q?) and Mark, would not have missed (which, of course, may at times include change of wording or word order). And we ask, what would be the rhetorical impact of such modifications on the authorial audience? There, then, the issue is the way in which these previous texts are echoed and reconfigured in this new text. How did the authorial audience, familiar with Matthew and Mark, respond to Luke's version of the Jesus story?[25]

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[23] Stefan Alkier, "Intertextuality and the Semiotics of Biblical Texts," in *Reading the Bible Intertextually,* 9.

[24] For example: Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the letters of Paul*, *Reading the Bible Intertextually* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); Dennis R. McDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Patrick K. Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Hayes; (Louisville: Westminster John Know, 1999), 156-80.

[25] Mikeal C. Parsons, *Luke* (Paideia: Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 13.

I hope to demonstrate throughout this study the fruitfulness of reading the Gospel of Luke

and 5:1-11 in particular as an interpretation and response to these traditions. The prologue

of the gospel invites this kind of reading. The audience is familiar with previous editions

of the story of Jesus—both arranged narratives (1:1) and received traditions (1:2)—and

the Gospel of Luke is intended to be heard as a clarification and guarantee of those

teachings (1:4). If this is the model audience that the text defines, then the encyclopedia

includes knowledge of these traditions.

The Gospel of Luke opens with a statement about predecessors. "ἐπειδήπερ

πολλοὶ ἐπεξείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν τετλψροφορημένων ἐν ἡῖν

πραγμάτων" (1:1). Among the questions raised by this passage are 1) how many is

πολλοὶ, and 2) what does it mean to ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν and 3) what judgment if any

does the gospel make concerning these narratives? Many commentaries have suggested

that when Luke refers to its many (πολλοὶ) predecessors in 1:1, the language is

conventional, but not to be taken too literally.[26] Klostermann writes: "Auch der Hinweis

auf die ‚vielen‘ Vorgenger entspricht der Konvention, beweist also nicht, dass es eine

Fuelle, sondern nur, dass es eine Mehrzahl solcher Texte gab."[27] Kümmel goes as far as

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[26] Robert H. Stein, "Luke 1:1-4 and *Traditionsgeschichte*," *JETS* 26/4 (1983): 422.

[27] Erich Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1975), 1; See also Dillon who rights "'many' obviously need not refer to a crowd of predecessors in the gospel-narrative enterprise, hence it seems reasonable to understand it under the terms of the Two-Source criticism which has been so consistently validated in contemporary Lucan studies. Mark, Q, and Luke's *Sondertradenten* are thus his forerunners." Richard J. Dillon, "Previewing Luke's Project from His Prologue (Luke 1:1-4)" *CBQ* (1981): 207. And J. Bauer writes "Das Konventionelle, Stilgemässe am lukainischen Prolog is immer wieder betont worden." J. B. Bauer (*ΠΟΛΛΟΙ Luk 1, 1*, *NovTest* 4 (1960): 263. W. Marxsen describes the number of predecessors as "nicht viele" (W. Marxsen, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament. Eine Einführung in ihre Probleme* [Güterscloh: Mohn and Co, 1963], 138).

to write that the gospel's use of the word "reveals nothing about the number of predecessors."[28] This is a widely held opinion about the meaning of πολλοί. Essentially, because this was a stock part of a prologue it carries very little significance. Bovon is typical. He writes, "The emphasis inherent in πολλοί ('many') also corresponds to his literary models; aside from the authors of Mark, Q and L (special source), there cannot have been 'many' to whose works he could have recourse."[29] Further, there is a general agreement that narratives which had been compiled were written accounts.

An alternative interpretation is offered by Loveday Alexander. In her thorough review of the prologue, she writes that "[t]here was no convention which could *compel* Luke to mention 'many' predecessors unless he wanted to." She therefore concludes:

> It is simplest, then, then to conclude, short of positive indications to the contrary, that Luke meant what he said. If this causes problems for our views on Gospel sources or chronology, perhaps we need to look more closely at those views and their assumptions. Part of the problem, I suspect, is the tendency of critics to think exclusively in terms of the documents we know: Mark and Matthew/Q are two, not 'many', and it seems unwarranted to hypothesize a number of other written Gospels, now lost without trace. But Luke never says that his predecessors had produced *written* documents: using the conventional language of any school treatise, he says merely that they had tried to 'put together an account' – a splendidly ambiguous phrase which could be interpreted in a number of historically plausible ways.[30]

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[28] W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. A. J. Mattill (London: S.C.M. Press,1970), 91.

[29] Bovon, *Luke*, 1.19.

[30] Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary conventions and social context in Luke 1.1-14 and Acts 1.1* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 115. Cf. Creed who earlier writes: "Greek writers very frequently begin a formal speech or preface with some part or derivative of πολύς . . . That the use of a part of πολύς was felt to be stylistically effective does not, of course, imply that the statement itself is not true to fact. Luke is speaking of what was matter of common knowledge." John Martin Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke: The Greet Text with introduction, notes and indices* (New York: St. Martin's, 1960), 3.

In this way, Alexander, posits not only that *many* means *many*, but also that we need not

limit the scope of the statement to written accounts. Certainly the ambiguity of the phrase

leaves open the possibility that oral material is included.[31] Further, verse two clearly

points to a tradition that included more than written texts. To read the text with the

competency of the model audience requires considering these stories. Reconstructing

these narratives and traditions will require borrowing tools from source-, form-, and

redaction-criticism, but the goal is not to look through the text to the situations in the

early Church which produced them, nor to understand the motivation of the author who

used them. Rather, by understanding something of the tradition (both written and oral)

which the text presumes, we are more able to hear the text in the richest possible way.

The assessment of the predecessors in the prologue is debated,[32] but Bovon is

surely correct in stating that "[i]f Luke had been somewhat satisfied with the work of his

predecessors, he would surely not have gone to the trouble of composing a new work."[33]

If there is some shortcoming in the predecessors, perhaps it can be seen in the way that

the prologue describes the careful preparation and arrangement of the work. Having

carefully investigated everything from the beginning, the text claims to produce a well-

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[31] "The verb [ἀνατάξασθαι] itself does not tell us whether the writer is compiling oral or written source material." Martin M. Culy, Mikeal C. Parsons, Joshua J. Stigall, *Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX; Baylor University Press, 2010), 2.

[32] Many see in Luke's description a slight of those who have written before him. This position is present as early as Origin (*Hom. in Lucam* 1), and is noted in modern commentaries (Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981], 291-92; Mikeal Parsons says that Luke found previous attempts were "unsuccessful in producing a rhetorically persuasive narrative" (*Luke,* 12; see also Parsons, *Luke: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* [Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2007], 40-50).

[33] Bovon, *Luke*, 1.19.

ordered narrative. While some early commentators found in the word καθεξῆς an indication that the narrative claimed to follow chronological order, the 'orderliness' of the account more likely refers to a rhetorically appropriate order. One often cited key to understanding what is meant by καθεξῆς is found in the use of the same word in Acts 11:4. In this verse Peter is recounting his experience to the Jerusalem council. The account which Peter gives is said to be orderly (καθεξῆς), but the events he describes are not told in the same chronological order that the narrator describes in chapter 10. If καθεξῆς is meant to indicate chronological order, Peter's speech could hardly be described as such. The sense of the word in both Luke 1 and Acts 11 is a rhetorically well-formed description. Peter described his experiences to the council in such a way as to convince them of the divine origin of the gentile mission. The Gospel of Luke will recount the life of Jesus in such as way as to make the reader certain of the things they had been taught, and cast its own unique vision of the significance of the life of Jesus.[34]

The way that the gospel will accomplish this well-ordered telling is also a part of the encyclopedia of the model audience. Patterns of discourse and familiar type-scenes are part of what the audience must know to make the moves that the text demands. To enable our reading, this study will turn to both Greco-Roman rhetorical criticism and Jewish (primarily biblical) modes of expression.

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[34] See Robert Tannehill, *The Gospel According to Luke*, vol. 1 of *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (Philadephia: Fortress Press, 1986), 11-12.

Classical Rhetorical Criticism

Especially since the 1980s biblical scholars have begun reading the New Testament in light of Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks.[35] George A. Kennedy's *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*[36] was a seminal work for this approach. Kennedy saw rhetorical criticism as a supplement to more traditional methods. His stated objective was "to provide readers of the New Testament with an additional tool of interpretation to complement form criticism, redaction criticism, historical and literary criticism, and other approaches being practiced in the twentieth century."[37] Kennedy distinguishes classical rhetorical criticism from modern and states that the goal of reading with ancient rhetorical categories is "reading the Bible as it would be read by an early Christian, by an inhabitant of the Greek-speaking world in which rhetoric was the core subject of formal education and in which even those without formal education necessarily developed cultural preconceptions about appropriate discourse."[38] He goes on to outline a five-step program for approaching the text. 1) Determine the rhetorical unit to be studied. 2) Define the rhetorical situation[39] of the unit. 3) Examine the text according to stasis theory. 4) Determine the species of rhetoric. 5) Consider the arrangement of material in

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[35] Pride of place is often given to Hans Dieter Betz's Galatians commentary in which he contended that "Galatians can be analyzed according to Greco-Roman rhetoric and epistolography" (*Galatians* [Philadelphia; Fortress Press, 1979], 14).

[36] George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

[37] Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 3.

[38] Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 5.

[39] Kennedy suggests that the rhetorical situation is analogous to the *Sitz im Leben* of form criticism (*New Testament Interpretation*, 34).

the text.[40] The sources for classical rhetorical criticism include Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, as well as works by Roman authors like Quintilian and Cicero, but the *progymnasmata*, Greek handbooks of rhetoric, became especially important for New Testament scholars. This was particularly true after the publication of an English translation of four early *progymnasmata* by Kennedy which made the material of the *progymnasmata* more accessible to biblical scholars.[41] One aspect of the rhetorical handbooks that has led to considerable work in New Testament studies is the concept of the *chreia* and its elaboration. Our earliest extant *progymnasmata* by Aelius Theon defines the *chreia* as "a brief saying or action making a point, attributed to some specified person" (Theon *Prog.* 96, Kennedy). This basic unit of rhetorical culture became important for New Testament scholars because of its affinity to the logion of Jesus. The concept of the *chreia* and the exercises prescribed for students around the *chreia* will play a significant role in this study.[42] The *chreia* will provide an interpretive framework through which we will attempt to better understand the Third Gospel's incorporation of traditional material into a coherent narrative. Throughout the study, there will also be appeals to concepts and categories from Greco-Roman rhetoric as elements of the cultural encyclopedia of the model audience of the Gospel of Luke.

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[40] Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 33-38.

[41] *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, trans. George A. Kennedy (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2003).

[42] See especially chapters two and three.

Outline of the Study

This dissertation will consist of three main sections. The first will focus on the *chreia* as a unit of gospel tradition. I hope in this section to establish that traditional stories about Jesus circulated among early Christians (including the audience of the Third Gospel) in a form that was similar to what Greco-Roman rhetoric defines as a *chreia*, and that the incorporation of these units into the Gospel of Luke is analogous to the incorporation of *chreiai* into Greco-Roman biography. We will review previous attempts at reading New Testament texts as *chreia* elaborations and suggest an alternative model which is more consistent with the production of narrative. The goal is to better understand how the model audience might view the adaptation of units of tradition with which they were already familiar into a narrative form. The second section will focus on the symbolic content of the various aspects of the story, in particular the concept of fishing for people and the use of the boat as a symbol of collective fate. Special attention will be paid to the way that the Gospel of Luke modifies the symbolism of these aspects of the story through its arrangement of the material. The third section will return to the text of the Third Gospel. The goal will be a close reading of our pericope within its narrative setting in Luke. The narrative elements of the text including setting, characters, and plot will be considered.

Chapter two will focus on the concept of the *chreia*. First, I will argue that the units of gospel tradition as they were experienced by both the author and audience of the Gospel of Luke would have been sufficiently similar to what the *progymnasmata* refer to as *chreiai* to allow us to draw analogies from the rhetorical handbooks about the ways in which these elements of the tradition might have functioned in the composition and

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reception of the Third Gospel, and in particular our passage. Second, I hope through this survey to be able to draw some broad conclusions about the social setting in which both the author and original audiences of the Gospel of Luke might have experienced gospel traditions before coming to the Third Gospel and in particular to our pericope.

Chapter three will explore the ways in which *chreiai* were incorporated into narratives. Examples from both Greco-Roman literature and rhetorical handbooks will be examined for evidence. This investigation will point to one particular exercise as most relevant for the Gospel's use of Jesus tradition. The goal will be to better understand how the model audience was influenced by a familiarity with the Jesus tradition, and how conventions surrounding the adaptation of units of tradition (*chreiai*) guide an audience to a particular understanding of their significance.

Chapter four will thoroughly investigate the background of the metaphor and explore the ways in which the Gospel of Luke diverts the audience away from this understanding. The goal is to problematize the image for the modern reader in the way it may have been for both author and audience of the Third Gospel. There are a number of examples of the metaphor of fishing for people in Greco-Roman and Jewish literature, almost all of which have a negative connotation. The final section of this chapter will trace the resolution of this tension in the text through the arrangement of the gospel as a whole and the inclusion of the miracle story.

Chapter five will explore the image of the boat as a symbol of collective fate, and suggest that a model audience of the Gospel of Luke was prepared to hear the boat as a metaphor for the Church and its mission. I will then explore the way the boat metaphor is employed in the Gospel of Mark (and Matthew), and the tradition that lies behind both

Luke 5:4-10 and John 21:2-8. The goal will be to hear Luke's distinct vision of the Church as revealed in its use of the boat metaphor.

Chapter six will explore literary aspects of the text through a close reading of Luke 5:1-11 organized around the setting, characters, and plot of the pericope. We will uncover the literary and rhetorical conventions which give the text its shape and guide the audience toward Luke's unique vision of the mission of the Church.

The final chapter will provide a conclusion to the dissertation as a whole. The fruits of the study will be gathered into a final review, and the implications for our reading of Luke 5:1-11 will be explored.

CHAPTER TWO

The *Chreia* as a Model for the Form and Preservation of the Gospel Traditions

Introduction

It is commonplace in the study of the Gospels to acknowledge that behind the

narratives we have received are individual units of tradition of which the gospel writers

(certainly the authors of the Synoptic Gospels) made use to produce their works. This

idea resurfaced in modern biblical criticism as far back as the early nineteenth century in

the work of J. G. Von Herder and later J. K. L. Geisler and continued through the work of

the form-critics and even very recent studies on the historical Jesus and the reliability of

memory. Attempts to better understand how the stories about Jesus came to be in the

form in which we find them in the gospels have been closely tied to the reliability of

these stories. This of course relates to our ability to reconstruct the historical Jesus and

whether any such effort should be made. Such emphases are, without question, valuable

in and of themselves though it remains an open question whether we have made much

real progress in this area. The emphasis of this review of literature, however, will vary

from the emphases of the authors reviewed. I am in pursuit of much smaller game. What I

hope to establish is an approximate picture of the state of the tradition near the end of the

first century, at the time that the Third Gospel was composed and first received.

Attempts at understanding the Jesus tradition have generally aimed backward toward the

historical Jesus or at least the earliest Christians' understanding of him. Here the aim is to

read this information as a part of the cultural milieu which shaped the text's reception.

The importance of the tradition for the production of the gospels has been often

rehearsed, but the importance of the tradition for its reception has been less often

considered. This is due in part to an overly text-centered approach to transmission which

tended to minimize the role of oral tradition in gospel production, together with a general

tendency to read the gospels as having been written in and for specific communities that

have little contact with one another. Both of these assumptions have faced serious

challenges in recent decades, and perhaps the time has come to give greater importance to

the experience with the Jesus tradition that the first audiences of the gospels brought to

their hearing of the gospels.

There are two specific points I wish to demonstrate. First, I will argue that the

chreiai as discussed in the *progymnasmata* and found in Greco-Roman literature provide

a model for the transmission and preservation of Gospel tradition in the early church.

Aelius Theon offered this definition of the *chreia*.

> A chreia (*khreia*) is a brief saying or action making a point, attributed to some
> specified person or something corresponding to a person, and maxim (*gnômê*) and
> reminiscence (*apomnêmoneuma*) are connected with it. Every brief maxim
> attributed to a person creates a chreia. (Theon *Prog*. 96; Kennedy)[1]

While more recent studies have looked to the *chreia* as a model for gospel traditions, the

earliest pioneers in gospel form-criticism considered but ultimately rejected the *chreia*.

This is particularly true in the work of Martin Dibelius. While his rejection of the *chreia*

as a model is not explicitly stated, Rudolf Bultmann's choice of the term *apophthegm* as

well as his preference for rabbinic models over Greco-Roman was a clear move in

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[1] This definition of the chreia and its categories vary little in other
progymnasmata. See Hermogenes "A chreia (*khreia*) is a recollection (*apomnêmoneuma*)
of a saying or action or both, with a pointed meaning, usually for the sake of something
useful" (*Prog* 6, Kennedy); Aphthonius "Chreia (*khreia*) is a brief recollection, referring
to some person in appointed way. It is called chreia because it is useful (*khreiôdês*). Some
chreias are verbal, some active, some mixed." (*Prog* 23, Kennedy).

another direction. In what follows I will examine their reasons for that rejection and trace through the twentieth century the move toward the *chreia* as a model. Second, I hope through this survey to be able to draw some broad conclusions about the social setting in which both the author and audience of the Gospel of Luke might have experienced gospel traditions before coming to the Third Gospel and in particular to our pericope. These two concerns, for the form and for the social setting (*Sitz im Leben*), have been closely related in gospel scholarship so they will be considered together here. I will work roughly chronologically, but it will be necessary at times to treat some works out of order when the content demands.

History of Research

The work of two early gospel form critics, Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann is a natural starting point for our review. Their reconstructions of the forces which led to the formation and preservation of gospel traditions set the agenda for the twentieth century. Their work is particularly important for this study because these authors rejected the category of *chreia* in favor of others. I will provide a basic outline of their approach and give special attention to their reasons for rejecting the *chreia* as an appropriate model.

Although both Dibelius and Bultmann fell into the same *Formesgeschichte* school, their methods differed from one another in what they considered the basic starting point for their inquiry. Dibelius's methodology was distinct in that he chose to pursue what he described as a 'constructive' method. Dibelius describes his approach in this way:

> An analytical method which starts from the text and goes back to the sources and
> isolated elements of tradition is not satisfactory. Rather one requires a

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constructive method which attempts to include the conditions and activities of life of the first Christian Churches. If we leave this work on one side, the sources and the small details which are brought forward by the analytical method hang in the air, and their sociological relationships, or " Sitz im Leben ", is not clear.[2]

Beginning with his own reconstruction of early Christian preaching and teaching, Dibelius attempts to understand how the forms that he finds in the gospels could have arisen from the social situation that he constructs. A number of presuppositions help determine his formal categories. Foremost among these presuppositions is the conviction that early Christian preaching provided the means of transmission and shaping of the Jesus traditions. As he famously wrote: "Im Anfang war die Predigt."[3] This conviction is the guiding principle of his analysis. The other guiding principle for Dibelius's study is the social location of the tradents of the Jesus tradition. He describes the earliest guardians of the Jesus tradition as a "company of unlettered people which expected the end of the world any day [and] had neither the capacity nor the inclination for the production of books."[4] This rules out for Dibelius any suggestion that the early Christians were interested in the production of literature or the preservation of a tradition for posterity. The task was quite simply the proclamation of the gospel and all that has survived of the gospel traditions must be understood primarily as material for this purpose. Short narrative units, he contends, had as their function sermon illustrations and were employed as needed without reference to a larger narrative. The sayings of Jesus, however, served a different function. For Dibelius, these provided the content of

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[2] Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, trans. Bertram Lee Woolf (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 10.

[3] Martin Dibelius, *Zum Urchristentum und zur hellenistischen Religionsgeschichte*, vol. 1 of *Botschaft und Geschite* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1953), 242.

[4] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 9.

catechetical preaching. Because the stories about the deeds and words of Jesus had differing functions in Dibelius's reconstruction of early preaching, they followed separate paths from tradition to written gospel. Thus for Dibelius, "*the tradition of narrative and the tradition of words are not subject to the same law*."[5] He defends this assumption by appealing to the Jewish distinction between *halakhah* and *haggadah*. He argues: "The sayings of Jesus were handed down within the framework of a Christian halakhah, and so it is by no means surprising, but rather in the nature of things, that this tradition arose under other conditions than those of the narrative material."[6] According to Dibelius, the traditions about Jesus which we now posses have their definite origins in the worship and preaching of Hellenistic Jewish Churches which was "of a Jewish kind although conducted in Greek."[7]

This preference for Jewish over Greek models is one of the reasons that Dibelius rejected *chreia* as a model for the dominical sayings. The primary reason, however, has to do with content. While acknowledging that the origin of both the *chreiai* and the Christian preservation of the words and deeds of Jesus are unliterary, he distinguishes the two by what he describes as a wide difference in content. He describes the *chreiai* as a collection of witty sayings "without material content."[8] They are evidence of an intellectual culture which valued boldness and cleverness as having value in and of themselves. On the other hand, Dibelius contends that

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[5] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 28; emphasis original.

[6] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 28.

[7] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 30.

[8] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 157.

[t]he originators of the tradition of Jesus were ἰδιῶται τῷ λογῷ; elegant speech was altogether foreign to them and especially when its effectiveness is an end in itself. The causes of this difference in essence are very manifold. The originators and mediators of this tradition, even if they were educated, nevertheless had no share in that world of culture out of which the witty sentences of the "Chriae" arose. In addition the Semitic character of the words actually spoken hindered elegant imitation in Greek. And finally the content of this tradition excluded altogether every presentation founded upon wit, punning, or elegant and brilliant manner of speech. For the word and work of the Master were determined by reference to the end of the world. In this landscape of the world, in this circumstance of an urgent time, in this period of the approaching divine judgment, that kind of word was forbidden which was only brilliant or only intended to arrest the hearer.[9]

Dibelius allows the content of the material to dictate its form.

It is worth noting, however, that while he rejected the possibility that the *chreia* provides an adequate model for the transmission of the sayings of Jesus, Dibelius allowed

[t]he analogy of the 'Chriae' may help to explain a development within the tradition of Jesus's sayings. In view of the wide occurrence of Chriea-like material it must have been easy for Christians, when they had become authors to a certain extent, to dress the sayings of Jesus in the form of 'Chriae', when they would become more striking and impressive. Traits handed down popularly received a literary dress and ambiguous sayings were explained.[10]

Dibelius is most willing to allow this tendency to Luke, whose style Dibelius describes as more literary. He notes a number of instances (our pericope is not among them) in which Luke takes a saying of Jesus and gives it the form of a *chreia*.[11] The examples of *chreiai* which Dibelius finds, he contends, are the result of the reworking of the tradition by the evangelist and, except for rare exceptions, the original traditions were not shaped in this way. Dibelius argues that

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[9] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 157-58.

[10] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 160.

[11] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 161-64.

the general tendency of Chria-like formulation hangs together with the tendency of the form universally current. This manner of abbreviating the circumstances and giving the concluding sayings as strikingly as possible is, therefore, apart from a few exceptions, not that of the original tradition, but is indicative of the secular style into which the gospel tradition was entering. The relative originality of the primitive Christian Paradigm in Greek literature comes out here once more. It is not a literary originality for which we must praise the author's craft of those who handed down the tradition, but pre-literary. [12]

In this way, even where Dibelius sees a very close formal connection to the *chreia* rigidly defined, he attributes it to the authors of the gospels (and especially Luke). The reason for this assertion is, to a great extent, the idea that the original forms of the gospel traditions must have been unique and find no parallel in 'secular' literature.

While the *paradigm* is central for Dibelius, he also puts forward two other related forms, the *tale* and the *legend*. Tales are "concerned with *individual stories complete in themselves*."[13] The tale is distinct from the Paradigm in that they are generally longer and include "far more of the secondary circumstances than in the Paradigms."[14] The *Sitz im Leben* for the tale is also distinct from the Paradigm. Rather than serving as sermon illustrations, the form "was intended to missionary work by its content."[15] These stories, according to Dibelius, serve to some extent as "a substitute for a sermon among hearers already accustomed to miraculous acts of gods and prophets."[16] The relative rarity of this form (Dibelius cites nine examples from Mark and five from John),[17] is attributed to the

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[12] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 163-64.

[13] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 72; emphasis original.

[14] Dibelius, *Tradition,* 77.

[15] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 76.

[16] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 76.

literary nature of the form—too polished and embellished for a community with no literary inclination. While the subject of these tales is frequently a miracle of Jesus, Luke 5:1-11 is not included in the category.

The third category that Dibelius proposes is the *legend*. The legend finds its analogue in the medieval stories read on saint's days to "give grounds of the significance" of the day. The focus of such *legends* is on a particular hero. "Legends deal with the human though, of course, with the human as continually marked out by God. Paradigms and Tales, on the other hand, even if in different forms, deal with the divine which has become human."[18] Dibelius considered such a concern for the individual to be out of place among the earliest bearers of the Jesus tradition and generally ascribes the presence of *legend* in the gospels to the work of the evangelist. This is true of the call narrative in Luke 5:1-11, which Dibelius discusses at some length. The narrative found in Luke 5:1-11 was not a part of the tradition handed down to the evangelist. Luke has expanded the saying with the inclusion of the narrative in order to satisfy curiosity about the character of Simon Peter.

> The real event began with the command to push out, Luke v, 4, and what then follows is in no way an extension of the Marcan record, but an independent narrative; a miracle, not mere help in distress but the unhoped-for success of Simon; his confession, and this not on account of the preaching of Jesus but of his own unworthiness before the miracle-worker; the call by Jesus, directed, however, only to the same Simon, as the real hero of the story. The character of the miracle and the independent significance of Simon in the whole passage differentiate this story from the Paradigms and Tales, and characterize it as a legend. The whole picture shows that it does not depend upon an editing of the Marcan text, for the miracle is here the beginning of the action and the basis of the narrative, and not

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[17] Mark 1:40-45; 4:35-41; 5:1-20; 21-43; 6:35-44; 45-52; 7:32-37; 8: 22-26; 9:14-29; John 2:1ff; 4:46ff; 5:1ff; 9:1ff; 11:1ff (Dibelius, *Tradition*, 71-2).

[18] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 106.

as in Nazareth an appended conclusion. Moreover, the Legend does not offer the word about fishers of men in the Marcan form, but in quite a different redaction of the same sense. The diagnostic interest of the Legend is, however, not to show how Jesus won disciples, but to tell something out of the life of Simon: his pardon and his pious humility. It deals with the typical interest of Legend in the lot of pious men, and these, in the Gospels, are the persons second to Jesus.[19]

Therefore, for Dibelius, Luke 5:1-11 is dependent on the tradition about the call of the disciples only distantly, and the tradition has been transformed by Luke into a story that has more to do with Peter than Jesus.

The earliest form, in Dibelius's reconstruction, is the *paradigm*. These short units of tradition had their origin in the preaching of earliest leaders of the Church. Other forms came later, and while Dibelius is hesitant to draw firm conclusions about historicity, he suggests that the legend and the tale were less likely to have originated among the first followers of Jesus. Dibelius describes a situation in which stories about Jesus were first shaped to fit the needs of preaching, and the earliest Christian preachers were responsible for their form.

At the same time that Dibelius was working out his arguments for the forms of pre-gospel Jesus traditions, Rudolf Bultmann was making his contribution. Bultmann describes his approach as *analytic* in contrast to Dibelius's *constructive* approach. He attempts to begin with the forms that he can reconstruct and to move toward reconstructing a historical setting (*Sitz im Leben*). Like Dibelius, Bultmann believed that the sayings of Jesus followed a different path from tradition to gospel than that of narratives about Jesus, and his book is organized accordingly. In the first section, Bultmann discusses the classes of the traditions of the sayings of Jesus, and in the second

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[19] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 112-13.

the traditions of the narrative material. The sayings material is broken into two parts, a discussion of the *apophthegm* and the *dominical sayings*.[20]

The *apophthegm* is Bultmann's primary category for Jesus tradition. He describes as *apothegm* a "saying of Jesus set in a brief context." [21] He prefers this Greek term because he describes it as "least question-begging."[22] And he begins his discussion of the Jesus tradition with this category because he will attempt to show that "many apothegms can be reduced to bare dominical sayings by determining the secondary character of their frame, and can thus be compared . . . with other sayings of Jesus."[23] Bultmann argues that sayings of Jesus were preserved independently of narratives about Jesus and that, in those pieces of tradition which include a narrative frame, that frame is secondary.[24] With his usual thoroughness, Bultmann divides *apophthegms* into two major headings and a number of sub headings. The first sub category of the *apophthegm* is the *controversy dialogue*. This form has as its starting-point "some action or attitude which is seized on by the opponent and used in an attack by accusation or by question."[25] Bultmann

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[20] Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968).

[21] Bultmann, *History*, 11.

[22] Bultmann, *History*, 11.

[23] Bultmann, *History*, 11.

[24] This is in contrast to Dibelius who asserts that "we must make a distinction between sayings and stories, in so far as the setting of the stories is to any degree essential for the understanding of the whole. The question whether the setting is original, like the question of historicity in general, must be kept clear from the investigation of form." (Martin Dibelius, "The Structure and Literary Character of the Gospels," *HTR* 20 [1927]: 162).

[25] Bultmann, *History*, 39.

describes this form as "typically *Rabbinic*,"[26] and suggests that its *Sitz im Leben* is to be found in "the apologetic and polemic of the Palestinian Church," and more specifically in "the discussions the Church had with its opponents, and as certainly within itself, on questions of law."[27] Treated with the *controversy dialogues* are the *scholastic dialogues* which are similar to controversy dialogues in every way except that the questioner is not an opponent, but someone seeking knowledge.[28] The last category of the *apophthegm* is the *biographical apophthegm*. The form again has its roots in rabbinic stories, where Bultmann finds "parallels in profusion." These stories "are not intended to be actual historical reports, but rather metaphorical presentations of a life."[29] In each category of the *apophthegm* Bultmann will insist that the setting is secondary and was most often added as a frame to a bare dominical saying.

The second major category of the sayings of Jesus is the *dominical sayings*. These sayings are analogues to the Old Testament and Jewish *mashal* and have the character of a proverb or general saying about life. A number of subcategories of dominical sayings are discussed, but what is most important for this study is that the sayings of this form are entirely independent of any narrative structure. While we might expect Bultmann to hold these sayings as most likely to be historical, he is reticent to trace much of the material back to Jesus. The period between the life of Jesus and the writing of the gospels was, in Bultmann's view, so fraught with theological interests and vulnerable to the creative and

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[26] Bultmann, *History*, 41.

[27] Bultmann, *History*, 41.

[28] Bultmann, *History*, 54.

[29] Bultmann, *History*, 57.

wholly unreliable nature of the transmission of folk-lore that little can be recovered of Jesus as an historical figure.

Under the heading of traditions of the narrative material, Bultmann lists first *miracle stories* and second *historical stories* and *legends*. The first category is not simply a story about a miracle, but a story in which the miracle is the central element. The second may include a miracle but they "are not miracle stories in the proper sense, but instead of being historical in character are religious and edifying."[30] Luke 5:1-11 will be treated as a *legend*, and his analysis of the passage is in close step with that of Dibelius. The focus on Peter makes it a *legend* rather than a *miracle story*. But Bultmann will go further in suggesting that the story of the miracle itself originated in the mind of Luke. The miraculous catch then serves as the "symbolic actualization" of the saying about 'fishers of men.'"[31]

From the perspective of later scholarship, the most important form put forward by Bultmann was the *apophthegm*, and a number of scholars will use his analysis as a starting point. Perhaps the more important legacy of Bultmann's form-critical studies, however, was his understanding of the setting in which the traditions were created and passed on. He concluded that a great deal of the material that the church preserved about Jesus could not be traced back to Jesus in any substantial way. The traditions were created by anonymous groups who either shaped or fabricated the stories in order to meet their theological needs.

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[30] Bultmann, *History*, 244.

[31] Bultmann, *History*, 217.

So, while the approaches of Bultmann and Dibelius diverged at several points, they were united in their choice of models other than the *chreia*,[32] and in the insistence that the sayings and actions of Jesus which were combined in the gospels came to that place via different paths. Dibelius's *paradigm* and Bultmann's *apophthegm* will be the forms most associated with their form-critical work. The seminal and influential work of these two scholars, in the words of Vernon Robins, "systematically guided interpreters away from ancient rhetorical discussions."[33]

The road toward the *chreia* passes through the work of Vincent Taylor, a contemporary of Bultmann and Dibelius. Taylor proposes the term *pronouncement story* as an alternative to Dibelius's *paradigm* and Bultmann's *apothegmata.*[34] Taylor finds Dibelius's term "too general and . . . too exclusively associated with the theory that the stories were formed under the influence of preaching."[35] He rejects Bultmann's term because it is "literary rather than popular and, by concentrating attention too much on the final word of Jesus, it almost invites a depreciatory attitude to the narrative element."[36]

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[32] Dibelius considered and rejected the *chreia* as inappropriate to the early Christian communities. Bultmann's move away from the *chreia* is less overt. The *apophthegm* is a Greek category, but Bultmann consistently avoids parallels in Greek literature opting instead for rabbinic models. He concludes his study by writing: "With all this the Church did not itself create new literary genres but took over traditional forms that had long been used in Judaism, and which—so far as dominical sayings are concerned—Jesus himself had also used" (*History*, 368).

[33] Burton L. Mack and Vernon K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1989), 10.

[34] Vincent Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1949), 29-30.

[35] Taylor, *Formation*, 30.

[36] Taylor, *Formation*, 30.

Taylor will also reject both authors' insistence that the transmission of narrative about and words of Jesus necessarily followed distinct paths to the gospels. While he will use the term *pronouncement story* to describe discreet units of tradition, his choice is not a rejection of the term *chreia*.

Taylor's work also represents an attempt to move the *Sitz im Leben* of the gospel traditions closer to the life of Jesus. He paints a much more positive picture of the historicity of the stories and sayings of Jesus than Bultmann had, and suggests that the tradition was far more stable than contemporary interpreters acknowledge. He will use such language as "definite statements carefully retained and deliberately issued by responsible persons," to describe the gospel traditions. This is a significant move away from earlier form-critical studies which relied on a model of folk-tradition to understand the transmission of the gospel tradition. In Taylor's reconstruction, the elements of the tradition achieved their form as a result of the deliberate efforts of authorized tradents. He was critical of Bultmann for ignoring the influence of eyewitnesses in the preservation of the traditions. He writes:

> It is on this question of eyewitnesses that Form-Criticism presents a very vulnerable front. If the Form-Critics are right, the disciples must have been translated to heaven immediately after the Resurrection. As Bultmann sees it, the primitive community exists *in vacuo*, cut off from its founders by the walls of inexplicable ignorance. Like Robinson Crusoe it must do the best it can. Unable to turn to any one for information, it must invent situations for the words of Jesus, and put into His lips sayings which personal memory cannot check.[37]

He takes exception to the form-critic's "oral forms shaped by nameless individuals."

In a series of articles beginning in 1958, Dennis Nineham set out to refute Vincent Taylor's suggestion that eye-witness testimony was a substantial part of the gospel

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[37] Taylor, *Formation*, 41.

traditions. The thrust of Nineham's argument concerns the form of the traditions themselves. He suggests that Taylor's position depends on an *a priori* argument about what must have been (i.e. eyewitnesses must have had continuing influence on the traditions) whereas the form-critical argument is "*a posteriori*, starting from the characteristics of the finished gospels, and reaching, by what is generally agreed to be a fairly consistent internal logic, a view of Gospel development in which eye-witness testimony played no very large part."[38] While Nineham agrees that Taylor's suggestion seems altogether likely and even offers "empirical evidence" for the likelihood that this was the case, he suggests that the evidence of the form of the material rules out the possibility of eye-witness testimony. Concerning the tradition that eye-witness recollections of Peter form the substance of Mark's Gospel, Nineham writes:

> Unless the whole form-critical approach is radically unsound, this tradition can hardly be accepted as it stands, for no plausible reason can be given why recollections derived directly from the living voice of St. Peter should have been cast in the stereotyped, impersonal form of community tradition.[39]

The suggestion that eyewitness testimony and community tradition should have used patently different forms is important for our study. This point is too infrequently or incompletely addressed by those who suggest a direct link between eye-witnesses and the gospels. Nineham suggests that any attempt at a middle ground must "form at least a general picture of *how* the two forces—community use and personal testimony— combined to produce just the kind of writings the gospels are."[40] While so much of the

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[38] Dennis E. Nineham, "Eye Witness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition. I," *JTS* 11 (1958): 16.

[39] Dennis E. Nineham, "Eyewitness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, II," *JTS* 9 (1958): 243.

[40] Nineham, "Eye-Witeness, I," 16.

form-critical ground that Nineham stands on has eroded in the decades since he wrote, the need to provide a satisfactory description of the relationship between personal testimony (or memory) and tradition remains.

In 1946, R.O.P. Taylor is the first to look to the *progymnasmata* for an understanding of the term, and gives his translation of Theon's definition: "A Chreia is a concise and pointed account of something said or done, attributed to some particular person," and notes that this "definition exactly fits the detachable little stories, of which so much of Mark consists – which are, indeed, characteristic of the first three Gospels."[41] Further, Taylor goes on to point out that the *progymnasmata* prescribed exercises for the transformation of the *chreiai* in a variety of forms and that these exercises can help New Testament scholars understand the transmission and adaptation of the words and deeds of Jesus.[42] This suggestion will not be taken up seriously until decades later.

William Farmer will generally accept Dibelius's understanding of the forces which gave rise to the formation of the earliest gospel traditions. He writes: "In our view, these literary units were first created to meet the catechetical and homiletical needs of some early Christian community. That is to say, they were originally designed as aids to teaching and preaching."[43] Where he will break away from Dibelius in his acceptance of the *chreia* as a pre-gospel form of the tradition. He commends Dibelius for noting the similarity between the *chreia* and his *paradigms* but argues:

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[41] R. O. P. Taylor, *The Groundwork of the Gospels with Some Collected Papers* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), 76.

[42] Taylor, *Groundwork*, 80-81.

[43] W. R. Farmer, "Notes on a Literary and Form-Critical Analysis of Some of the Synoptic Material peculiar to Luke," *NTS* 8 (1962): 306.

He was wrong, however, in regarding these as the result of a literary tendency of the evangelist to cast tradition which came to him in the form of paradigms into the more concise *Chreia* form. It happens that in the Hellenistic literature in which *Chreiai* are found (notably in the lives of various famous men) the pattern is not for the authors of these works to create *Chreiai*, but to incorporate them into their accounts from earlier collections of *Chreiai*.[44]

Farmer is here influenced by R.O.P. Taylor, and the translations of pertinent sections of the *progymnasmata* which are provided in Taylor's book. This represents not only a turn toward the *chreia* as a model, but also a willingness to consider literary models for understanding the formation of the gospels.

Over the decades which follow, however, Taylor's *pronouncement story* will remain central in form-critical studies of the gospels. A Work Group on Pronouncement Story was formed in the SBL and its findings were published in a 1981 volume of *Semeia*. The introductory article written by Robert Tannehill begins by grouping early form critical categories under this broader heading.

The name "pronouncement story," coined by Vincent Taylor . . . will be used to designate the literary genre discussed in this volume. This name is immediately descriptive, indicating the two characteristic parts of the genre, a *pronouncement* which is the climactic element in a brief *story*. As used here, pronouncement story will correspond rather closely with Rudolf Bultmann's "apophthegms" . . . and less closely with Martin Dibelius's "paradigms" . . . It also overlaps with the *chreia* discussed by some ancient scholars.[45]

The key element in the *pronouncement story* as the term was coined by Taylor and developed by others is its concluding statement. The pronouncement is the final part of the story. As can be seen in the definition above, the category of *chreia* continues to be discussed and the connection to the basic units of gospel tradition is recognized (as

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[44] Farmer, "Notes," 307-08.

[45] Robert C. Tannehill, "Introduction: The Pronouncement Story and its Types," in *Pronouncement Stories*; *Semeia* 20, ed. Robert C. Tannehill (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

Taylor had done before), but discussion of *chreia* is fairly limited. In the same volume of *Semeia*, however, authors discuss the occurrences of pronouncement stories in Greco-Roman, Jewish and early Christian literature. This discussion will form the groundwork for a more comprehensive study of the *chreia*.

In 1984 Robert Tannehill will return to Bultmann's category of *apophthegm* in an article which makes frequent use of the term pronouncement and further folds the *apophthegm* into the category of *pronouncement story*.[46] In his work and in the early work of the SBL work group generally, we see a movement toward understanding the pronouncement story as a literary phenomenon. Discussion is focused less on the *Sitz im Leben* which gave rise to the form and increasingly on literary parallels.

Subsequently, in their 1989 book *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels,*[47] Burton L. Mack and Vernon K. Robbins help to move biblical studies away from the categories of *paradigm*, *apophthegm*, and *pronouncement story* and more directly toward the *chreia* as a model. This book will prove influential to later studies as the *chreia* increasingly displaces other categories for describing the short episodic narratives found in the gospels. The book also explores the concept of elaboration as discussed in ancient rhetorical handbooks as a useful tool for understanding how the gospel writers shaped received traditions into the extant gospels.

In addition to works published promoting Greco-Roman rhetoric and the *chreia* specifically as a model for the transmission of pre-gospel traditions, a number of books were published which made the *progymnasmata* and *chreiai* more easily accessible to

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[46] Robert C. Tannehill, "Types and Functions of Apophthegms in the Synoptic Gospels," *Principat* 25.2, (1984): 1792-1829.

[47] Mack and Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion*.

biblical scholars. In 1986 volume one of Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil's *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric* was published which provided English translations of the discussions of the *chreia* in the *progymnasmata*.[48] Vernon K. Robbins's *Ancient Quotes & Anecdotes* was published three years later. It contained a collection of stories which fit the working definition of *pronouncement story* that had been put forward by the SBL working group.[49]

The move away from the categories of *paradigm* and *apophthegm* and in the direction of the *chreia* reached its climax in the publication of *Semeia* 64, *The Rhetoric of Pronouncement*. The articles contained in this volume, like *Semeia* 20, contained the results of studies conducted by the SBL Pronouncement Story Workgroup. Edited by Vernon K. Robbins, the work presented in *Semeia* 64 explored the *pronouncement story* from the context of Greco-Roman Rhetoric and specifically the *chreia*. What had been a footnote or excurses in early work on the topic had become central.[50]

Before going on with this survey it is necessary to step back chronologically. In the work of the Pronouncement Stories group, unlike the work of the form-critics, the form was not consistently related to any particular *Sitz im Leben*. The studies tended to deal more often with the final form of the text and had a more literary critical emphasis. The question of the social setting which produced and preserved the traditions was, however, continuing among other scholars. In 1961, Scandinavian scholar Birger

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[48] Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil eds. *The Progymnasmata,* vol. 1 of *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*; *SBLTT* 27 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

[49] Vernon K. Robbins ed., *Ancient Quotes & Anecdotes: From Crib to Crypt* (*S*onoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1989).

[50] Vernon K. Robbins ed., *The Rhetoric of Pronouncement* (*Semeia* 64; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).

Gerhardsson, in response to the form critical models that had been put forward at the time, suggested an alternative situation in which gospel traditions took shape. His monograph *Memory and Manuscript* attempted to move the locus of traditioning away from anonymous crowds (Bultmann's folk-tradition model) and into a structured system of intentional impartation of teaching from Jesus to his disciples and from his disciples to their disciples and so on. The model that Gerhardsson proposes is the transmission of oral torah in rabbinic Judaism. He suggests that here we can find analogues for both tradent and tradition. As a model for the tradents of Jesus tradition, Gerhardsson offers the *tannaim*. The *tannaim* were specialists in preserving the oral tradition with a level of detail comparable to written records. These "traditionists *par excellence* . . . were the principle of careful oral transmission incarnate."[51] These students (who showed promise in memory if in no other way)[52] were the storehouses of oral tradition for rabbinic Judaism. The role of preserving and memorizing the oral torah also fell, though to a lesser extent, to teachers and advanced students in rabbinic schools and to an even smaller degree to anyone who received even an elementary education in rabbinic schools.[53] Although the material from which Gerhardsson draws is all later than the period of the earliest transmission of Jesus tradition, he points to the conservative nature of education in the ancient world generally and in Rabbinic Judaism particularly as

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[51] Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1961), 93.

[52] Gerhardsson writes: "The literal reproduction of the oral text material by these *tannaim* was so 'mechanical' as to require no deeper knowledge of the meaning of the tests. An unintelligent pupil was quite capable of becoming a good *tanna*, if he had a good memory" (*Memory and Manuscript*, 95).

[53] Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, 100 ff.

evidence that similar practices could be traced back into the early period of pharisaic

Judaism. The enduring contribution of Gerhardsson, and the one most relevant to this

study, is his suggestion of a far more structured mechanism by which the gospel

traditions were produced and passed on. This structure included not only an institution

wherein traditions were preserved but also a process by which the tradition was shaped.

He argued that the form which the material took was achieved through an intentional

process of concentrating and epitomizing. He writes:

> When a teacher's words are accorded considerable authority and when an attempt
> is made carefully to preserve them—and when instruction is concentrated
> generally on memorization—brevity and conciseness are important virtues. . . The
> tendency to concentrate teachings and texts, expressing them with the utmost
> brevity, is general. There was a very active consciousness of the importance of
> such concentration, of condensing material into concise, pregnant—and if
> possible also striking, pithy and succinct—sayings. An ancient proverb says that
> "a sharp peppercorn is better than a basket of gourds."[54]

Gerhardsson will relate this principle of boiling down a teaching to its essence to the

kelal.

> *Kelal* (כללא כלל) does not as a rule mean primarily a basic legal or logical
> principle, but just a summarizing, inclusive, condensed statement, irrespective of
> the field with which it deals. Thus *kelal* denotes not only a concentrated basic
> statement, a generalization which introduces (or concludes) a series of
> commandments in the written or oral law, but also the concentrated summary or
> heading of a haggadic exposition.[55]

Criticisms of Gerhardsson's work have focused on the chronological distance between

his sources and the mid- to late-second century as well as his tendency to draw too

straight a line between rabbinic practices and the practices of the early church.[56] On

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[54] Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, 138.

[55] Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, 139.

[56] For example, Morton Smith, review of *Memory and Manuscript*, by Birger
Gerhardsson, *JBL* 82 (1963); Terence C. Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary*

numerous occasions, however, Gerhardsson points to Greco-Roman models as a supplement to his rabbinic models. This suggestion will be taken up by Loveday Alexander, whose work we will consider below.

Gerhardsson's approach was fundamentally different than that of the early form critics. His model presented the transmission of gospel traditions in what Kenneth Bailey will refer to as a *formal controlled* system of traditioning. [57] At the other end of the spectrum, Bailey places Bultmann's approach, calling it *informal uncontrolled*. In the former, a stringent set of guidelines protect both the contents of the tradition and the authorized tradents. In the latter, there are no social systems to preserve the tradition and nothing to ensure its fidelity to the original experience or individual. Bailey brings his experience of three decades teaching in the Middle East to the question of how tradition is formed and preserved. He observed examples of the preservation of traditions with great precision (closer to Gerhardsson's view), and other examples of the free embellishment of stories and total transformation over time (Bultmann's view). Bailey suggests that the type of tradition and its relation to community identity was determinative for the way that traditions are preserved in Middle Eastern society. Traditions that were particularly stable in his view were traditions that related to identity formation. The more a story was seen as central for community identity the more closely the tradition was guarded. Bailey will ultimately opt for something of a *via media* between Gerhardsson and Bultmann, suggesting that the creation and preservation of

Dependency: Variability and Stability in the Synoptic Tradition and Q, WUNT 195 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 161 ff.

[57] Kenneth Bailey "Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels," *AJT* 5 (1991): 34-54.

gospel traditions likely happened in a setting that he calls *Informal Controlled.*[58] The

traditions were controlled because of the influence of leading members in the community

and the community's own need to preserve their collective identity. These served as

controls on the central elements of the tradition. The setting, however, that he suggests is

not Gerhardsson's school but informal gatherings of members of the community.

Loveday Alexander has fleshed out Gerhardsson's suggestion that a similar model

for transmission might be found in the Hellenistic schools. "The Hellenistic schools,"

Alexander writes, "have immense potential as a social model (complementary to that of

the rabbinic schools) for understanding the functioning of memory and tradition within

early Christianity."[59] She begins her argument with a discussion of two early second

century authors, Papias and Justin. Alexander is not unique in her appeal to these two

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[58] Bailey's construction is actually quite specific. He writes:
It is my suggestion that up until the upheaval of the Jewish-Roman war (66-70 A.D.) *informal controlled* oral tradition was able to function in the villages of Palestine. Those who accepted the new rabbi as the expected Messiah would record and transmit data concerning him *as the source of their new identity.* Then, in the year 70 A.D. many of the settled villages of Palestine were destroyed and many of the people dispersed. Thus the Jewish-Roman war would have disrupted the sociological village structures in which the *informal controlled* oral tradition functioned. However, anyone twenty years old and older in the year 70 A.D. would have been an authentic recite of that tradition. It appears that the earliest church may have refined the methodology already functioning naturally among them. Not everyone who lived in the Christian community in the village and heard the stories of Jesus was authorized to recite the tradition. The witness was required to have been an *eyewitness* of the historical Jesus to qualify as a *huperetes tou logou.* Thus at least to the end of the first century, the authenticity of that tradition was assured to the community through specially designated authoritative witnesses. At the same time, with the destruction of the controlling communities which monitored and passed on the tradition, the corruption evidenced in the apocryphal gospels is explainable (Bailey, "Informal," 50).

[59] Loveday Alexander, "Memory and Tradition in the Hellenistic Schools," in *Jesus in Memory*, ed. Werner H. Kelber and Samuel Byrskog (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 115.

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authors as evidence for the way that gospel traditions were regarded in the second century, but her discussion is one of the more helpful, so I will treat this evidence in the context of her work.

Justin makes frequent use of the phrase ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων. This is the term he prefers in his apologetic writings over εὐαγγέλιον which he implies is insider language. It is clear that he uses the term to refer to written texts (they are read aloud at Christian gatherings), and are referred to by Christians as gospels. Alexander resists the suggestion that the title Justin gives is an apologetic move to associate the writings of the early Christians with Xenophon's *Apomneumata of Socrates*. She points out that the title *Apomneumata* was given to a number of other works, many of which are not biographies like Xenophon's but merely collections of anecdotes. Gathering these anecdotes and committing them to writing was by no means assured. The impetus for these anecdote collections, Alexander suggests, was the need to encapsulate what it meant fundamentally to be Greek and disperse these capsules of Greek identity throughout the quickly growing empire. The preservation in writing of this quintessentially oral form collapsed "the artificial distinction between 'literate' and 'oral' societies."[60] To illustrate that oral did not mean spontaneous to these proliferators of the Greek anecdote (and thus Greek culture), Alexander refers to a passage from Diogenes Laertius: "When Diogenes offered him [Aristotle] dried figs, he saw that he had prepared something caustic to say (χρείαν εἴη μεμελετηκώς) if he did not take them; so he took them and said Diogenes had lost his figs and his jest into the bargain" (*Diogenes Laertius* vol. 1, p. 461, LCL). The *chreia* that Diogenes has prepared and Aristotle had thwarted

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[60] Alexander, "Memory and Tradition," 126.

demonstrates an essential quality of this oral form: "Anecdotes do not circulate like bacteria, in the air we breathe. They are designed, in Plutarch's words, to be useful, and they will survive only in social contexts where those uses remain operative."[61] The place to begin for a reconstruction of this social context, Alexander suggests, are in the rhetorical *progymnasmata*, which provide examples of both the cultural significance of these anecdotes and discussions of how to make use of them. Acknowledging that there are a number of speech forms related to the anecdote in the *progymnasmata*, Alexander seeks to simplify the question of form.

> Much of the confusion over the formal identification of anecdotes in gospel studies goes back to the over-refinement of generic types perpetuated by the form critics in a mistaken deference to the definitions of Greek rhetoric. As we have seen, it is virtually impossible to insist on strict definition in this field: the rhetors are evidently struggling to impose a stable terminology on a linguistic usage that is inherently fluid. Thus while relatively few gospel anecdotes match the extreme syntactical compression of the Hellenistic *chreia*, the underlying narrative structure of the classic gospel pericope can be accommodated without difficulty to the Hellenistic anecdotal tradition, with its focus on encounter and riposte.[62]

This imposition of stability by the rhetors cannot match what Alexander calls "the cheerful chaos of extracurricular linguistic usage," and she writes that "the functional term χρεία covers a wide range of gnomic and anecdotal material."[63] Given this definition of *chreia* which includes the broader "Hellenistic anecdotal tradition," Alexander suggests that the *chreia* provides an attractive model for the preservation and adaptation of gospel traditions.

> In the *chreia* tradition, stories and sayings are reduced to their essential core so that they can easily be retold in a variety of different words. Verbal variation is

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[61] Alexander, "Memory and Tradition," 127.

[62] Alexander, "Memory and Tradition," 144.

[63] Alexander, "Memory and Tradition," 128.

built into the model—but a variation within limits: the rhetorical handbooks are quite prescriptive in defining the stylistically acceptable formulae to be used in the ἐργασία of the *chreia*.[64]

Alexander's use of the model of the Hellenistic school setting and the form of the *chreia* are employed more loosely than Gerhardsson's rabbinic models. Rather than suggesting almost perfect correspondence between the early Christians and the Hellenistic schools, she offers the social setting and form as an answer to how personal memory became tradition. It was carefully crafted into memorable forms and transmitted in an environment that valued the sayings as formative living tradition that included models for adaptation but set limits on this adaptation.

Since the turn of this century there has been renewed interest in gospel traditions (and their historicity) focusing on the nature of memory and memorializing. One of the more substantial treatments of this type is James Dunn's *Jesus Remembered*. Dunn accepts Kenneth Bailey's model in which stories about Jesus were shaped and preserved among the disciples of Jesus in an informal, yet controlled way. With this model in mind, Dunn writes:

> we may assume that the traditioning process *began* with the initiating word and/or act of Jesus. That is to say, the impact made by Jesus would not be something which was only put into traditional form (days, months, or years) later. The impact would *include* the formation of the tradition to recall what had made that impact. In making its impact the impact word or event *became* the tradition of that word or event.[65]

Dunn makes frequent use of the term *impact* both here and elsewhere in the book to suggest that the gospel traditions go back to Jesus. The disciples of Jesus were impacted

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[64] Alexander, "Memory and Tradition," 136.

[65] James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, vol. 1 of *Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 239.

by the life and teaching of Jesus and in their meetings together (sometimes in the presence of Jesus himself) they recalled the impact that Jesus had made on them though word and deed, and in these setting the gospel traditions emerged. The process of traditioning was one in which the impact of Jesus was memorialized in early Christian communities. Dunn summarized his findings in this way:

> The primary formative force in shaping the Jesus tradition was the impact made by Jesus during his mission on his first disciples, the impact which drew them into discipleship. (1) The initial formative impact was not Easter faith. The impulse to formulate tradition was not first effective in the post-Easter period. The tradition available to us, particularly in the Synoptic Gospels, has certainly been structured and regularly retold in light of Easter faith. But again and again the characteristic motifs and emphases of the individual traditions show themselves to have been established without and therefore probably prior to any Easter influence. The initiating impact was the impact of the pre-Easter call to faith. (2) We can certainly hope to look behind that impact to the one who made that impact. But we cannot realistically expect to find a Jesus ('the historical Jesus') other than or different from the Jesus who made that impact. Any other 'historical Jesus' will, unavoidably and inevitably, be the consequence of inserting other factors and ideological concerns into the business of constructing 'the historical Jesus'. (3) The impact itself, in large part, took the form of tradition. For most of those who had been so decisively influenced by Jesus, who had found his challenge literally life-transforming, could not have failed to speak of that impact to others who shared the new appreciation of God's kingship and its consequences for their living in the here and now. That impact-expressed-in-verbal-formulation was itself the beginning of the Jesus tradition proper – as also of embryonic ritual, as the disciple groups met together to share that tradition, no doubt regularly in the context of the shared meals which had themselves been so characteristic of Jesus's mission.[66]

The point that is most relevant to our study is the third. The "impact . . . took the form of tradition." Dunn does not spell out exactly how the "impact-expressed-in-verbal-formulation" took place, but he does at least suggest a social setting for the formulization in the meetings of disciples together and in "embryonic ritual." Dunn's book presents a

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[66] Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 882-83.

social situation among early Christians in which the tradition was rehearsed and in some way formalized into the compact units that we have in the gospels.

In response to the informal-controlled system of traditioning first discussed by Bailey and adopted by Dunn, Richard Baukham posits a formal-controlled system of traditioning that included rote memorization.[67] He finds Dunn too close to the form-critics' "picture of an oral tradition for which the eyewitnesses were only a starting point. The memories of the original disciples reached the Gospel writers mainly because they had fed these into the oral tradition at an early stage."[68] Baukham attempts to overcome Nineham's objection that the gospel traditions as we have them do not resemble eye-witness testimony by appealing to an argument put forward by T.F. Glasson that the traditions received their shape in the original telling of eyewitnesses. Glasson poses the questions:

> Why is it that the anecdotal character of the Gospels—a feature familiar to us from both ancient and modern works—has led many New Testament Scholars throughout the past sixty years to explain it as due to an extended oral process which casts doubt upon the reliability of the material, so that we can place no firm confidence in stories which have undergone a good deal of manipulation and alteration in the course of several decades?[69]

Glasson (and Baukham) refute Nineham's objection based on form by suggesting that the form in which we find the gospel tradition is a perfectly natural form for eyewitness testimony. Glasson writes:

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[67] Richard Baukham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

[68] Baukham, *Eyewitnesses*, 263.

[69] T. Francis Glasson, "The Place of the Anecdote: A Note on Form Criticism," *JTS* 32 (1881): 144.

[E]mphasis on a reductive process arises particularly in the case of the pronouncement story or apophthegm; here the main interest lies with some striking saying, and as long as this is preserved the accompanying details can be allowed, as it is said, to drop away. But at this point one must call a halt. Quite often the original 'ear-witness' of today himself trims the story to its bare essentials' and at other times (a most important matter) the one who first writes it down, keeping an eye on his space, trims it. In neither case is there any question of the influence of community transmission or a long period of oral repetition. Why should it be necessary to posit this when dealing with the Gospel pericopae?[70]

Baukham commends the usefulness of Glasson's model which draws on common experience and adds:

> But we can give it greater substance by appeal to the psychological studies of recollective memory we have studied. The structuring of stories according to "forms" occurs even before the eyewitness first tells his or her story. Such forms will be further honed in the eyewitness's telling of the memory over the course of the first few such rehearsals. This is a *rapid* process in the rehearsal of the story by the *individual* eyewitness (in a social context). In order to account for the forms, there is absolutely no need to postulate a long process of "impersonal" (Nineham's term) community tradition. In the eyewitness's own early rehearsals of the story a distinction would already have been made between, on the one hand, the feature essential to the story and its point, and, on the other hand, inessential details that would be merely optional features serving the storytelling attractiveness of the story. A grasp of the gist of the story, essential to the meaning the eyewitness had found in the event, would be necessary for all communication of the story, whether by the eyewitness or as repeated by others.[71]

While this accelerated version of the process of traditioning is not entirely implausible, it tends to ignore the fact that regardless of how long it took for such memories to reach their form, there remains a period of time (at least four decades) between when the eyewitnesses first recounted their memories of Jesus and when they were folded into one the extant gospels. For our purposes we note that whether the stories reached their anecdotal form within their first recounting by witnesses or whether they were so shaped

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[70] Glasson, "Place of Anecdote," 145.

[71] Baukham, *Eyewitnesses,* 350-51.

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by a process of community transmission, by the late first century such stories had reached just such a form and regardless of the importance of those eyewitnesses to Christian communities and evangelists, the tradition was no longer simply the property of those eyewitnesses.

Samuel Byrskog, in his *Story as History-History as Story*,[72] also attempts to link the transmission of gospel traditions to specific eye witnesses. Byrskog's overall argument is built upon modern studies of oral history as well as his reading of ancient historiographers. Heraclitus' dictum "Eyes are surer witnesses to ears" summarizes Byrskog's reading of ancient historians' emphasis on the eyewitness. The term autopsy is central to the study. "*Autopsy is essentially to be defined as a visual means to gather information concerning a certain object*, a means of inquiry, and thus also a way of relating to that object."[73] Without equating eye-witness testimony with uninterpreted raw fact, Byrskog suggests that certain witnesses or informants were the guardians of gospel tradition. Peter is especially important for Byrskog, and he lends considerable credence to Papias' description of Peter's role as a source for Mark's Gospel.[74] While he does not provide as comprehensive a picture of the social situation in which the gospel traditions were preserved, he does point to a situation in which information was passed from teacher to student.[75]

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[72] Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History–History as Story: The Gospel Traditions in the Context of Ancient Oral History* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002).

[73] Byrskog, *Story as History*, 48; emphasis original.

[74] Byrskog, *Story as History*, 274-92.

[75] This is also present in his early work *Jesus the Only Teacher: Didactic Authority and Transmission in Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism and the Matthean Community* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994).

Markus Bockmuehl also gives considerable place to the role of eyewitnesses. He stresses the importance of what he calls "living memory." This personal living memory he calls "*Wirkungsgechichte* on the *human* scale,"[76] and it rests on his suggestion that "[p]osterity for a while includes people who retain a personal link to the persons and events concerned."[77] This period of living history, according to Bockmuehl, extends for up to 150 years after the events being remembered and consists of the memory of apostles and their immediate students. Again we might appreciate Bockmuehl's point that there were individuals present in the community at the time the gospels were composed who could serve as a control on Jesus traditions, but Bockmuehl fails to offer a sustained picture of how the memories became traditions.

This criticism of the proponents of the eyewitness model has been put succinctly by Alan Kirk. After reviewing and critiquing a number of these studies, he concludes that the approaches of the form critics and the more recent attempts to understand memory and the Jesus tradition have evidenced the same flaw. He concludes that the common failing of these studies is that they "posit or at least assume a nexus of some sort between memory and tradition, but each runs up against the problem of correlating memory with the distinctive phenomenology of tradition."[78] Kirk attempts to remedy this failure through an appeal to research into social memory. The question is not simply what was remembered but what was memorialized. This process need not be construed, as had

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[76] Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2006).

[77] Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*, 168.

[78] Alan Kirk, "The Memory-Tradition Nexus in the Synoptic Tradition: Memory, Media, and Symbolic Representation," in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Tom Thatcher (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

Bultmann, as a destructive and disfiguring force. Kirk suggests a constructive role that commemoration may play. He writes: "Memory is coextensively articulated in culturally preformed genres and narrative scripts, expressed in various media, that give it not merely an external formal structure in tradition but at the same time a refinement and enrichment that tap into the deep symbolic resources of the cultural memory." In the process of transmission the tradition is shaped by the community into a more refined and more useful form. "The shaping of memory along the lineaments of cultural genres and scripts renders it communicable, and it is in the course of sharing and rehearsing memories in the groups for which they hold pertinence—that is, in commemoration—that they come into sharper relief as standardized forms of a shared tradition bearing the shared meanings and norms of a community."[79]

The gospel traditions, as we have access to them in the synoptic gospels, exhibit a lapidary nature that accords well with Kirk's insights from social memory. Memories about Jesus were shaped into units of tradition that became the common property of Christian communities. This does not rule out the importance of certain authorized individuals who served as controls on the tradition, but such individuals were not the primary storehouse. The gospel traditions shaped and were shaped by those who cherished them and saw them as foundational for their individual and cultural self-understanding.

Conclusion

Of the studies surveyed above, the two that offer sustained models for the crafting and preserving of gospel traditions are the studies of Gerhardsson and Alexander.

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[79] Kirk, "Nexus," 148.

Gerhardsson's approach suffers from an excess of specificity. Further, there is insufficient evidence to warrant equating the practices of early Christians with those of later rabbinic Judaism. His model does, however, function as an analogue near enough to the early Christians, both in time and culture, to suggest a rather intentional traditioning process in which stories are carefully shaped into memorable units. Alexander's model has the advantage of being more general in its understanding of the school of the apostles and is based largely on Patristic understanding of the nature of both the tradition and the process of traditioning.

For the purposes of this study, however, we need only establish that elements of the Jesus tradition were available to Christian communities near the end of the first century. While the traditions were certainly shaped by the evangelists, they had reached a conventional form by this time through the distilling processes of traditioning, which sharpened their usefulness and aided in memory. This form bears considerable resemblance to the *chreia* especially when broadly defined. These units of tradition were used in the early church for proclamation and education. The prologue to the Luke's Gospel assumes that the audience has received instruction in the life of Jesus. This teaching would have included these units of tradition which had been shaped into compact and memorable units. In this context an audience of Luke 5:1-11 hears the story of the call of Peter and the first disciples not for the first time, but against the backdrop of a more basic version of the story (similar to what we find in Mark 1:16-18). In this way the function of Luke's version of the call moves from informative to interpretive. The important thing is not that Jesus called Peter, James, and John but its significance. This

interpretative move is accomplished through what the rhetorical handbooks call

elaboration, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Paraphrase and Elaboration in Greco-Roman Rhetoric

Introduction

I have argued that some units of Jesus tradition that circulated in the late first
century among both author and audience of the Gospel of Luke bore similarities to the
chreia, especially when broadly defined as a part of the larger Greco-Roman anecdotal
tradition. In this chapter I will discuss the methods prescribed in rhetorical texts and
demonstrated in literary practice for manipulating these units of tradition.

In the previous chapter I put forward Aelius Theon's definition of the *chreia*:

> A chreia (*khreia*) is a brief saying or action making a point, attributed to some
> specified person or something corresponding to a person, and maxim (*gnômê*) and
> reminiscence (*apomnêmoneuma*) are connected with it. Every brief maxim
> attributed to a person creates a chreia. (Theon *Prog*. 96; Kennedy)[1]

Theon goes on to describe three categories of *chreia*. The first is verbal, in which the
chreia consists of someone's words. This type of *chreia* could be either declarative or
responsive. As an example of the declarative verbal *chreia*, Theon offers this saying of
Isocrates. "Isocrates the sophist used to say that those of his students with natural ability
were children of the Gods" (Theon, *Prog*. 97 [Kennedy]). As an example of a responsive
verbal *chreia* Theon gives the following. "Diogenes, the Cynic philosopher, seeing a rich

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[1] This definition of the chreia and its categories vary little in other
progymnasmata. See Hermogenes "A chreia (*khreia*) is a recollection (*apomnêmoneuma*)
of a saying or action or both, with a pointed meaning, usually for the sake of something
useful" (*Prog* 6, Kennedy); Aphthonius "Chreia (*khreia*) is a brief recollection, referring
to some person in appointed way. It is called chreia because it is useful (*khreiôdês*). Some
chreias are verbal, some active, some mixed." (*Prog* 23, Kennedy).

young man who was uneducated, said 'He is dirt plated with silver" (Theon, *Prog.* 97 [Kennedy]). The second major category of *chreia* is the action *chreia*. For this type, Theon offers the well-known story of Diogenes and the pedagogue. "When Diogenes the Cynic philosopher saw a boy eat fancy food, he beat his pedagogue with his staff" (Theon, *Prog.* 98-99 [Kennedy]). The third category is the mixed *chreia* which combines the two. These pithy capsules of culture were a means of memorializing the words and deeds of famous men through anecdotes which expressed their essential teachings and character.

I argued in chapter two that many gospel traditions fit the definition of the *chreia*. Now I will offer a model for the expansion or elaboration of these anecdotes into narratives. This study is not the first to look to the *progymnasmata* for analogies to this process of elaboration. There have been a number of biblical scholars who have argued that *chreia* elaboration as described by Hermogenes and Aphthonius provide models for the way that New Testament authors spun a *chreia* into a narrative. I will argue that many of these attempts are made possible only by generalizing the categories to the point of meaninglessness, or by basing the argument on a uniquely Christian version of the exercise without analogue in classical rhetoric. Further I will argue again for the utility of Theon's model and will suggest that the practice of *paraphrasis,* both as a stand-alone exercise and especially as one section of the later *chreia* elaboration exercises, is relevant for understanding gospel narratives and for hearing Luke 5:1-11 with the model audience.

Paraphrase

In Greco-Roman rhetorical education, paraphrase played a significant role, first as its own exercise, and then as a part of exercises related to the *chreia* or *maxim*. A

discussion of paraphrase is important here because rhetorical *chreia* expansion and

elaboration must be understood as developments from and extensions of the rhetorical

category of paraphrase, if they are to be understood correctly.[2]

At its base, paraphrase simply involves saying the same thing in different words

and was frequently closely associated with translation. A recurring question concerning

paraphrase as a rhetorical exercise was the value of restating what had already been said.

It is worth noting, however, that there is never a question of being able to convey the

same substance in other words. The idea that old ideas might be expressed anew with

other (better) language was expressed in the fourth century B.C.E. by Isocrates.

> Furthermore, if it were possible to present the same subject matter in one form
> and in no other, one might have reason to think it gratuitous to weary one's
> hearers by speaking again in the same manner as his predecessors but since orator
> is of such a nature that it is possible to discourse on the same subject matter in
> many different ways—to represent the great as lowly or invest the little with
> grandeur, to recount the things of old in a new manner or set forth events of recent
> date in an old fashion—it follows that one must not shun the subjects upon which
> others have spoken before, but must try to speak better than they. (Isocrates
> *Panegyricus,* 7-10 [Norlin, LCL])

The problem that some had with paraphrasing the work of others, especially works from

the literary canon, was that it may not always be possible to improve on the language.

Theon addresses just this point in his discussion of paraphrase in the introduction

to his *progymnasmata*.

> Despite what some say or have thought, *paraphrasis* (paraphrase) is not without
> utility. The argument of opponents is that once something has been well said it
> cannot be done a second time, but those who say this are far from hitting on what
> is right. Thought is not moved by any one thing in only one way so as to express
> the idea (*phantasia*) that has occurred to it in a similar form, but it is stirred in a

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[2] One of the few studies which carefully considers the role of *paraphrasis* in the
formulation of the gospels, and in particular Luke is Timothy Brookins's, "Luke's use of
Mark as παράφρασις: its effects on characterization in the 'healing of blind Bartimaeus's
pericope (Mark 10.46-52/Luke 18.35-43)," *JSNT* (2011): 70-89.

number of different ways, and sometimes we are making a declaration, sometimes asking a question, sometimes pressing our thought in some other way. There is nothing to prevent what is imagined from being expressed equally well in all these ways. There is evidence of this in paraphrase by a poet of his own thoughts elsewhere or paraphrase by another poet and in the orators and historians, and, in brief, all ancient writers seem to have used paraphrase in the best possible way, rephrasing not only their own writings but those of each other. (Theon *Prog.* 61 [Kennedy])

Theon goes on to give examples from Homer, Demosthenes, Thucydides, and others, suggesting that the practice was widespread among classical writers. Other discussions of paraphrase mention these anonymous persons who object to the practice. Cicero expresses precisely this problem when he describes a practice of his youth:

For my part, in the daily exercises of youth, I used chiefly to set myself that task which I knew Gaius Garbo, my old enemy, was wont to practice [sic]: this was to set myself some poetry, the most impressive to be found, or to read as much of some speech as I could keep in my memory, and then to declaim upon the actual subject-matter of my reading, choosing as far as possible different words. But later I noticed this defect in my method, that those words which best befitted each subject, and were the most elegant and in fact the best, had been already seized upon by Ennius, if it was on his poetry that I was practicing, or by Gracchus, if I chanced to have set myself a speech of his. Thus I saw that to employ the same expressions profited me nothing, while to employ others was a positive hindrance, in that I was forming the habit of using the less appropriate. (*De or.* 1.154-55 [Sutton, LCL])

As a substitute for this exercise, Cicero will turn to translating works from Greek to Latin, allowing him to choose his own best words. Quintilian, very much aware of Cicero's objections, will address the same problem. After approving of the practice of translation, here he agrees entirely with Cicero, he goes on to defend the practice of paraphrasing works without translation.

I therefore disagree with those who forbid paraphrases of Latin speeches, on the ground that all the best expressions have been anticipated and anything we put in another way is bound to be worse. In fact we do not always need to despair of being able to find something better than the original, nor did nature make eloquence such a poor, starved thing that any subject can only be well handled once! Or are we to suppose that, while actor's gestures can so often vary the effect of the same words, oratory has *less* power, so that things are said which leave

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nothing more to be said on the same subject? But grant that what we discover is neither better than the original nor equal to it: there is still a place for the second best. Do we not ourselves often speak twice or more on the same theme, sometimes even in successive sentences? It is conceivable that we can compete against ourselves but not against others? If there were only one way of saying a thing well, we might legitimately suppose that our predecessors blocked the road for us; but in fact there are countless ways, and many roads lead to the same destination. Brevity and fullness both have their charms; metaphor and literal language have different merits; straightforward speech does well for some things, a figured variation for others. And finally the actual difficulty of the exercise is very useful. We may add that paraphrase gives a more thorough knowledge of the great authors, because we do not race through the text in a carefree reading; we go over every detail, are forced to examine it in depth, and become aware of its great qualities from the very fact that we find it impossible to imitate. (*Inst. or* 10.5.5-8 [Russell, LCL])

Notice that Quintilian is both more optimistic about the possibility of saying the same thing as well as the original and less concerned with the student's failure to surpass his models in eloquence. It is clear that in addition to an exercise in style and ornament, the practice of paraphrase was a tool for better understanding the canon of great literature. Even the failure of the student to match the original eloquence leads to better appreciation.

In addition to paraphrasing literary classics, Quintilian recommends paraphrasing Aesop's fables.

Let them learn to tell Aesop's fables, which follow on directly from their nurses' stories, in pure and unpretentious language; then let them achieve the same slender elegance in a written version. Verse they should first break up, then interpret in different words, then make a bolder paraphrase, in which they are allowed to abbreviate and embellish some parts, so long as the poet's meaning is preserved. This task is difficult even for fully trained teachers; any pupil who handles it well will be capable of learning anything. (*Inst. or.* 1.9.2 [Russell, LCL])

Here Quintilian seems to add a second step to the exercise of paraphrase. First, the fable is retold in other words, then, after a careful analysis of each verse, the students proceed

to a freer paraphrase. Even in this freer paraphrase, however, the success of the exercise

depends upon the student not "losing the poet's meaning."

Paraphrasis as a separate exercise falls out of the extant *progymnasmata* after

Theon but lives on as a part of the elaboration of a *chreia*.

<div align="center">Chreia Elaboration</div>

Theon prescribes a variety of different exercises that students might perform with

the *chreia*.

> Chreias are practiced by restatement, grammatical inflection, comment, and
> contradiction, and we expand and compress the chreia, and in addition (at a later
> stage in study) we refute and confirm. Practice by restatement is self-evident; for
> we try to express the assigned chreia, as best we can, with the same words (as in
> the version given us) or with others in the clearest way. (Theon *Prog.* 101
> [Kennedy])

He goes on to describe first grammatical exercises in which the *chreia* is restated in

singular, dual, and plural, then in varying tenses and moods. That these exercises were

not intended as actual techniques for producing an argument or a narrative is made clear

in his examples. The practice of putting a *chreia* into the dual produces the illustration,

"The twin orators Isocrates said the twin students with natural ability are children of

gods" (Theon *Prog.* 101 [Kennedy]). It is difficult to imagine any *chreia* which might be

better stated or better understood by bifurcating the actors in it. These initial exercises

have as their clear aim the development of the students' grammatical, rather than

persuasive abilities. It is in the next three sections that Theon describes that the contents

of the *chreia* are more fully engaged and a student moves toward the production of an

argument or a narrative. First, students are directed to add a comment "appropriately and

briefly approving what is said in the chreia, to the effect that it is true or noble or

beneficial, or that other famous men have thought the same. Second, students are

<div align="center">61</div>

encouraged to "contradict chreias from their contraries" (Theon *Prog.* 103 [Kennedy]). Here the students must refute the saying, judging incomplete, not always true, or completely false. This exercise differs from Hermogenes' step 4, the argument from the opposite, in that it is a refutation not a confirmation from another perspective. Both of these exercises build the students' critical faculties and examples from literature are abundant. The final example, however, holds the most promise for shedding light on a reading of our pericope.

> We expand (ἐπεκτείνομεν) the chreia whenever we lengthen the questions and answers in it, and the action or suffering, if any. We compress by doing the opposite. For example, this chreia is brief: "Epaminondas, dying childless, said to his friends, 'I leave two daughters, the victory at Leuctra and that at Mantinea.'" We expand it as follows: "Epaminondas, the general of the Thebans, was, you should know, a great man in peacetime, but when war with Lacedaimonians came to his fatherland he demonstrated many shining deeds of greatness. When serving as Boeotrach at Leuctra, he defeated the enemy: and conducting a campaign and contending on behalf of his country, he died at Mantinea. When he had been wounded and his life was coming to an end, while his friends were bewailing many things, including that he was dying childless, breaking into a smile, he said, 'Cease your weeping, my friends, for I have left you two immortal daughters: two victories of my country over Lacedaimonians, one at Leuctra, the elder, the younger just begotten by me at Mantinea.'" (Theon *Prog.* 103-04 [Kennedy])

In this exercise the original *chreia* is stretched into a narrative by the addition of details which fill out the story. The information added is likely a combination of historical (or at least traditional) data available elsewhere about the military victories at Lectra and Matinea and plausible details added to make the story come to life (e.g. Epaminondas breaking into smile).

Theon's *progymnasmata* differs from later texts in that he does not link elaboration or *exargasia* to the *chreia* specifically and his discussion of elaboration has little to do with *chreia* elaboration as discussed in Hermogenes and others. His treatment

of *exargasia* is broader and relates closely to his discussion of *paraphrasis*. He describes the exercise as follows:

> "Elaboration (*exargasia*) is language that adds what is lacking in thought or expression." What is "lacking" can be supplied by making clear what is obscure; by filling gaps in the language or content; by saying some things more strongly, or more believable, or more vividly, or more truly, or more wordily—each word repeating the same thing—, or more legally, or more beautifully, or more appropriately, or more opportunely, or making the subject pleasanter, or by using a better arrangement or a style more ornate. (Theon, *Prog* 110 [Kennedy])

It is easy to relate this description with other treatments of paraphrase discussed above and with Theon's discussion of *chreia* expansion. I will argue that this type of elaboration provides an excellent model for understanding the function of the narrative in Luke 5:1-11.

Chreia elaboration will take another form in the *progymnasmata* of Hermogenes and Aphthonius. These works prescribe a system of building an argument that takes a *chreia* as its starting point. This exercise becomes so closely connected to the *chreia* in these and later works that Hermogenes makes it the most important aspect of the *chreia* exercise.

> Much is said by the ancients about different kinds of chreia, (for example,) that some of them are declarative, some interrogative, some investigative. But now let us come to the point, and this is the elaboration (*exargasia*). Let the elaboration be as follows: first, a brief encomium of the speaker or doer; then a paraphrase of the chreia, then the cause; for example, "Isocrates said that the root of education is bitter but its fruit sweet." Praise: "Isocrates was wise," and you will slightly develop the topic (*khôrion*). Then the chreia, "He said this," and you will not state it in bare form but expand the statement. Then the cause, "For the greatest things are wont to succeed through toil, and when successful bring pleasure." Then by contrast, "Ordinary things need no toil and in the end give no pleasure, but things of importance are the opposite." Then from a comparison, "For just as farmers need to reap fruits by working the soil, so also with speeches." Then from examples "demosthenes, by shutting himself up at home and working hard, later reaped the fruit in the form of crowns and testimonials." It is also possible to bring in a judgment; for example, "Hesiod said (*works and Days* 289), 'The gods sell all good things to us for toils.'" At the end you will put an exhortation to the

effect that one must be persuaded by the person who has said or done this. (Hermogenes *Prog.* 7-8 [Kennedy])

This discussion of *chreia* elaboration has given rise to a number of attempts to read gospel passages as elaborations of *chreia*.[3] One of the earlier and more influential of such attempts is found in Burton Mack's chapters of *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* which he co-wrote with Vernon Robbins.[4] In chapter two, Mack gives an introduction to *chreia* elaboration especially as it is found in Hermogenes. In other chapters of the book, he attempts to demonstrate that a passage in the gospels should be understood as an elaborated *chreia* (sometimes with suggestions about what the original might have been). For Mack, the elaboration of the *chreia* according to Hermogenes's categories provides a way to find the answer to questions which could not be answered by either form- or redaction-criticism. He writes:

> What we have lacked is a composition model which can account both for the similarities and the differences of just such a set of stories as the four under discussion [Mark 14:3-9, Matt 36:6-13, Luke 7:36-50, and John 12:1-8]. Our suggestion will be that the rhetorical techniques of chreia elaboration provide us with such a model.[5]

Mack illustrates his point through the texts of Mark 14:3-9 and Luke 7:36-60. In both of these texts, Mack argues that both evangelists constructed their narratives from an original tradition, which he describes as a "Cynic chreia." The original, according to Mack, ended with a pithy remark by Jesus. This original conclusion was then discarded

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[3] Marion Moeser writes: "The methods presented by Mack and Robbins in *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* have set an agenda for future analysis of Gospel anecdotes" (*The Anecdote in Mark, the Classical World and the Rabbis* [New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002], 180). Examples of other studies are included below.

[4] Burton L. Mack and Vernon K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion*.

[5] Burton Mack, "Elaboration within a Chreia," 86-106 in *Patterns of Persuasion*, 89.

by the evangelists and replaced by "Objections more to the point of the practical and theological issues facing those communities."[6] Pointing to the marked differences in the two accounts, Mack suggests that "those who transmitted [the *chreia*] expanded it in two different ways in the course of transmission, and that the expansion followed the pattern of chreia elaboration as learned in the Hellenistic school."[7] To illustrate his point, Mack attempts to identify the eight parts of elaborated *chreia* in both texts. Perhaps the simplest way to demonstrate the shortcoming of this analysis is to represent Mack's division of the passages in a table (3.1). The first column provides the heading which Mack suggests, and the second and third provide the text from the gospels. I am also including a fourth column that includes Hermogenes' example of a *chreia* elaboration as an aid to the discussion which follows.

We notice immediately that when placed next to Hermogenes's text, Mack's categorization of the section is forced at best, and at worst completely baseless. As one reviewer puts it: "To make the Gospel accounts correspond, the authors often stretch Hermogenes' categories to the breaking point."[8] In his discussion of the elaboration elements, Mack himself seems to dilute the connection. While he insists, for example, that in Mark 14:3-9 "Jesus' response does contain all of the basic elements of rhetorical elaboration," he adds that "[i]t does not, however, fully develop any of the elements."[9]

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[6] Mack, "Anointing of Jesus," 89.

[7] Mack, "Anointing of Jesus," 89.

[8] Steven Cory, review of *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels*, by Burton Mack, *JR* 72 (1992): 97-98.

[9] Mack, "Annointing of Jesus," 94.

Table 3.1 – Chreia *Elaboration in Hermogenes and Mack*

Heading	Mark 14:3-9	Luke 7:36-50	Hermogenes
Setting	And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the jar and poured it over his head. (3)	One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was sitting at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of -ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. (36-38)	Not Present
Challenge, Question	But there were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment thus wasted? For this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and given to the poor." And they reproached her. (4-5)	Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have know who and what sore of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." (39)	Isocrates said that the root of education is bitter but its fruit is sweet.
(1) Introduction[10]	Not Present	And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it, Teacher?"	Praise: "Isocrates was wise" and you shall slightly develop the topic

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[10] Mack labels this first heading "introduction," but in Hermogenes this is the place for praise (*encomium*).

Table 3.1 (*continued*)

Heading	Mark 14:3-9	Luke 7:36-50	Hermogenes
(2) Response[11]	But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble *her*? (6a)	Not Present	Then the chreia, "he said this," and you will not state it in bare form but expand the statement.
(3) Rationale	She has done a *beautiful thing* to me. (6b)	"Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." (47)	Then the cause, "For the greatest things are wont to succeed through toil, and when successful bring pleasure."
(4) Contrary[12]	"For you *always* have the poor with you . . .; but you will *not always* have me." (7a, c)		Then by contrast, "Ordinary things need no toil and in the end give no pleasure, but things of importance are the opposite."
(5) Analogy	". . .and whenever you will, you can *do good* to them"; (7b)	"A certain creditor had two debtors, one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." (41-43)	Then from a comparison, "For just as farmers need to reap fruits by working the soil, so also with speeches."

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[11] Mack labels this second heading "response" but in Hermogenes this is the place for *paraphrasis*. It is always a restatement of the original *chreia* (a number of examples are included below). There is no restatement or paraphrase in the example given.

[12] It is a common failing of this type of analysis along the lines of *chreia* elaboration to construe the statement from the opposite as meaning simply a negative statement.

Table 3.1 (*continued*)

Heading	Mark 14:3-9	Luke 7:36-50	Hermogenes
(6) Example	She had done what she could: she has anointed my body beforehand for burying." (8)	Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment." (44-46)	Then from an example "Demosthenes, by shutting himself up at home and working hard, later reaped the fruit in the form of crowns and testimonials." It is also possible to bring in judgment; for example, "Hesiod said . . ., 'The gods put seat before virtue,' and another poet says, 'The gods sell all good things to us for toils.'"
(7) Judgment[13]	"And truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."	And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (50)	At the end you will put an exhortation to the effect that one must be persuaded by the person who has said or done this.
(8) Conclusion	Not Present	"And he said to her, "our sins are forgiven." (48)	Not Present

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[13] Hermogenes uses the category "Exhortation."

And the arrangement of the Lucan version is a jumble (the parts of the elaboration occur in the order 1,5,6,3,4,8,7), which Mack attributes to Luke's "inductive line of argumentation."[14] It is difficult to imagine that any reader would recognize the pattern of elaboration when the steps are so thoroughly reordered, and the elements themselves bear such a slight resemblance to the prescribed parts of the exercise. The resemblance to Hermogenes's exercises are slight. Where the resemblances do exist, they might better be accounted for on other rhetorical grounds without appealing to elaboration.

In addition to the forced categories, the analysis shows another important divergence from Hermogenes. Hermogenes's elaboration is not placed in the mouth of the subject of the *chreia*. In examples of the exercise only the statement of the *chreia* and the *paraphrasis* section include the words of the *chreia's* subject. When a *chreia* is elaborated in these exercises, the result is a speech about the original *chreia*, not an expansion of the text into a longer speech or narrative. To deal with this incongruence, Mack posits what he will call "narrative elaboration" and provides scant justification for the category in *Patterns of Persuasion*.[15] He gives a fuller discussion of narrative elaboration in his later book *Who Wrote the New Testament? The Making of the Christian Myth*. Here Mack argues that

> one learned in school how to turn a chreia into the story of a little debate between
> the protagonist and his challengers. One also learned how to "elaborate" the point
> of a chreia by providing a coherent set of arguments in its favor. In this case, the
> arguments were one's own, not those of the protagonist of the chreia. As the Jesus
> people developed chreiai into more elaborate argumentations, however, they

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[14] Mack, "Annointing of Jesus," 102.

[15] He simply states "In this case, the elaboration functions as a device for narrative expansion with the story itself. Jesus will propose a thesis about the significance of the enigmatic action, then go on to elaborate the point himself" ("Annointing of Jesus," 89).

chose not to take the credit for the arguments they had found. Instead, just as with the attribution of new teachings to the founder of a school, they let Jesus take the credit both for the chreia and for the arguments in its favor. And it so happened that the standard outline for the elaboration of a chreia ended with an authoritative pronouncements (Mack and Robbins 1989). This results in giving Jesus two prominent pronouncements in each elaborated chreia, with the last statement invariably making a pronouncement on the correctness of his own views. . . . Thus whether inadvertently or on purpose, the Jesus School produced a self-referential authority for their founder-teacher.[16]

Thus, *chreia* elaboration becomes a way for Mack to suggest some precedent for the Jesus School's putting words into the mouth of their founder. His *Narrative Elaboration*, however, is without precedent, and its relationship to Hermogenes' progymnasmatic exercise depends entirely on Mack's suggestion that early Christians felt free to substantially alter and add to the original *chreia* of Jesus even to the point of supplanting the gist, and even the all important punch line of the original. This kind of *chreia* elaboration is never taught in the rhetorical handbooks. That is not to say that a student may never contradict a *chreia*, but when a *chreia* is refuted, it is not done by changing the substance of the *chreia* itself. The attitude of the *progymnasmata* was generally conservative when it came to the *chreiai* and one function of repeating, paraphrasing, and elaborating on the *chreia* was character formation. The chreiai were understood largely as formative to the student—authorities for shaping character and behavior. If early Christians took the liberties with the Jesus traditions that Mack suggests, one can hardly look to the *progymnasmata* or the *chreia* exercises as a model.

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[16] Burton L. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament: the Making of the Christian Myth* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1995), 59-60.

Mack uses the same model in chapter six to examine Mark 4:1-34.[17] The results are much the same as his treatment in chapter four. The categories of Hermogenes's elaboration are only made applicable by generalizing them to the point of being almost meaningless, and the analysis depends on the acceptance of his new category of narrative elaboration.

Other attempts to read New Testament narratives as elaborated *chreiai* have tended to accept the premise that an elaborated *chreia* might take the form of a narrative without dealing with Mack's suggestion that the narrative elaboration was a particularly Christian form. But this is precisely what is necessary if one reads narrative texts in this way. There is no analogue in Greco-Roman rhetoric for this type of narrative *chreia* elaboration.

Ron Cameron applies the method to Q 7:18-35.[18] Aside from the problem of analyzing the structure of a hypothetical document, Cameron's approach follows Mack by suggesting that a typically cynic *chreia* is behind the text.[19] This *chreia* has been domesticated by the "Q group" through elaboration. He suggests that

> [t]he original chreia took a position on the question of Jesus' identity and activity. When that chreia was effaced by transferring the response to a subsequent place

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[17] Burton L. Mack, "Teaching in Parables: Elaboration in Mark 4:1-34," in *Patterns of Persuasion*, 143-60.

[18] Ron Cameron, "'What Have You Come out to See?' Characterization of John and Jesus in the Gospels," *Semeia* (1990): 35-69.

[19] The *chreia* which he reconstructs is as follows: "When asked, 'are you the one who is to come or should we expect another?' Jesus replied, 'Whoever is not offended by me is blessed" (Cameron, "*What Have You Come out to See,*" 52). The rest of the story, including Jesus's recounting of the miracles they are report to John, are then put into Jesus's mouth through the elaboration of the *chreia*.

in the argumentation, another response was substituted to explicate the implication of the original questions.[20]

Again, the fundamental problem of applying Hermogenes's *chreia* elaboration to a narrative persists. Cameron squeezes the text into the categories chronologically, but the resemblance between Hermogenes's categories and the text are slight, and it certainly cannot support the thesis that *chreia* elaboration provided a rhetorical means of rendering the original *chreia* unrecognizable.

There are examples which do not follow Mack's suggestion that *chreia* elaboration might be used as a technique to transform the gist of a *chreia* into something unrelated. David Gowler suggests that Matthew 12:1-8 can be read as an elaborated *chreia* developed along Hermogenes's headings. Gowler's attempt is in many ways more convincing than Mack's.[21] The categories correspond well in function to the sections of the text that he suggests. The problem remains that the elaboration of a *chreia* according to multiple headings that is described in the *progymnasmata* does not in any of the examples available to us result in a continuous narrative. Gowler's argument might have been better made by a more general appeal to the rhetorical persuasiveness of the argument.[22]

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[20] Cameron, "What Have You Come out to See," 53.

[21] David B. Gowler, "The Chreia," in *The Historical Jesus in Context*, eds. Amy-Jill Levine, Dale Allison, and John D. Crossan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[22] Hock and O'Neal point out the similarity between Hermogenes categories for elaboration and the seven arguments of the *expolitio* in *Rhet. Ad Herenn*. Ronald F. Hock & Edward N. O'Neil, *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric Classroom Exercises* (Boston: Brill, 2002).

Other examples are available. William Wright attempted to read John 9 in this way.[23] His analysis depends largely on the assertion that the pattern of elaboration laid out in Hermogenes's *progymnasmata* was "a flexible pattern, which an individual should adapt and modify as one's rhetorical needs necessitated."[24] In actual examples of the exercise, however, there is no such flexibility of pattern. As with the other examples, however, one could hardly read examples of *chreia* elaborations in the *progymnasmata* and then read John 9 and see any immediate resemblance. The comparison is possible only when the headings are removed from actual examples and made into flexible and vague categories.

In general, attempts to understand the relationship between synoptic passages using Hermogenes's elaboration exercise have been less than convincing. The fundamental flaw is that the exercise was never prescribed as a way to construct a narrative. This is compounded when the relationship between the section of the passages considered and Hermogenes's heading turns out to be slight.

Further, I have argued above that the *chreiai* of Jesus would not be the property of the evangelists only. Mack, and others, have presented a picture in which what Jesus really said was radically altered in order to convince the audience of a particular theological point. But if the audience already knows the original *chreia* it is difficult to imagine that this kind of manipulation would be convincing. It makes good rhetorical sense to use the authority of the saying that the audience knows to make a further point,

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[23] William M. Wright, *Rhetoric and Theology: Figural Reading of John 9* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyler, 2009); especially pages 144-152.

[24] Wright, *Rhetoric and Theology*, 148.

but if the elaborated version of the saying contradicts the original, this can only serve to bring the original to the mind of the audience and thus undermine the point being made.

That is not to say, however, that the elaboration by heading has nothing to offer us. In Hermogenes's *progymnasmata*, the second section is the restatement of the *chreia* itself, but it is not to be simply repeated "in bare form" but expanded. In Aphthonius' development of the exercise this section is called *paraphrasis*. Here we find the *chreia* stretched into a narrative in a manner similar to Theon's expansion.

Paraphrasis *in the* Progymnasmata

In this section we will look at examples of *paraphrasis* in *chreia* elaborations in the *progymnasmata*, in order to see examples of how students were taught to expand a *chreia* into a narrative. These examples are taken from Hock and O'Neil's *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric*,[25] where *chreia* elaborations from a number of *progymnasmata* are compiled. Since the same *chreiai* are frequently chosen for elaboration, I have grouped the analysis by *chreia*. In each case I have chosen a version of the original *chreia* that is representative and followed it with the *paraphrasis* sections as well as my own comments.

Original Chreia

"Alexander, on being asked by someone where he kept his treasures, pointed to his friends." (Libanius, *Prog.* 3 [Hock O'Neil, 141])

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[25] Ronald Hock and Edward O'Neil, *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric: Classroom Exercises* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2002).

Paraphrasis

> Therefore, someone approached him and said, "I would very much like to see your treasures, O King." And it seems to me that the man was prompted to do this because he had seen an entire people subdued recently and because he supposed that this had resulted in a pile of money. How then did Alexander react? He did not become violently angry if someone asked him an impertinent question. Nor did he then order his subordinates to take the fellow, lead him around, and show him the pile of gold, a certain number of talents of silver, and the abundance of enemy spoils. Instead he ordered him to look at his friends and said, "Look for no other wealth of Alexander. These are my treasures." (Libanius, *Prog.* 4 [Hock O'Neil, 143])

It is easy to see how this *paraphrasis* fits Theon's definition of *chreia* expansion quite nicely. The questions and answers are expanded and a fuller narrative setting is given. Also, the expanded paraphrase adds details which both give color to the story and provide further reasons to praise Alexander; he is patient when faced with impertinence.[26] One might easily have heard the original *chreia* without coming to this conclusion. Further, the *paraphrasis* makes it clear that there was indeed considerable wealth that might have been shown the impertinent questioner, thus making Alexander's pointing to his friends more significant. Finally we see that while the original *chreia* was an action *chreia*, the expanded paraphrase is mixed; Alexander both points to his friends and says "Look for no other wealth of Alexander" (Libanius, *Prog.* 4 [Hock O'Neil, 143]).

An Anonymous Elaboration

> Paraphrastic. Being a king who was as affable as possible, he allowed everyone to ask about whatever they desired. And so, when someone, supposing that he possessed as much wealth as the number of trophies which he had acquired, sought to learn how many he possessed, Alexander, passing over his labors, defined his wealth in terms of friendship. And he defined as abiding wealth those men through whom wealth was the more secure. . . (Anon. [Hock O'Neil, 249])

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[26] Hock & O'Neil suggest that this may be a veiled reference to Julian since Alexander was not generally regarded in this way (*The Chreia,* 127).

Here we see again the claim that Alexander was gracious to his interlocutor. In this paraphrase the moral of the *chreia* is brought out more clearly. Friendship is a better and more secure wealth than possessions. We note in both of these examples that one possible way of understanding Alexander's action is eliminated. It is quite possible to understand Alexander's response as an indication that he had dispersed the spoils of his conquest among his friends. Plutarch indicates that after his victory over Persia he distributed the spoils with such freedom as to raise the objection of Olympias (*Alex.* 34, 39). In both cases, however, the paraphrase makes the story one of the value of friendship rather than a testament to Alexander's generosity. This demonstrates how an expanded paraphrase of a *chreia* can direct the audience to one of a number of possible interpretations.

Another *chreia* which receives frequent treatment in the *progymnasmata* is the account of Diogenes' beating of a pedagogue because of the behavior of his student.

Original Chreia

> Diogenes, on seeing a youth misbehaving, struck his paedagogus, adding: "Why do you teach such things? (Libanius, *Prog.* [Hock O'Neil, 157])

Paraphrasis

> A paedagogus was in the company of a boy, but the boy was not maintaining the proper decorum. To Diogenes his behavior seemed to need correction. What, then, does he do? He ignores the young man and goes after the one in charge, inflicts many blows on his back, and adds to the blows the remark that such a man should certainly not be a teacher. (Libanius, *Prog*. 3. [Hock O'Neil, 159])

This paraphrase amplifies the beating which Diogenes dispenses so that it is not one but many blows, and the saying which concludes the *chreia* is replaced by indirect discourse. It also attempts to explain the actions of Diogenes as appropriate because the pedagogue was responsible for the youth.

Paraphrasis

> This is why, when he had entered the marketplace and chanced upon a boy who was showing a lack of self-control although his paedagogus was in attendance, he disregarded the boy, went after the paedagogus, and chastised the guardian instead of the boy. Nor did he conceal the reason for his blow: "This much at least," he said "anyone who is not a good paedagogus will understand." And so this is what he has done, but it is possible from what follows to understand that he has acted properly. (Ps. Nicolaus, *Prog*. 3 [Hock O'Neil, 213])

Here again the setting is expanded to show that Diogenes' actions were appropriate. Diogenes verbal response, however, is changed in order to make it a more appropriate warning to all pedagogues. The gist of the story remains the same, but it is given a more universal application.

Paraphrasis

> Paraphrastic. This is why he used to go around the marketplace investigating, so to speak, someone he could chastise. And so, on seeing a boy misbehaving, although a paedagogus was in attendance, he disregarded the young man and chastised the pedagogus instead of the boy, inflicting punishment on both with a single blow. And so, this is what he did, and it is possible from what follows to praise <him>. (Anonymous in Doxapaters, *Homiliae* 3 [Hock O'Neil, 249])

What stands out about this paraphrasis is that it seems to attempt to avoid the impression that the youth goes unpunished. It is not that Diogenes struck the boy, but that in striking the pedagogue he inflicted punishment on both.

Other examples could be offered from *chreia* elaborations, but these make the point that more than simply restating, the expansion of the *chreia* was an exercise in interpretation and application. It directs the audience toward a particular understanding of the *chreia* and brings out the truth encapsulated in the original.

Paraphrasis *in Literature*

Not only do we find these tendencies in the progymnastic texts, but examples of expanded *chreia* can be identified in literature as well, and particularly in the work of Plutarch. A number of *chreiai* are collected in Vernon K. Robbins's *Ancient Quotes and Anecdotes*. This collection makes it convenient to examine different versions of the same *chreia*. Unlike in the *progymnasmata*, where we could clearly say that one text is an expansion on another, in these examples from literature it is impossible to say with certainty the exact form of an original *chreia* that was expanded. Further, it is not possible to always say that the longer version of the *chreia* is an expansion of a shorter version. It is certainly possible that a more elaborate story was condensed into a *chreia*. The argument, however, is based on cumulative evidence, and so while it may be possible that the longer gave rise to the shorter, it is very likely (especially in light of the evidence from the *progymnasmata* that a *chreia* invited expansion) that some of the examples moved from the shorter *chreia* to an expanded narrative.

First, let us consider a story from the youth of Alexander. This *chreia* is especially interesting because it is attested in three versions all attributed to Plutarch. The first is found in *Sayings of Kings and Commanders*. This text is a collection of sayings without narrative framework.

> Being nimble and swift of foot, he was urged by his father to run in the foot-race at the Olympic games. "Yes, I would run," said he, "if I were to have kings as competitors." (*Mor.* 3.179D [Babbitt, LCL])

This version has all the marks of a *chreia*: it is compact with only the bare narrative setting and concludes with a clever punch line. Plutarch also includes a version of this *chreia* in his *Lives*. Here the saying has been woven into a larger narrative and serves to

illustrate Alexander's superiority to his father. This version is very similar to the first and

shows only minor variation in language.

> When those about him inquired whether he would be willing to contend in the foot-race at the Olympic games, since he was swift of foot, "Yes," said he, "if I could have kings as my contestants." (Plutarch, *Alex* [Robbins, 15])

A longer version is found in *Fortune of Alexander.*

> Since he was swiftest of foot of all the young men of his age, his comrades urged him to enter the Olympic games. He asked if the competitors were kings, and when his friends replied that they were not, he said that the contest was unfair, for it was one in which a victory would be over commoners, but a defeat would be the defeat of a king. (Plutarch, *Mor.* [Robbins, 15])

Here the saying has been expanded and some details of setting have changed. In the short

version, it is Alexander's father who encourages him to race, while in this version it is

Alexander's friends who urge it. Alexander's reply is changed from direct to indirect

discourse and the pithy remark is replaced by an explanation of his refusal. This is clearly

an interpretive move. It clarifies the meaning of Alexander's response.

Another example can be drawn from a *chreia* about Alexander found twice in

Plutarch. The shorter is drawn from *Sayings of Kings and Commanders*.

> Of his foremost and most influential friends he [Alexander] seems to have honored Craterus most and to have loved Hephaestion best. "For," said he, "Craterus is fond of the king, but Hephaestion is fond of Alexander." (Plutarch, *Mor.* 3.181D [Robbins])

We find an expanded version of the *chreia*, again, in Plutarch's *Lives*.

> Moreover, when he [Alexander] saw that among his chiefest friends Hephaestion approved his course and joined him in changing his mode of life, while Craterus clung fast to his native ways, he employed the former in his business with the Barbarians, the latter in that with the Greeks and Macedonians. And in general he showed most affection for Hephaestion, but most esteem for Craterus, thinking and constantly saying, that Hephaestion was a friend of Alexander, Craterus a friend of the king. (Plutarch, *Alexander* 48.1-2, [Robbins])

The shorter version is not meaningful if audience knows nothing of Craterus and

Hephaestion. In this expansion additional information is given which explains the saying

of Alexander. Here, as we have seen above, the saying is moved from direct to indirect

discourse, but the content is similar.

A story about Chrysantas and his decision not to strike down a foe in battle

demonstrates how the same *chreia* can be expanded in different ways to make very

different points. The story is attested in Epictetus, Plutarch, and Xenophon.

> But Chrysantas, when he was on the point of striking the foe, refrained because he heard the bugle sounding the recall; it seemed so much more profitable to him to do the bidding of his general than to follow his own inclinations. (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.6.15 [Robbins, 186])

A similar version is found in Plutarch's *Sayings of Spartans.*

> Another [Spartan], in the thick of the fight, was about to bring down his sword on an enemy when the recall sounded, and he checked the blow. When someone inquire why, when he had his enemy in his power, he did not kill him, he said, "Because it is better to obey one's commander than to slay an enemy." (Plutarch *Sayings of Spartans* 3.236E [Robbins, 186])

Both of these versions emphasize the importance of obedience to superiors. In the second

version the *chreia* takes the form of question and answer, while in the first there is no

dialogue and the motivations of Chrysantas are explained by a narrator. Xenophon

provides a fuller version of the story. Here the story is set as a dialogue and Cyrus says:

> But as to Captain Chrysantas, who fought next to me, I have no need to make enquiry from others, for I myself know how gallant his conduct was; in everything else he did just as I think all of you also did; but when I gave the word to retreat and called to him by name, even though he had his sword raised to smite down an enemy he obeyed me at once and refrained from what he was on the point of doing and proceed to carry out my order; not only did he himself retreat but he also with instant promptness passed the word on to the others; and so he succeeded in getting his division out of range before the enemy discovered that we were retreating or drew their bows or let fly their javelins. And thus by his obedience he is unharmed himself and he had kept his men unharmed. (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 4.1.3 [Robbins, 186])

The emphasis is again on obedience, but additional details are given, which give the story color as well as providing the results of Chrysantas's obedience. Whether Xenophon added these details from some source or whether they were simply included to add vividness to the story is impossible to say with confidence. Quintilian seems to suggest that the practice of adding plausible details for the sake of vividness (*enargeia*) was appropriate (Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.3.67-70). The main thrust of the story, however, that Chrysantas had stayed his hand when he was called to retreat (whether by bugle or by Cyrus himself), is retained.

Plutarch uses this anecdote again in *Roman Questions*, this time with a different emphasis.

> Is it because sheer necessity alone constitutes a warrant to kill a human being, and he who does so illegally and without the word of command is a murderer? For this reason Cyrus also praised Chrysantas who, when he was about to kill an enemy, and had his weapon raised to strike, heard the recall sounded and let the man go without striking him, believing that he was now prevented from so doing. (Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, 4.273F [Robbins, 186])

The issue of obedience is still present, but the emphasis has shifted to a question of when it is appropriate to kill. Again the main outline of the story has not changed, but its context and the explanation of Chrysantas's motives give the story a different point.

In one final example we see how more than one *chreia* are brought together resulting in a fuller picture of the characters involved. The two component *chreiai* can be found in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. Both concern Alexander and Diogenes and are brought together in Plutarch's *Lives*.

> When he [Diogenes] was sunning himself in the Craneum, Alexander came and stood over him and said, "Ask of me anything you desire." To which he replied, "Stand out of my light" (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 6.38 [Robbins, 257]).

> Alexander is reported to have said, "Had I not been Alexander, I should have liked to be Diogenes" (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 6.32 [Robbins, 257]).

The two *chreiai* are combined in the longer narrative which Plutarch includes in *Lives.*

> And now a general assembly of the Greeks was held at the Isthmus . . . and [Alexander] was proclaimed their leader. Thereupon many statesmen and philosophers came to him with their congratulations, and he expected that Diogenes of Sinope also, who was tarrying in Corinth, would do likewise. But since that philosopher took not the slightest notice of Alexander . . . Alexander went in person to see him; and he found him lying in the sun. Diogenes raised himself up a little when he saw so many persons coming towards him, and fixed his eyes upon Alexander. And when that monarch addressed him with greetings, he asked if he wanted anything, "Yes" said Diogenes, "stand a little out of my sun." It is said that Alexander was struck by this, and admired so much the haughtiness and grandeur of the man who had nothing but scorn for him, that he said to his followers, who were laughing and jesting about the philosopher as they went away, "But verily, if I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes." (Plutarch, *Alexander* 14.15-5 [Robbins, 256])

While we cannot be certain that the two *chreiai* were not together in Plutarch's source, it is at least plausible that Plutarch has brought the two together in his narrative because of their similarity in content. The result is that Diogenes' request that Alexander step out of his light becomes a reason for Alexander's admiration and the longer narrative, including Diogenes' indifference concerning Alexander's power, make the saying attributed to Alexander more plausible.

These examples help to demonstrate both the freedom to change and the limits of that transformation prescribed in Greco-Roman education and exemplified in the literature. The traditional material could be made more vivid with the introduction of incidental details and could be carefully shaped to make a particular point. The traditions have their power, however, in their being common property and their usefulness for making a point depends on their faithfulness to that tradition. Alteration serve primarily to bring the *chreia* to the audience in a vivid way and to draw out a meaning (and possibly preclude others) that is implicit in the original. The process of stretching a *chreia* into a narrative was primarily one of interpretation and application.

Conclusion

Having investigated the concept of paraphrase and *chreia* expansion, we can now turn to our passage. It is clear from even a cursory reading of Luke 5:1-11 that the entire passage is directed toward the concluding call and response. For this reason, I am suggesting that the pericope can be profitably read as an expansion of an originally shorter *chreia*. Fortunately, we are not left entirely to speculation on the nature of that original *chreia*. The text of Mark 1:16-18 contains a compact narrative that fits nicely into the ancient rhetorical category of the *chreia*. The text reads:

> And as he was walking beside the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and Andrew who was Simon's brother casting their nets in the sea (for they were fisherman). And he said to them "Follow after me, and I will make you fishers of people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Having reviewed examples above, we can see that this passage has a number of similarities with the *chreia* above. It fits Theon's definition of a *chreia* as "a brief saying or action making a point, attributed to some specified person or something corresponding to a person" (Theon *Prog.* 96 [Kennedy, 15]). It includes only a sparse narrative framework, and a memorable saying of an important figure. Its length is within the reasonable limits of a *chreia*, though it is possible to imagine that a shorter version of the story may have circulated as well. The information about Andrew being Peter's brother, and the clarification that the men casting their nets were fisherman might have easily been left out to make for a tighter unit. It is impossible to do anything more than speculate about the forms that the story may have taken in early Christian tradition, but it

is not at all unlikely that original audiences of the Gospel were already aware of a version

of the *chreia* that was similar to the text of Mark 1:16-18.[27]

With this in mind we can see that the text of Luke 5:1-11 functions in a manner

very similar to the *chreia* expansions we have seen above. A short *chreia* is expanded by

the addition of narrative material and the saying itself has undergone minor changes

without altering the gist of the original.

Mark 1:16-18

And as he was walking beside the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and Andrew who was Simon's brother casting their nets in the sea (for they were fisherman). And he said to them "Follow after me, and I will make you fishers of people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Luke 5:1-11

One day, as the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Genesserat. And he saw two ships moored by the shore, and the fishermen, who had disembarked from them were cleaning their nets. And he got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to push out a little from the shore, and sitting down he began to teach the crowds from the boat. And when he finished speaking, he said to Simon, push out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch. And Simon answered, Master, although we have labored through the whole night, we have caught nothing, but at your word I will lower the nets. When they did this they enclosed a great multitude of fish, and their nets began to break. And they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they filled both boats to the point that they were sinking. When he saw this, Simon Peter fell at Jesus's knees saying "go away from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord," for he and all those with him were taken with wonder at the catch of fish they had brought in. And so also were, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, do not be afraid, from now on you will be capturing people. And when they had brought their boats to the shore they left everything and followed him.

The story has been filled out considerably, and some of the basic details have

been altered. The setting has been moved from the shore to a boat and the circumstances

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[27] Nor is it impossible or even unlikely that some would have heard the actual text of Mark's Gospel.

which lead up to the call have been painted in vivid detail so that the form of the original *chreia* is no longer visible in the expanded narrative. The example of Plutarch's telling of Alexander's relationship with Diogenes above provides a good analogy for Luke's version of the calling. The original *chreia* has been made a part of a larger narrative and other traditional material has been brought together in order to make the story more compelling. In addition to making the story more compelling, Luke's version of the story directs the reader toward a particular understanding of the meaning of saying within the *chreia*. We saw this tendency in a number of the examples surveyed above. The purpose of Luke's version of the call cannot be understood primarily as the impartation of information. Rather, an early Christian who was already familiar with a version of the story similar to what we find in Mark or Matthew could only hear Luke's version as a commentary on the story's meaning. This would be entirely consistent with the gospel's stated purpose. The longer version accomplishes a number of rhetorical objectives, which we will explore in greater detail in later chapters, but at the most basic level, the elaboration serves to direct the audience toward a particular understanding of the meaning of the story.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Metaphor of People-Fishing in Greco-Roman and Jewish Literature

Introduction

In this chapter I will attempt to fill in the entry for "people-fishing" in the socio-cultural encyclopedia of the model audience of Luke's Gospel. By invoking these texts I am not suggesting that either Luke or his audience would have read or been familiar with them (in fact some of these texts post-date Luke). Nor am I attempting to demonstrate any dependence on these texts or even follow the development of the ideas expressed in the gospel. Rather, the texts explored in this chapter are meant to prepare the twenty-first century reader to hear the words of Luke 5:1-11 with all the nuance and color which the text's historical and literary context can lend.

We will begin with an exploration of the metaphor of people-fishing as it has been discussed by modern interpreters and then continue by exploring instances and echoes of the metaphor in ancient literature.

Brief History of Research

This discussion of the background of the people-fishing metaphor in Greco-Roman and Jewish sources is certainly not the first. It would be helpful at this point to begin with a brief summary of those studies.

Jindřich Mánek

In 1957 Jindřich Mánek published an article titled "Fishers of Men,"[1] in which he

argued that the metaphor of fishing for people should be understood in light of "old

cosmological myths, in which the water is seen as an enemy of God."[2] This observation

is not especially remarkable in the larger history of interpretation; similar ideas were put

forth by many early authors, but it is important for this study because it will form the

backdrop to the emergence of a turn in the reading of the text among modern biblical

scholars. For Mánek, the idea of Sea as Chaos monster is the controlling image of the

story. He writes:

> In the background of Jesus's picture "fishers of men" it is therefore necessary to
> see the waters in their biblical conception. The waters are the underworld, the
> place of sin and death. To fish out a man means to rescue him from the kingdom
> of darkness, out of the sphere, which is hostile to God and remote from God. To
> be "fishers of men" is the task of mankind's salvation. Jesus does not make a play
> of words when addressing his first disciples as future "fishers of men." His
> challenge was full of meaning.[3]

While it seems entirely unnecessary and in fact counterproductive to suggest that for

Jesus's words to be "full of meaning" is somehow incompatible with the phrase being "a

play of words,"[4] Mánek is correct in asserting that the significance of the metaphor goes

beyond the superficial connection with the occupation of the Jesus's first disciples. In

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[1] Jindřich Mánek, "Fishers of Men" *NovT* 2 (1957): 138-141. But see also Ernst Lohmeyer who insists that "Das Bild von den Menschenfischern ist im Altertum nur in einem üblen Sinne Bekannt" (*Das Evangelium des Markus* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1937], 31-32).

[2] Jindřich Mánek, "Fishers of Men," 138.

[3] Jindřich Mánek, "Fishers of Men," 139.

[4] Note for example E. Lohmeyer in his commentary on Mark who suggests that the metaphor "heir hat es einen doppelten Anlass" capturing both the word play and a deeper significance. E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, 32.

many ways Mánek's reading accords well with many pre-critical readings of the metaphor which suggest that in fishing for people the disciples bring them from a world of darkness and confusion into the world of light.

While Mánek's reading is helpful and this idea of the sea as a place of darkness and separation from God surely forms a part of what a model reader would bring to this text, the sea plays only a supporting role in the narrative, and we need to fill in the picture with other data from the cultural milieu.

Charles W. F. Smith

Two years after the publication of Mánek's article, Charles W. F. Smith will take the question further. He does not disagree with Mánek in the basic notion of the sea as a place of darkness and separation, but he suggests that the sea metaphor is only in the background and that we must look elsewhere for clues to the meaning of the metaphor. The controlling image for Smith was the image of judgement. Central to his argument is the fact that the people-fishing metaphor has an "ominous ring" which is confirmed by the way the image is used in Jewish literature.[5] Citing Amos 4:2, Habakkuk 1:14-15, Jeremiah 16:16, and a passage from the Hodayot (all of which will be considered below), Smith argues that in all of these passages "the figure of the fishers is one of judgment and the fishermen are its agents."[6] It is important to note that Smith is arguing for the meaning of the metaphor as it was spoken by Jesus. When it comes to the meaning of the metaphor in contexts of the four gospels, Smith suggests that there has been a shift.

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[5] Smith rather summarily dismisses the "scant references in literary Greek" as being hardly relevant to the meaning of the metaphor. Smith, "Fishers of Men," 189.

[6] Charles W. Smith, "Fishers of Men," *HTR* 52 (1959): 190.

The shift, Smith argues, was motivated by the Church's discomfort with the idea of the apostles as instruments of divine judgment. The metaphor as it was spoken by Jesus "occupies a place in a substratum which seemed inconvenient to the developing thought-forms of the Church."[7] He traces a development from the Markan version which retains its original meaning—that the disciples are being called to share with Jesus in the task of gathering people for judgment—through an intermediate stage in which Matthew has pushed the judgment element of the fishing metaphor into the eschaton (as demonstrated by the parable of the dragnet), to the Johannine and Lucan versions in which "there is no connection . . . with the inauguration of an eschatological event."[8] He refers to this last development as "a conversion of the fisherman's task to a more 'genial' form, congenial with the post-pentecostal conception of the Church's mission and, in a sense, less 'Biblical.'"[9]

Smith's article raises an issue which will be central to the reading of the passage which I will propose—that the image of people-fishing is one which carries a connotation of judgment. Further Smith notes the various shades that the metaphor takes in the four gospels. This will also be important for our study, especially the shape that the metaphor takes in Luke. Finally, Smith suggests that the image of judgment has been eliminated in Luke (and John); here my reading of the text has something in common with Smith's. I will examine how Luke's shaping of the story tends to soften the judgment theme which the image of fishing for people might have evoked in an early Christian audience. I will

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[7] Smith, "Fishers of Men," 202-03.

[8] Smith, "Fishers of Men," 201.

[9] Smith, "Fishers of Men," 198.

depart from Smith's reading, however, in two important ways. First, Smith attributes to Luke a motive of making the story more palatable to a less eschatologically minded church. This grows largely from Smith's place in the history of biblical studies, and I will suggest that the shape of Luke's call narrative may have had other motivations. Secondly, I will reject Smith's suggestion that the metaphor goes unmitigated in Mark. I will argue, rather, that within the context of the Gospel of Mark as a whole, the clues to understand the metaphor as one of redemption, rather than judgment, are, in fact, present, and that Luke only makes the connections more explicit.

Wilhelm H. Wuellner

Perhaps the most substantial contribution to our understanding of the metaphor of people-fishing in the ancient world comes in Wilhelm H. Wuellner's *The Meaning of 'Fishers of Men.'*[10] This book explores the use of the metaphor in both Christian and non-Christian traditions, and provides a wealth of references to Greco-Roman, Ancient Near-Eastern, Jewish, and Early Christian literature and material culture. This chapter will trace much of the same literature and in fact owes a debt to this collection of primary source material. The aims of this chapter, however, are very different from the aims of Wuellner's monograph, and the questions we will ask of the literature are quite different. Wuellner is concerned chiefly with the transformation of the meaning of the metaphor through time. Wuellner describes his task in this way:

> The task, then, is not so much to outline the variety of uses that the fishing metaphors had acquired in pre- and post-New Testament times, but to identify the

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[10] Wilhelm H. Wuellner, *The Meaning of 'Fishers of Men'* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), 1967.

transformation of the meaning, which is the hermeneutical process, that went on as the metaphor passed from one culture or religion to another.[11]

As stated above, the goal of this study is quite different. Here the aim is a richer understanding of the use of the metaphor in Luke's Gospel. The differences in aim lead to differences in scope. In addition, Wuellner makes much of the role of the fisher of people in Greco-Roman religion. In this he is heavily dependent upon Eisler's connecting the fisher to Orphic and Dionysian cult practices, which will be addressed more fully below.

While Wuellner's book is quite comprehensive, it suffers from a number of important flaws. One weakness in Wuellner's book is his decision to include all types of hunting and sometimes warfare as evidence for the meaning of the metaphor of fishing for people. This leads to the inclusion of evidence which has little or no bearing on ancient understanding of the metaphor of people-fishing. The chief weakness of Wuellner's book, however, is that in an attempt to trace the development and transformation of the metaphor, it constructs an archetypal fisher of men, who pricks the hearts of the leaders of the world in order to bring them to see the error of their ways.[12] The fisher of people becomes a sociological category for Wuellner,[13] and at times he refers to characters in literature which might fit this sociological category, but when the reader examines the primary sources there is very little or no reference to fishing for people.

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[11] Wuellner, *Meaning*, 8.

[12] One example is that Wuellner comes to the unlikely conclusion that the second title of Lucian's *The Fisherman* is meant "bring the teachers of his days—the target of his satire—to justice and, by chance, back to full life" (Wuellner, *Meaning*, 71).

[13] I might also note that Wuellner connects the fisher-of-men with the *Theos Aner*, a sociological category which has not stood the test of history.

Greco-Roman Literature

In Greco-Roman literature, the metaphor of people-fishing was employed in the long contest for both students and public esteem that was carried out among those who considered themselves philosophers or rhetoricians. The debate went on for centuries beginning at least as early as Aristophanes's *Clouds*, in which Aristotle is derided as a huckster, and continuing into the second sophistic. Within this debate, the image of fishing for people was employed by writers and orators on both sides of the debate.

Plato

Plato's *The Sophist* sets out to give a definition to the class of men commonly called sophist. The argument is advanced through a dialogue between an Elean Stranger and one of Socrates' young students. Theatetus begins with a definition of the angler as a means of defining the more difficult category of sophist. This course is taken, according to the stranger, because "the sophist is not the easiest thing in the world to catch and define" (*Soph.* 271 [Fowler, LCL]). The conversation works toward a definition by means of ever narrowing categories, and at each turn the angler is placed in the less noble of the two options. So while the angler is allowed a certain art, his art is that of acquisition rather than production, and a sneaky kind of underhanded acquisition at that. The point of the narratives is clearly not the derogation of the angler but of the sophist. Like the angler the sophist is employed in a craft which produces nothing but acquires what has already been produced and that by means of deceit and trickery. The comparison is made between the angler and the sophist is such a way that it is clear that while the angler practices an art of no great honor, the sophist is worthy of an even lower classification. For the sophist seeks to bring in a catch of people rather than fish. The

sophist is a fisher of men who "turns toward the land and to rivers of a different kind—rivers of wealth and youth, bounteous meadows, as it were—and he intends to coerce the creatures in them" (*Soph.* 222A [Fowler, LCL]). The stranger suggests that the angler and the sophist are entirely alike in their definition except that the angler hunts wild creatures in the water and the sophist hunts tame creatures (humans are placed in this category) on land. Thus the sophist is a sort of fisher of people. And here it cannot be denied that the image of both the fisherman and the fish is decidedly negative. The former are hucksters motivated by greed, and the latter are the gullible who lack the wisdom to avoid the hook of the sophist.

Dio Chrysostom

Other similar comparisons between the sophist and the fisherman can be found in Greek literature. Dio Chrysostom, like Plato, describes sophists as having a catch. Echoing Socrates and scoring a point at the expense of sophists, Dio writes:

> For I do not take disciples, since I know there is nothing I should be able to teach them, seeing that I know nothing myself; but to lie and deceive by my promises, I have not the courage for that. But if I associated myself with a professional sophist, I should help him greatly by gathering a great crowd to him and then allowing him to dispose of the catch [τὴν ἄγραν] as he wished. However, for some reason or other, not one of the sophists is willing to take me on, nor can they bear the sight of me. (Dio, *Discourses* 12.13 [Cohoon, LCL])

In Dio's metaphor both the fish and the fisherman are presented negatively. And ironically the bait is Dio, who had the power to draw a crowd, but would not stoop to the sophist's habit of acquiring a host of followers. So the sophist is again presented as a fisherman whose motives for reeling in a catch of followers are dubious. In this case we have an instance of the people-fishing metaphor which is particularly relevant to our text because Jesus uses the metaphor of people-fishing in the very act of acquiring followers.

Lucian of Samosata

Lucian of Samosata's *The Fisherman*[14] post-dates the Gospel of Luke,

nevertheless it demonstrates a point on the trajectory of the people-fishing metaphor. In

the second half of this work, Lucian employs the metaphor of people-fishing. Having

presented his own defense, the protagonists, Frankness [Παρρησιαδης], turns to the

capture and conviction of the sham-philosophers who are, in fact, guilty of the misdeeds

of which Frankness had been accused. Immediately the problem of separating the true

philosophers from the sham philosophers presents itself, and Frankness is given the task

of sorting. Frankness accomplishes his assigned duty with the help of a fishing rod with

figs and gold for bait. Casting the line from the wall of the acropolis into the city below,

Frankness lands the sham philosophers one by one each represented by a species of fish

appropriate to their philosophical school (e.g. the Cynic is a dog-fish). The fisher of men

in this story is Frankness who is presented positively, but the fish themselves are

presented in a decidedly negative light. They are the greedy sham philosophers who

cannot resist the bait of gold and figs.

Orpheus

In an interview will PBS's Bill Moyer, Joseph Campbell said of the image of

fishing for people: "This is an old motif that is earlier than Christianity. Orpheus is called

'the Fisher,' who fishes men, who are living as fish in the water, out up into the light."[15]

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[14] The work is also sometimes called *The Dead Come to Life Again*—a title which better describes the first part of the work in which Frankness is accused by the great representatives of Greek philosophy.

[15] Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, ed. Betty Sue Flowers; (New York; Doubleday, 1988), 216.

This same claim can be found in three other of Campbell's books on the development of myths and mythological imagery, and the idea that Orpheus was known as a fisher of men appears in a number of encyclopedias of Religion and religious symbolism.[16] This raises the question as to whether Jesus's words in the Gospel of Luke are intended to call the image of Orpheus to the mind of the model audience. Because Orpheus is mentioned by early Christian writers in comparisons with Jesus,[17] and there are a number of examples of the so called 'Orpheus as Christ' image in early Christian art,[18] we are tempted to come to this conclusion. Before coming to such a conclusion, however, we will look closer at Campbell's claim.

[16] Joseph Campbell, *The Transformation of Myth through Time* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), 199-200; *The Mythic Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 388-89; *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 11-12. That Orpheus was known as a 'fisher of men' is repeated in a number of fairly recent books on religious symbolism. See for example: Jack Tresidder, *Symbols and their Meanings* (New York: Sterling Pub. Co., 2000), 66; Helen Valborg, *Symbols of the Eternal Doctrine: From Shamballa to Paradise* (New York: iUniverse, 2006), 321; Graeme Smith, *A Short History of Secularism* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008), 77; Dunnigan Ann, "Fish" pages 3122-24 in *Encyclopedia of Religion* 2nd edition; Lindsay Jones ed. (Farmington Hills Mich.: Thomas Gale), 2005.

[17] For examples Origen, *Against Celsus* 7.53; Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen* 1; *The Divine Institutes* 1.5; Eusebius *Oration in Praise of Constantine* 14.5. For discussions of Orpheus in Early Christian Writings see Jean-Michael Roessli, "Convergence et divergence dans l'interprétation du mythe d'Orphée" *RHR* 4 (2002), 503-513; and Wilhelm Geerling, "Das Bild des Sängers Orpheus bei den Griechischen Kirchenvätern" in *Griechische Mythologie und früher Christentun* (Darmstat: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), 254-67.

[18] Especially significant as early representations of Orpheus in Christian art the Catacombs of S. Callitus, Domitilla, and SS. Peter and Marcellinus, the sarcophagi in Ostia, Rome, and Porto Torres, and the Cacarens relief. For a discussion of these and other instances of Orpheus in early Christian art see Janet Huskinson, "Some Pagan Mythological Figures and their Significance in Early Christian Art" *Papers of the British School at Rome,* 42 (1974), 68-97. See, however, Jas Elsner, *Double Identity: Orpheus as David. Orpheus as Christ? BAR*, 35.2 (2010): 34-45. Elsner argues that the association between the image of Orpheus among the animals with Christ the good shepherd goes beyond the evidence.

In each of these three works, Campbell's comments are a part of his discussion of the images engraved on the Pietroasa bowl.[19] He interprets the images of the bowl as a representation of the mystery initiation in which one "is made cognizant of the portion within him of the ever-living god who died to himself to live manifold in us all."[20] According to Campbell, the sixteen figures of the bowl represent "the sequence of initiatory stages of that inward search."[21] The process begins with the first figure who he describes as Orpheus the fisher whose fishing line draws the initiate into the mystic gate. In one work Campbell describes the figure in this way:

> This is Orpheus, the fisher. The theme of the fishing of men out of water into the light is associated with initiation. Here we are lost in the waters of ignorance, and Orpheus the fisher will fish us out. . . In the Christian tradition, when Jesus called his apostles, who were fishermen, he said, "I will make you fishers of men." That's the same Orphic idea. The Pope's ring is known as the fisherman's ring, and on it is an engraving of the hall of fishes. So here we have Orpheus with his fishing rod and his net, and lying at his feet is a fish.[22]

Campbell offers no evidence, literary or otherwise, for his identification of the figure with the fish as Orpheus, and other options for the identity of the figure have been offered. One of the earliest comprehensive studies of the bowl was conducted by Alexander Odobesco at the end of the nineteenth century. Following an earlier work by Charles de Linas,[23] he concludes that the figures on the bowl are German deities in

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[19]For a full account of the history and discovery of the Pietroassa bowl see Madeleine von Heland, *The Golden Bowl from Pietroasa* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wicksell, 1972), 8-10.

[20] Campbell, *Masks of God*, 14-15.

[21] Campbell, *Masks of God*, 15.

[22] Campbell, *Transformation*, 199-200.

[23] Charles de Linas, "Historoire du travail à l'Exposition universelle de 1867" *Revue archéologique de Paris* 9 (1868): 183-97.

classical Greek attire.[24] Odobesco describes the character which Campbell calls Orpheus

as:

> Homme barbu, debout, vêtu d'une courte tunique de fourrures à manches collantes, chindota, ajustée à la taille par une ceinture ; il a pour coiffure les dépouilles de la tête d'un animal féroce, galea pellibus tecta, et il est chausseé de bottines à basse tige, perones (?) ; une chlamyde couvre ses épaules ; il élève de la main droite une écharpe, strophium, les deux bouts réunis, – peut-être une fronde, funda, – et porte dans la gauche un arc, la corde enroulée autour du bois ; on voit un gros poisson entre ses jambes.[25]

In a later study of the bowl, Charles de Linas abandoned his earlier understanding of the

figures on the bowl and suggested that "these figures allude to mysteries in which the sun

is associated with the earth gods," and concluded that the figures must represent an

oriental mystery cult.[26] Building from these observations, Hans Leisegang argued that the

figure of the man with the fish was Orpheus the Fisher.[27] Campbell's description of the

figures has much in common with that of Linas and Leisegang[28] but the identification of

the figure with the fish as Orpheus must be dependent upon Leisegang's article which

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[24] Alexander Odobesco, *Le Trésor de Pétrossa: historique-description; etude sur l'ovfèvrerie antique*, 3 vols. (Paris: J. Rothschild, 1889-1900).

[25] Alexander Odobesco, *Le Trésor de Pétrossa,* 2.35. "A bearded man, standing, wearing a tight fitting short-sleeved fur tunic (*Chindota*) fitted at the waist with a belt; there is, on his head, the scalp of a wild animal (*galea pellibus tecta*), and he is wearing low boots (*perones?*); a cloak covers his shoulders; he raises a scarf in his right hand (*strophium*) with the two ends together, – perhaps a sling (*funda*) – and in his left hand he holds a bow with the string wrapped around it; a large fish can be seen between his legs."

[26] Charles de Linas, *Les Origines de l'orfèvrerie cloisonné*, (Paris 1887), 3.297-347.

[27] Hans Leisegang, "The Mystery of the Serpent" in *Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks* (ed. Joseph Campbell; trans. Ralph Manheim; Bollinger Series 30.2; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 194-260.

[28] See also Madeleine Von Heland, *The Golden Bowl from Pieteroasa*.

first appeared in 1939.[29] This debt goes unacknowledged, though Campbell interacts with Leisegang's contribution at another point in the discussion.[30] The dependence on Leisegang is significant, because it is in his article that we find the root of the association of Orpheus with a fisherman. The Orpheus that Leisegang describes is the figure "whose features have been brought out so clearly by Eisler's investigation."[31] So we see that the idea that Orpheus was a fisher originates with Robert Eisler.

Eisler's study explores the worship of the divine fisher in various religious traditions, and takes as its starting point that the name Orpheus derives from the word 'orphoi' which was used of sacred fish in sanctuaries to Apollo. He argues that the word originally simply meant fish before it took on its cultic meaning. After a lengthy discussion of other fisher-gods in antiquity and the etymology of their names, Eisler will conclude that Orpheus was originally understood as a fisher.[32] He will then go on to attempt to show how this idea of Orpheus as fisher developed into Orpheus as 'Fisher of men' – a development about which Eisler is certain.[33]

Eisler fills in the blanks of the development of the Orphic rites from its original connection to the sacred fish to the stories of Orpheus and the evidence of orphic religious rites in later literary sources, by referring to stories and images from a great variety of ancient sources. This kind of filling in the blanks was made possible by the

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[29] Hans Leisegang, "Das Mysterium der Schlange," 151-250.

[30] Campbell, *The Masks of God*, 21-22.

[31] Leisegang, "The Mystery of the Serpent," 194-260.

[32] Robert Eisler, *Orpheus the Fisher: Comparative Studies in Orphic and early Christian Cult Symbolism* (London: J. M. Watkins, 1921), 11-19.

[33] Eisler, *Orpheus*, 30.

conviction that there is a clearly discernible family tree among ancient cults and mythologies, and that the development of these rites and myths happened in a regular pattern across cultural, temporal, and geographic boundaries.

More importantly for our study, Eisler argues that early Christians were aware of the tradition that Orpheus was known as a fisher (and fisher of people). This is confirmed for Eisler by the proximity of some instances of Orpheus as shepherd with an image of a 'sacred fisher.' The primary piece of evidence that Eisler offers is that on the sarcophagus of an early Christian named 'Firmus' the image of Orpheus as shepherd is found next to the image of an angler. Eisler comes to what he feels is the inevitable conclusion "that the sculptor, or the inspirer, of this most important *relieve* was perfectly well acquainted with the main doctrine of Orpheus, with the old and genuine meaning of the name 'Orpheus.'"[34] Eisler continues:

> And if indeed, on this sarcophagus, the 'Orpheus' and the 'Fisher' glyph represent the exoteric and the esoteric aspects of one and the same divinity, may we then not compare the 'Fishermen,' who play such an important part in the legendary history of the Dionysian cult . . . with Peter, with the three other apostolic fishermen of the Gospel, and with their successors, the Christian bishops, who wear as insignia of their dignity, both the crozier of the 'Shepherd' and the mystic ring of the 'Fisher,'

For the "skeptic, who feels not yet prepared to admit so much," Eisler offers other examples of the presence of the image of Orpheus and the image of a fisherman together in ancient Christian funerary art. Eisler also suggests that the image of the lamb with milk pail is connected by various avenues to Orpheus and orphic rites. In this way he includes additional evidence of the connection (by proximity) of the image of the fisher to

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[34] Eisler, *Orpheus*, 59.

Orpheus (via the lamb and milk pail).[35] Ultimately, Eisler can produce no literary

evidence that Orpheus was considered a fisher of people.

     Eisler's study is situated squarely in the *Religionsgeschichte* school, and is thus

interested primarily in tracing the development of the tradition of people-fishing in order

to demonstrate dependence. When it comes to the saying of Jesus, Eisler makes no direct

link to any Greco-Roman traditions. And the section on the gospel accounts makes only

vague connections to orphic concepts. In his introduction, Eisler confesses that he had

hopes of drawing more direct lines between Greco-Roman sources and Christian

concepts and practices but was ultimately unable to do so. His discussion of the saying of

Jesus makes connections only to Old Testament passages.

     Other explanations have been offered for the epistemology of the name

Orpheus,[36] and Eisler's suggestion that he was somehow connected to a fish-god, when

mentioned at all, is not usually well received.[37] In fact, Eisler will himself back away

from this meaning of the name in a much later work where he admits that he is not as

convinced as he had been and finds other explanations more plausible.[38]

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[35] Eisler, *Orpheus*, 61-69.

[36] After first stating "pas d'étymologie demonstrable" Chantraine guesses that it might derive from the root ορπο- since Orpheus was separated from his wife (Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnarie Étymologique de la Langue Grecque* [Paris: Klinchsieck, 1999], 829).

[37] O. Gruppe, "Orpheus," columns 1058-1207 in *Lexicon Der Griechischen Und Römischen Mythologie* (edited by W. H. Roscher; Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965), III.1.1063; Konrat Ziegler, "Orpheus," Columns1200-1316 in *Paulys Realencyclopädie Der Classischen Altertumswissenshaft,* ed. Georg Wissowa; (Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller, 1939), 1205-06; *Reallixicon Für Antike Christentum* (edited by Theodor Klauser; Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1969).

[38] Robert Eisler, *Orphisch-dionysische Mysteriengedanken in der christlichen Antike* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966). See also Robert Eisler,

Thus we find that at its roots, the idea that Orpheus was known as a people-fisher is dependent on an etymological connection between Orpheus and fish. This connection is not supported by literary evidence and the chief proponent of the idea abandoned it before Campbell first identified the figure on the bowl and made his claim about Orpheus. In the end we find no compelling reason to believe that Orpheus was connected to the idea of fishing for people.

Summary of Greco-Roman Literature

We see, then, that the image of people-fishing in Greco-Roman literature is consistently negative. Most commonly the fishermen are presented as hucksters and the fish are those foolish enough to be taken in by their sophistry. Thus the image of the fisherman and the fish are both negative. In Lucian's story, the fisherman is presented positively, but this time the fish are the pretenders who seek only gold and fame. If the tradition of Jesus's calling his disciples to be fishers of people was heard by a Greco-Roman audience without context, then an audience would likely view both Jesus's disciples and those for whom they would fish in a negative light.

Jewish Literature

Now we will turn our attention to instances of the metaphor of fishing for people in Jewish literature. The metaphor is found almost exclusively in the prophetic tradition and Israel herself is most often the object of the fishing. The texts explored below have been cited repeatedly since Smith as evidence for the meaning of the people-fishing

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Man into World: An Anthropological Interpretation of Sadism, Masochism, and Lycanthropy (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 114, where Eisler takes the view that the name originated from the Greek ὀρφευω to make an orphan.

metaphor. What I hope to add to these studies is an exploration of how real readers of these texts understood them in an attempt to reconstruct the point of view of our hypothetical model audience.

Amos 4:2

The first instance which we will examine is found in Amos 4:2. This passage is mentioned by commentators as an instance of people-fishing in the Old Testament. An immediate problem arises, however, if we are seeking to understand how this text might have influenced the way Luke's audience heard his gospel. Most importantly, the passage which includes some reference to people being taken by fish-hooks in most English translations is entirely free of fishing imagery in the Septuagint. For Luke's Greek speaking audience, this might preclude this specific reference from influencing their reading of the text.

The Greek of the text reads:

> ὀμνύει κύριος κατὰ τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ Διότι ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς καὶ λήμψονται ὑμᾶς ἐν ὅπλοις καὶ τοὺς μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν εἰς λέβητας ὑποκαιομένους ἐμβαλοῦσιν ἔμπυροι λοιμοί,

> The Lord swears by his holy ones: For behold, days are coming upon you, and they shall take you with weapons, and fiery pests shall cast those with you into cauldrons heated from underneath (Amos 4:2 LXX).[39]

In the Greek text, the uncertain Hebrew צֵן is replaced by ὅπλον, meaning weapon or tool, and the phrase "ἔμπυροι λοιμοί" seems to have taken the place of the Hebrew " בווירות דוגה." Exactly why the Greek varies so greatly from the Hebrew text is beyond the scope

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[39] English translations of the LXX, unless otherwise specified come from Albert Petersma and Benjamin G. Wright ed., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint: And Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

of this paper. The important point is that no trace of people-fishing remains in the Greek translation, and Early Christian writers show no knowledge of such a reference.

Though the lack of reference to people-fishing in the LXX perhaps excludes this passage as a direct influence on Luke's audiences' understanding of the metaphor, the apparent reference to fishing in the Hebrew text is consistent with other such references and helps to strengthen our understanding of the metaphor. The Hebrew text itself, however, is not free from difficulty. The key words "צן" and "בוירות דוגה" are far from clear. The first word which the NRSV translates as "hooks" may mean "shields" (which might account for the LXX) "ropes," "thorns," "baskets," or even "boats."[40] The phrase "בוירות דוגה" is also difficult. דוגה is a *hapax legomenon* and the phrase may be translated "fish hooks," "fish pots," or "fishing boats."[41] Here at least we can be fairly certain of some reference to fish or fishing where people stand in the place of fish. So regardless of the difficulties, the Hebrew text does seem to employ people-fishing imagery. Here the context is clearly judgment. The "cows of Bashan" can expect to be hauled away like fish by their enemies who act as agents of God's judgment.

Ezekiel 29:4-5

In Ezekiel 29 we again see the metaphor of fishing used as a description of judgment. Here Pharaoh is the object of judgment, but others will be dragged in tow as he is fished from the Nile River. Pharaoh is called in the MT התנים הגדול, which is sometimes

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[40] For a complete discussion of the possible meanings of "צן" and the scholars who have advocated each translation see Shalom M. Paul, "Fishing Imagery in Amos 4:2," *JBL* 19 (1978): 183-86.

[41] For a complete discussion of the possible meanings of "בוירות דוגה" and the scholars who have advocated each translation see Shalom M. Paul, "Fishing Imagery in Amos 4:2," 186-90.

taken to mean simply the great crocodile by some commentators on the Hebrew text. In the LXX, however, where Pharaoh is called τὸν δράκοντα τὸν μέγαν, the mythic description of Pharaoh comes through more clearly. In both the MT and the LXX, the description is reminiscent of Job 40:25 (41:1 Eng), where the imagery of the Leviathan is invoked. Note also that in Ezekiel 19:4 the beast is described as having a πτέρυξ, which in this context of a creature living in the Nile River may mean simply fins, but also evokes the image of a winged dragon. The Pharaoh is not the only victim of this fishing, because the fish of his river will be brought up with him cleaving to his fins (or wings). Then the great dragon and all of his fish with him will be thrown onto the dry land. The image of fishing for people here is again part of an oracle of judgment, this time aimed at Egypt. The fish caught by this hook will certainly die as they are left to be devoured by the birds of the air. Although there is an element of hope for Egypt later in the text (29:13-16), the image of judgment here is a picture of total destruction.

Habakkuk 1:14-17

In Habakkuk 1:14-17 we find in one of Habakkuk's characteristic complaints a description of an invading army (the Chaldeans), who gather in their foes like fishermen drawing in a catch of fish. Thus Habakkuk complains:

> You have made people like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler. The enemy brings all of them up with a hook; he drags them out with his net, he gathers them in his seine; so he rejoices and exults. Therefore he sacrifices to his net and makes offerings to his seine; for by them his portion is lavish, and his food is rich. Is he then to keep on emptying his net, and destroying nations without mercy (Habakkuk 1:14-17 NRS).

In this passage fishing for people is used as a description of the brutal destruction of an invading army. And Habakkuk's complaint stems largely from the fact that God is responsible for this slaughter, and the image of fish is used to illustrate how God has

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rendered his people defenseless. The reference to the enemies worshiping of their fishing

implements is a metaphor for the enemies' gloating in their military power.

Jeremiah 16:16

It is somewhat more complicated to determine the nature of the people-fishing in

Jeremiah 16:16, because the immediate context makes it difficult to determine the

purpose of the fishing expedition.

> Therefore I will hurl you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your ancestors have known, and there you shall serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor. Therefore, the days are surely coming, says the LORD, when it shall no longer be said, "As the LORD lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of Egypt," but "As the LORD lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the lands where he had driven them." For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their ancestors. I am now sending for many fishermen, says the LORD, and they shall catch them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks. For my eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from my presence, nor is their iniquity concealed from my sight. And I will doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations. (Jeremiah 16:13-18 NRS)

There are at least two very different ways to read verse 16. If it is read with verse 15, the

image of people-fishing may be positive. Read in this way, the Lord will bring Israel

back to their own land through fishermen and hunters who will seek them out and return

them to the land. If, however, verse 16 is read together with verse 17, those for whom the

fishers and hunters hunt are those whose iniquity is not hidden and who will be doubly

repaid for their sins. Most modern commentaries have suggested that verse 16 was

originally connected with verse 13 so that it can be read unambiguously as metaphor for

divine judgment carried out by the enemies of Israel. While this may be true, it does not

help us to understand how this instance of fishing for people might have impacted the

hearing of Luke's calling narrative. The first century audience was unlikely to appeal to an earlier form of the text to explain this tension. Terence Fretheim, one of the few recent critical commentators to attempt to read the passage in the context of the final form of Jeremiah, has suggested that whatever the original context of the oracle, in its current literary context, the fishing and hunting references must "be read in hopeful ways."[42] According to Fretheim, the problem of the negative tone of verses 17 and 18 is addressed by an appeal to the Hebrew of the opening phrase of verse 18: " ושלמתי ראשונה משנה משנה עונם והטזתם." While many English translations do not include an equivalent for "ראשונה" "first," by understanding the judgment described in verse 18 as a reference to a previous judgment, a contrast is created between verses 16-17 and verse 18. For most Christian readers of the Old Testament, however, this creative way of relieving the tension was not available since the LXX lacks the word "first" in verse 18 and translates the phrase simply as: "καὶ ἀνταποδώσω διπλᾶς τὰς ἀδικίας αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν" ("and I will doubly repay their injustices and their sins").

It would, no doubt, be beneficial if we had access to an early Jewish reading of this passage which might give us some indication of how this passage was traditionally understood. If such readings exist, they have eluded my searches. We do have early Christian readings of these verses, but these readings are influenced by the New Testament people-fishing metaphor. The connection to Jeremiah 16:16 is the most prevalent in early Christian readings perhaps owing to the ambiguity noted above, or because these fishermen are expressly sent by God. Thus Cyril writes:

> Let us admire the skilfulness [sic] of the method employed in making them a prey who were to make prey of the whole earth; even the holy Apostles, who, though

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[42] Terrence E. Fretheim, *Jeremiah* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 251.

themselves well skilled in fishing, yet fell into Christ's meshes, that they also, letting down the drag-net of the Apostolic preaching, might gather unto Him the inhabitants of the whole world. For verily He somewhere said by one of the holy prophets, "Behold I send many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall catch them as fish: and afterwards I will send many hunters, and they shall hunt them as game." By the fishers He means the holy Apostles; and by the hunters, those who successively became the rulers and teachers of the holy churches." (Cyril of Alexandria, *Comm. Gosp. Lk.* 5 [Smith])

It is evident, however, from the writings of some relatively early Christian writers that the meaning of the Jeremiah passage was an open question for many pre-modern Christian writers. For example, Jerome explicitly counters the notions that Jeremiah 16:16 be read as a reference to divine judgment. He writes: "This and the following verses do not promise punishment to sinners, as many believe, but rather give them promise of healing" (Jerome, *Hom. Ps.* [Wenthe]). This reference is significant in that it shows that Jerome's positive reading of these verses was not the only or perhaps even the most common reading. Later John Calvin will take the opposite opinion and in doing so he will identify what he believes is a common interpretation of Jeremiah 16:16 in his own day.

Some explain this of the apostles; but it is wholly foreign to the subject: they think that Jeremiah pursues here what he had begun to speak of; for they doubt not but that he had been speaking in the last verse of a future but a near deliverance, in order to raise the Children of God into a cheerful confidence. But I have already rejected this meaning, for their exposition is not well founded. But if it be conceded that the Prophet had prophesied of the liberation of the people, it does not follow that God goes on with the same subject, for he immediately returns to threatening, as ye will see; and the allegory also is too remote when he speaks of hunters and fishers; and as mention is made of hills and mountains, it appears still more clearly that the Prophet is threatening the Jews, and not promising them any alleviation in their miseries. I therefore connect all these things together in a plain manner; for, having said that the evil which the Jews would shortly endure would be more grievous than the Egyptian bondage, he now adds a reason for confirmation. (John Calvin, *Comm. on Jer.* [Owen, 322-323])

Bonaventure, when commenting on Jesus's call, incorporates both Jeremiah 16:16, which he reads positively, and Habakkuk 1 which he reads negatively, as a reference to "evil fishers":

And this is what Jeremiah 16:16 has: "Behold, I will send you many fishers, and they will fish them." And on the contrary, the devil has his own evil fishers and heretical seducers. Habakkuk 1:14-15 says: "You will make human beings like the fish of the sea. . . . He drew them into his dragnet and gathered them into his net." And certainly up until now evil fishers prevail, so that the good fishers scarcely have a place. And what Isaiah 19:8 has is fulfilled: "The fishers will mourn, and all that cast a hook into the river will lament and they that spread their nets upon the waters." (Bonaventure *Comm. Lk.* V [Karris])

Here the ambiguity of the metaphor is made evident even from a Christian author who has been influenced by the calling narrative.

Ezekiel 47:7-12

We will conclude our investigation of Old Testament passages with one which is somewhat questionable. I discuss it here because it was at times appealed to by early Christian readers of the call narrative, and because at least one modern biblical scholar has made an extended argument for the centrality of the passage in not only the call narrative but all of the stories of Synoptic Gospels which are closely associated with the Sea of Galilee.

J. Duncan Derrett in a 1980 article in *Novum Testamentum*[43] argues that the call to become fishers of people can only be properly understood in light of Ezekiel 47. Included in Ezekiel's vision of the rivers flowing from the temple mount is a description of the fish that will live in the river and even in the dead sea, which will be made largely fresh again. The fish are to be many and of various kinds – "like the fish of the great sea." And people will be fishing from the shores of the once dead sea spreading nets upon the waters. It is important to Derrett's argument that the inclusion of the fishermen in Ezekiel 47 is not merely embellishment but is central to the vision. He argues:

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[43] J. Duncan M. Derrett, "ʹΗΣΑΝ ΓΑΡʹΛΙΕΙΣ (MK. 1 16) Jesus's Fishermen and the Parable of the Net," *NovT* 22 (1980): 108-37.

Once it is understood that in traditional Jewish thought the fish represents or suggests the individual soul awaiting salvation, and the fishermen, operating with line and/or with nets, represents God's agents effectuating that salvation, the items which were, from a literary point of view, mere embellishment become articulate in the prophecy. Fishing and fishermen thus become typical agents of the coming of God's reign, preparing (odd as it may seem) for the Banquet at which the fish will be diners, not dish. The rediscovery of this tradition places each one of our topics in an entirely new light.[44]

This assertion, that fish represented an individual awaiting salvation, is out of step with the more prevalent use of the metaphor of fishing for people in the Old Testament. As we have seen, the fish were overwhelmingly the object of judgment. Further, Derrett's description of the tradition which has been "rediscovered" is altogether unconvincing. After a somewhat vexing comparison of Jesus to Zebulun and Naphtali,[45] Derrett appeals to the text of Ezek 47:8 in the LXX: "καὶ εἶπεν πρός με τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦτο τὸ ἐκπορευόμενον εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν . . . ὑγιάσει τὰ ὕδατα." That the text uses the verb ὑγιάζομαι suggests healing not only for the water but for the fish as well. Thus for Derrett, the fish are "living souls healed by that water."[46]

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[44] Derrett, "ῘΣΑΝ ΓΑΡ῾ΛΙΕΙΣ," 109.

[45] This association arose, he argues, in midrashic development of the story of Jacob's blessing of the patriarchs. Zebulun's blessing included the promise that he "shall settle at the shore of the sea; he shall be a haven for ships, and his border shall be at Sidon" (Gen 49:13 NRSV). This along with the centrality of the Sea of Galilee to Jesus ministry in the Synoptic Gospels suggest to Derrett a connection between Zebulun and Jesus which he further develops by suggesting parallels between Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and Zebulun as presented especially in the Testament of the Twelve (e.g. Jesus and Zebulun both operated along the shore and functioned as sailors). The connection with Naphtali is a step further removed. In Gen 49:21, Naphtali is called a doe set free which brings forth either beautiful שֶׁפֶר (words) or beautiful עֹפֶר (fawns). Here, the text critical argument is not as important as the development of this tradition in later Jewish writings. Derrett points to "commentaries which may well have been available in the time of Christ" which read this passage as an indication that Naphtali would be a bearer of good news. In this way, then, Jesus is like Naphtali (whose territory included the Sea of Galilee) because he is a bearer of good news. (Derret, "ῘΣΑΝ ΓΑΡ῾ΛΙΕΙΣ," 112-15.)

[46] Derrett, "ῘΣΑΝ ΓΑΡ῾ΛΙΕΙΣ," 118.

Derrett's argument that Ezekiel 47 is central for understanding the call of the disciples cannot bear up under its own weight. The simplest reading of the text is that fresh water and abundance of fish represent a time of abundance for Israel which is found in other prophetic descriptions of Israel at peace. Further, his argument that the fish represented a soul awaiting salvation is dependent on literature that is difficult to date with any confidence, and the connection with Ezekiel 47 is entirely dependent on the LXX rendering of the desalinization of the Dead Sea, and even here the healing is applied to water, not to the fish. The fish are a sign of its having been healed, not the recipients of healing or eternal life.

Dead Sea Scrolls

In the *Hodayot* from the Dead Sea Scrolls we find another instance of the metaphor of fishing for people:

> You made my lodging[47] with many fishermen, those who spread the net upon the surface of the water, those who go hunting the sons of injustice. And there you established me for judgment and strengthened in my heart the foundation of truth." (1QH[a] 13.7c-10a)

The references to both fishing and hunting echo Jeremiah 16:16,[48] and the exact phrase

" פושי מכמרת על פני מים אמללו" occurs in both 1QH[a] 13.7 and Isaiah 19:8 (MT). We have

already discussed the difficulties with the Jeremiah passage, but the passage from Isaiah

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[47] Dupont-Sommer translates the phrase "במגור" as "in the place of exile" which further enhances the judgment language. *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, trans. G. Vermes (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), 214.

[48] See Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran,* 214. Kittel adds that the poem evokes themes in Habakkuk as well (Bonnie Kittel, *The Hymns of Qumran: Translation and Commentary* [Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1980], 96.)

is clearly an image of judgment, and the bringing together of these allusions results in a metaphor that is clearly one of divine punishment.[49]

This section is part of a larger poem (12.5-19) which invokes three images of judgment. It begins by thanking the Lord for sustaining the poet during a stay among foreign people[50] and invokes the imagery of lions who are "appointed for the sons of guilt, lions which grind the bones of strong men, and drink the bl[ood] of heroes" (1QH[a] 7). Reference to lions closes the poem as well (1QH[a] 18-19), and the metaphors of fishing and of the refining of gold are "neatly enclosed, one in the first half of the poem and one in the second half, by the imagery of the lions."[51] A similar judgment image which echoes Isaiah 19:8 is found early in the *Hodayot* at 11.26: "When all the traps of the pit open, all the snares of wickedness are spread and the nets of the scoundrels are upon the surface of the sea." The context is again one of judgment.

Joseph and Aseneth

The story of Joseph and Aseneth contains an intriguing use of the people-fishing metaphor. Near the end of the work we find the psalm of Aseneth (21.10-21). In this psalm Aseneth confesses her sins to the Lord and describes how Joseph rescued her from loss. In the last stanza (21.21), Aseneth describes herself as being caught by the beauty of

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[49] Mansoor writes "it is clear that the author here is referring to the divine agents of punishment" (Menahem Mansoor, *The Thanksgiving Hymns* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans], 1961).

[50] The historical setting of this poem is not important for our study. For a discussion of proposals for the authorship and *Sitz im Leben* for these hymns see: *A Tribute to Géza Vermès: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, ed. Philip R. Davies and Richard T. White (JSOTSup 100; Sheffield, Eng: JSOT Press, 1990), 51-65.

[51] Kittel, *The Hymns of Qumran*, 96.

Joseph and grasped by his wisdom like a fish on a hook. This would seem to be an example of a positive use of the people-fishing metaphor.

> I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned;
> before you I have sinned much,
> until Joseph the Powerful One of God came.
> He pulled me down from my dominating positions
> and made me humble after my arrogance,
> and by his beauty he caught me,
> and by his wisdom he grasped me like a fish on a hook,
> and by his spirit, as by bait of life, he ensnared me,
> and by his power he confirmed me,
> and brought me to the God of the ages
> and to the chief of the house of the Most High,
> and gave me to eat bread of life,
> and to drink a cup of wisdom,
> and I became his bride for ever and ever. (*Joseph and Aseneth*, 21.21,[Burchard, OTP])

Within this stanza, however, we also find an example of why the story has been difficult to place in time and provenance. The reference to eating the "bread of life" and drinking the "cup of wisdom" led early interpreters to conclude that the work was composed by, or at least heavily redacted by a Christian author. When first introduced to modern scholarship by Pierre Batiffol, he suggested that the work was a fifth century Christian work based on a shorter Jewish legend of the fourth century.[52]

One of the immediate problems with our text is its age. This is complicated by the fact that Aseneth's song is found in the longer recession of the text but not the shorter. While the goal of the study is not to show dependence, the age of the text does have bearing on its significance for the model audience. If the shorter text, championed by Marc Philonenko, is the older it is difficult to establish with any certainty the date of the

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[52] Pierre Batiffol, *Studia patristica, études d'ancienne littérature chrétienne*, 30-37. Cited in C. Burchard, "Jospeh and Aseneth: A New Translation and Introduction" in OTP II., 187.

portion of the text relevant to this study. If however, the longer text type, championed by C. Burchard, is the older text type, then we may with some confidence date the portion of the text in question within 200 years of the turn of the era.

Summary of Jewish Literature

In Jewish literature, we see that most uses of the metaphor of fishing for people are clearly negative. The fishers are foreign powers by whom God enacts judgment upon his people. These foreign powers will kill, destroy, and enslave ancient Israel. The only passage that may be taken positively is ambiguous. It may refer to God's salvation of his people, but it may also be understood as another instance of divine judgment expressed as foreign domination.

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New Testament

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The significance of the use of Jesus tradition in early Christian preaching and teaching has already been explored above, but it is appropriate to make some brief comments on one account of fishing for people from the New Testament. Here I refer to the account of eschatological fishing in Matthew 13:47-50. Forming a parallel to the *Parable of the Wheat and the Tares*, in the parable of the dragnet, the Kingdom of God is likened to a net which brings in fish of all kinds which once brought to shore must be sorted separating the good fish which are collected in baskets from the bad which are burned in the fire. Here the metaphor of people-fishing has a clear judgment context, but the judgment is not exclusively negative. The net is the instrument by which all people are brought to the moment of judgment and those brought up may be brought up to life or to destruction. Whether or not Luke's Gospel presumes knowledge of this story, it

demonstrates that to be fished for is not necessarily positive even in early Christian thought.

Some would include the story of the great catch of fish in John 21 as an example of the metaphor of fishing for people in the New Testament. I will argue in chapter five of this study that the catching of fish in John 21 functions as a miracle of provision (along the lines of the feeding miracle in John 6) rather than an example of the people-fishing metaphor.

Apocryphal Texts

Another text we will consider is a part of the Nag Hammadi library. We discuss it with Christian texts, though it certainly does not conform to what will become orthodox Christianity, and, in fact, the text gives little indication of being a Christian text at all.[53] However, because the text is part of a larger collection of texts which include references to Christ, we will consider it now among early Christian writers. The text is a section from a writing known as *Authoritative Teaching*. The struggle for maintaining the purity of the soul in the midst of the temptations of carnality is the subject of the work. The section which relates to fishing for people begins at 29,3 and continues through 31,24.

> For this reason, then, we do not sleep, nor do we forget [the] nets that are spread out in hiding, lying in wait for us to catch us. For if we are caught in a single net, it will suck us down into its mouth, while the water flows over us, striking our face. And we will be taken down into the dragnet, and we will not be able to come

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[53] MacRae writes "there is nothing specifically Christian in the document" and Parrot adds that while there has been debate whether the text is hostile to traditional Christianity or whether one may find numerous echoes of New testament passages "Neither of these basically antithetical positions is well enough supported in the text to warrant abandoning the cautious assessment expressed by Macrae" (George W. Macrae "Authoritative Teaching," "Authoritative Teaching," in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* [trans. James M. Robinson; James M. Robinsons ed.; San Franscisco: Harper & Row, 1988]304-05).

up from it because the waters are high over us, flowing from above downward, submerging our heart down in the filthy mud. And we will not be able to escape from them. For man-eaters will seize us and swallow us, rejoicing like a fisherman casting a hook into the water for he casts many kinds of food into the water because each one of the fish has its own food. He smells it and pursues its odor. But when he eats it, the hook hidden within the food seizes him and brings him up by force out of the deep waters. No man is able, then, to catch that fish down in the deep waters, except for the trap that the fisherman sets. By the ruse of food he brought the fish up on the hook.

In this very way we existed in this world, like fish. The adversary spies on us, lying in wait for us like a fisherman, wishing to seize us rejoicing that he might swallow us. For [he places] many foods before our eyes, (things) which belong to this world. He wishes to make us desire one of them and to taste only a little, so that he may seize us with his hidden poison and bring us out of freedom and take us into slavery. For whenever he catches us with a single food, it is indeed necessary for <us> to desire the rest. Finally, then, such things become the food of death.

Now these are the foods with which the devil lies in wait for us. First he injects a pain into your heart until you have heartache on account of a small thing of this life, and he seizes <you> with his poisons. And afterwards (he injects) the desire of a tunic so that you will pride yourself in it, and love of money, pride, vanity, envy that rivals another envy, beauty of body, fraudulence. The greatest of all these are ignorance and ease.

Now all such things the adversary prepares beautifully and spreads out before the body, wishing to make the mind of the soul incline her toward one of them and overwhelm her, like a hook drawing her by force in ignorance, deceiving her until she conceives evil, and bears fruit of matter, and conducts herself in uncleanness, pursuing many desires, covetousnesses, while fleshly pleasure draws her in ignorance.[54]

Here we have perhaps the most explicitly negative use of the people-fishing metaphor.[55]

The fisherman, who uses both nets and hooks, is the devil who seeks to entrap the soul

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[54] "Authoritative Teaching," 308.

[55] In the critical edition of the text we find in a footnote: "The 'positive' use of the metaphor of 'fishers of men' in the Bible is well known; the 'negative' use (as here) is quite rare" (James M. Robinson ed., *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices* [vol. 3; Boston: Brill, 200], 274). Our discussion of the topic contradicts this conclusion.

with bait of physical pleasures. All of us, then, are like fish that must remain alert and wary of the devil's hooks and nets.

We find a similar text in another Coptic document. The translation of this text is found in M. R. James's *The Apocryphal New Testament*.[56] In commenting on the collection of Coptic narratives from which this text comes, James remarks that "[i]t is conceivable that some of the narrative matter in these fragments may be taken to be from earlier books; but the fragments themselves cannot, I think be earlier than the fifth century."[57] In the text, Jesus and his apostles are fleeing Herod who seeks Jesus's life. Here the devil is again presented as fisherman:

> They came down from the mountain, and met the devil in the form of a fisherman with attendant demons carrying nets and hooks; and they cast their nets and hooks on the mount. The apostles questioned Jesus about this: John, Philip, and Andrew, in particular. John was sent to speak to the devil and ask him what he was catching. The devil said, 'It is not a wonder to catch fish in the waters: the wonder is in this desert, to catch fish there.' He cast his nets and caught all manner of fish (really men), some by their eyes, others by their lips, etc.[58]

The devil stands ready to catch those who can be tempted by sensory pleasures. Another strange twist on the metaphor of fishing for people is found in an apocryphal text which survives only in a sixteenth century Slavonic text. The text was translated into German by Ivan Franko.[59] In this text, Peter gains passage on a ship which is piloted by the Archangel Michael and buys a young boy as a slave. Unbeknownst to Peter this

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[56] Montague R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts Epistles, and Apocalypses with other Narrative and Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924).

[57] James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 147.

[58] James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 149.

[59] Ivan Franko, "Beiträge aus dem Kirchenslavonischen zu den Apokryphen des Neues Testamentes," *ZNW* 6 (1902): 315-335.

young boy is Jesus. After the sea voyage, in the course of which Peter calms a storm,

Peter and the young boy arrive in Rome. The following is the relevant section from

Franko's translation:

> Dann sagte Petrus zum Kinde: „Geh' ans Meer und fange mir etliche Fische."
> Das Kind aber sagte zu ihm: „Gehe hin und mache mir 12 Angeln und ich will
> gehen und dir Fische fangen." Und das Kind stand auf und ging ans Meer hinab
> und in einer Stunde fing es 12 Tausen Fische, und kam zum Petrus und sagte ihm:
> „Kommen wir, mein Herr, um Fische zu holen."
> Peterus aber verwunderte sich und sprach zum Kinde: „Woher hast du diese
> Fertigkeit?"
> Das Kind sagte zu ihm . . . frage mich nicht darüber, sondern nimm die Fische
> und gieb sie den Notleidenden, welche an deinen Christus glauben. „Petrus aber
> that, wie ihm das Kind befohlen hatte. . ."
> Dann befahl es den Fischen, welche es gefangen und den Armen gegeben hatte:
> „Geht zu euerem herrn!" Und alsbald gingen die Fische auf dem Trockenen auf
> seiner Spur, und alle Leute wunderten sich. Und nicht die Fische allein gingen
> ihm nach, sondern auch die Tiere des Landes.[60]

In this strange story the fish are at one point sold to the poor and then summoned to

follow Jesus.

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[60] Franko, "Beiträge," 320-321. In English:
Then Peter said to the child: "Go to the sea and catch me some fish."

The child, however, says to him: "Make me twelve hooks and I will go and catch
fish." And the child got up and in the course of an hour caught twelve thousand fish, and
came to Peter and said to him: "Let's go, my lord, and get the fish"

But Peter was amazed and said to the child: "Where did you get this skill?"

The Child said to him: ". . . do not ask me, but rather take the fish and give them
to the needy who believe in your Christ." And Peter did as the child ordered. . .

Then he [the child] commanded the fish, which he had caught and had given to
the poor: "Go to your master!" And immediately the fish were out of the water and on his
trail, and everyone wondered at this. And it was not only the fish that followed him, but
the land animals as well.

Other Evidence for the Negative Reception of the People-Fishing Metaphor

We also find more direct evidence that this saying of Jesus had the potential for being understood negatively simply because the act of fishing always ends with the death of the fish. This problem of the fishing metaphor was apparently exploited by Julian the apostate in his mocking of Christianity. The tradition of Julian's mockery of Christians is preserved in the writings of a tenth century bishop named Philagathus. After citing Jesus's calling of the disciples in Luke 5, he adds the following:

> But coming to this point, I have been angered by a bit of pagan nonsense. For, those raving against the Church and attempting to tear this sacred net, add the following to the other slanders which they belch from their reeking souls, they say "If the disciples have been called to catch people in the same manner as fish, for as it says 'you will catch people' and elsewhere 'follow after me and I will make you fishers of people,' and fishermen bring fish out of life and into death (for to the things which live in the water, water is life and air is death, and it is just the opposite for things which live on land) and if this indeed is true, then when the disciples of Jesus catch people through preaching, they hand them over like fish to destruction and death." These things came from the tongue of Julian the apostate, the foul, rash, and despised one, from whom the venom of an asp comes, and 'his teeth are like weapons and swords,' as it says in the Psalm. And such sophistry is exactly like the barking of rabid dogs and the hissing of venomous serpents, chopping up the truth with a stupid deception. (Philagathus, 5.10; author's translation)

Other Christian writers indicate by the apparent need for clarification that the image of people-fishing might easily be understood negatively. For example, Remigius of Auxerre commenting on Mark exclaims: "Wonderful indeed is this fishing! For fishes when they are caught, soon after die; when men are caught by the word of preaching, they rather are made alive."[61] Ambrose, however, suggests that to fish with a net is to capture the fish alive; thus he writes: "And the Apostolic tools are aptly named fishing nets, which do not kill their catch, but save them, and bring them from the deep to the light, and lead those

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[61] This quote is included in Aquinas' *Catena Aurea*.

who waver from the lowest to the highest" (Ambrose *Comm. Lk.*, 4.72). Here again, however, it seems that Ambrose is making an effort to overcome the obvious problem inherent in the fishing metaphor.

Conclusion

We have seen through this survey of literature that not only does the metaphor of people-fishing have some decidedly negative baggage, but that by its very nature the metaphor is likely to be heard negatively. A number of commentators have suggested that by altering the wording of Jesus's commission from "δεῦτε ὀπισω μου, καὶ ποιήσω ὑμᾶς γενέσθαι ἁλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων" to "ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀνθρώπους ἔση ζωγρῶν," Luke has removed the negative connotation of the people-fishing imagery.[62] This is problematic for at least two reasons. First, within the context, the metaphor is the same. Even without specifically mentioning fishing, the concept of catching people mentioned directly after the great catch of fish creates the same analogy. Furthermore, the word ζωγρέω is not without negative connotation. In Greek literature generally, and in the LXX, the word most often means taking prisoners. This meaning is only positive when it is set in contrast to being killed in battle or executed and in many cases those who were "captured alive" were later executed. While there are at least two positive metaphorical meanings of ζωγρέω in Greek literature (Homer, *Il.* 5.689; *Anth. Pal.* 9.597.6), the overwhelming majority of references refer to taking prisoners.[63] And in the LXX, while often set in contrast to

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[62] Darrel Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:5* 461; Derret, J. Duncan M., "'ΕΣΑΝ ΓΑΡ᾽ΑΛΙΕΙΣ (MK. I 16): Jesus's Fishermen and the Parable of the Net," *NovTest* 22 (1980): 108-137; Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 126.

[63] Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* vol. 2, trans. James D. Ernest (Peabody Mass: Hendrickson, 1994), 161-163.

executing prisoners it is still not an entirely positive thing to be captured alive. It is merely the lesser of two evils. The Gospel of Luke overcomes the negative image of people-fishing not by a simple vocabulary change but by placing the calling in the larger narrative and by expanding the *chreia* to clarify the meaning of the metaphor.

By narrating Jesus's programmatic message in Galilee and his subsequent ministry of preaching and deliverance before the calling, the Gospel of Luke has defined the ministry of Jesus as one of deliverance to captives rather than taking captives. Jesus has delivered people from demon possession, and even healing from sickness has been presented in terms of deliverance. In the narrative of Luke 5:1-11, the metaphor of fishing for people is clarified by connecting the miracle of the great catch of fish to Jesus's preaching from the boat. The same boat serves as pulpit for Jesus and the setting for the miracle. In this way the meaning of the metaphor of fishing for people is clarified. To fish for people is to follow Jesus in his ministry of deliverance. In this way, the model audience is directed away from misunderstanding the metaphor and equating the people-fishing with taking captives. The ministry of Jesus has been described in precisely the opposite terms.

The metaphor takes on an entirely new meaning in the gospels. No other gospel, however, goes as far as the Gospel of Luke to make the new meaning clear. Fishing for people is a ministry of the proclamation of the Word of God and the goal of that proclamation is deliverance.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Boat as Metaphor for the Church in Luke 5 and Related Passages

Introduction

Chapter three outlined the relationship between Luke 5:1-11 and the accounts of

the call of the first disciples in Mark 1:16-18. There are two other traditions that lie

behind our pericope. The first is the story of Jesus preaching from the deck of boat, which

is found in Mark 4 and Matthew 13. The second is the account of the great catch of fish

from John 21. This chapter will explore the relationship between Luke's call narrative

and these two traditions.

Preaching from the Boat

Luke 5 begins with Jesus standing by the water being pressed upon by the crowds.

He steps into a boat which becomes the stage from which he addresses those gathered.

This same setting is used in both Mark and Matthew. In this section I will argue, first,

that the boat in all three stories symbolizes the Church. To make this point I will begin

with a discussion of the development of the boat as a symbol for the Church, with

examples drawn from Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian literature. Next, we will

compare the use of this symbol in the three accounts of Jesus preaching from the deck.

We will focus on the way that Luke's blending of this tradition with the fishing miracle

leads the model audience to an understanding of the Church that differs in important

ways from that of the other two Synoptic Gospels.

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The Boat as Symbol for the Church

The boat became a symbol for the Church in early Christian art and literature, and I will argue that there is sufficient reason to find the boat serving this function in our passage. In what follows, I will provide a brief overview of the prehistory of the use of the boat as a symbol for collective fate and the development of the boat as a symbol for the Church.

By the time the Third Gospel was written the boat already served as a symbol for collective fate. The idea that members of a community are "all in the same boat" can be found in both Greco-Roman and Jewish literature.

The Boat in Greek Literature

In Greek literature the boat frequently stands for the state. The image evokes a sense of common destiny. Most often, allusions to the state as a boat are made to emphasize the peril that it faces. References to the dangers of sea, storms, and the threat of shipwreck are frequent. Thus the image emphasizes the need for a common purpose, and especially the need for strong singular leadership. In fact, the image of the boat was sometimes invoked to disparage democracy and call for the consolidation of power. Thus Sophocles' Oedipus is urged to take charge of the city which "is grievously tossed by storms, and still cannot lift its head from beneath the depths of the killing angry sea" (Sophocles, *Oed. tyr.* 20 [Lloyd-Jones , LCL]). And in Dio's *Roman History*, Caesar is encouraged to take control of Rome, which is described as "[a] great merchantman manned with a crew of every race and lacking a pilot," which "has now for many generation been rolling and plunging as it has drifted this way and that in a heavy sea, a

ship as it were without ballast" (*Roman History*, LII 16.3 [Cary, LCL]). Similarly,

Polybius describes the Athenian democracy as

> a ship without a commander. In such a ship when fear of the billows or the danger of a storm induces the mariners to be sensible and to attend to the orders of the skipper, they do their duty admirably. But when they grow over-confident and begin to entertain contempt for their superiors and to quarrel with each other, as they are no longer all of the same way of thinking, then with some of them determined to continue the voyage, and others putting pressure on the skipper to anchor, with some letting out the sheets and other preventing them and ordering the sails to be taken in, not only does the spectacle strike anyone who watches it as disgraceful owing to their disagreement and contention, but the position of affairs is a source of actual danger to the rest of those on board; so that often after escaping from the perils of the widest seas and fiercest storms they are shipwrecked in harbour and when close to the shore. (Polybius *Histories* VI, 3-8 [Paton, LCL])

Plato employs the image of the ship for the state in his argument that it should be ruled by

philosophers. He suggests that if the philosophers seem useless to the city, it is only

because their proper place at the helm has been usurped by a mutinous populous who

knows nothing of the art of steering and lacks the wisdom to track the weather or guide

the ship by the stars (*Rep* 6.487d-488e).

The Boat in Latin Literature

In Latin literature, we find similar use of the ship metaphor. Perhaps the most

complete example is found in the *Odes of Horace*. Ode 24 is traditionally read as an ode

to the state:[1]

> O ship! New waves are about to carry you out to sea. O, what are you *doing*? One final effort now, and make port before it is too late! Don't you notice how your side is stripped of oars, your mast is split by the violence of the Southwester, the yardarms groan, and the hull, without the support of the ropes, can scarcely withstand the overbearing sea? Your sails are no longer in one piece, you have no

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[1] Though, as Rudd notes, "Some modern scholars have seen the ship as a woman, some as a poetry book, some as Horace's life" (Niall Rudd, *Odes and Epodes*, LCL 51 n. 29).

gods left to call upon, now that for a second time you are beset by danger. Although you are made of Pontic pine, the daughter of an illustrious forest, and you boast of you lineage and name, such things are of no avail; the terrified sailor puts no trust in painted sterns. Unless you are to become a plaything of the winds, take care! Until lately you caused me worry and disgust; now you inspire my devotion and fond concern. Make sure to avoid the waters that flow between the shining Cyclades! (Horace *Odes* 14 [Rudd, LCL 50-52])

Again the metaphor of the ship is employed to show imminent danger. Livy uses the metaphor to show the need for strong leadership in troubled times: "Any one of the sailors and passengers can steer when the sea is calm. When a savage storm comes and the ship is swept over a rough sea by the wind, then there is need of a man and a pilot" (Livy 24.8.12-13 [Moore, LCL]). A similar sentiment is expressed by Cicero's frequent use of the metaphor. In *De Republica*, Cicero has Scipio suggesting that, at least theoretically, a benevolent dictator would be an ideal form of government. The benefit of singularity of leadership is expressed through the metaphor of the ship. When "the sea suddenly grows rough" there is need for a strong hand at the helm (*Repub.* 34.63 [Williams, LCL]). In his letters, Cicero expresses his involvement (or lack of involvement) in the affairs of state with nautical language. After being exiled, he writes to Atticus:

> I had long grown tired of playing skipper, even when that was in my power. Now, when I have—not abandoned the helm, but had it snatched out of my hands and am forced to leave the ship, I want to watch the wreck they're making from terra firma. (Cicero *Att.* 27 (II.7) [Bailey, LCL])[2]

Later, Pliny describes Trajan as a competent pilot who guides the ship of state to harbor.[3]

So in Latin literature the ship as a metaphor for the state functions in very much the same

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[2] Cf. *Fam* 9.15.3.

[3] In a recent article, Warren Carter describes how Pliny's *Panegyricus* employs the image of the ship in praise of Trajan. Carter attempts to demonstrate anti-imperial

way as it does in Greek. The ship is employed as a metaphor for the community in peril, and the emphasis is consistently on the need for strong leadership at the helm. The state, like a ship, is in constant peril, and the survival of the ship depends on an able pilot and a crew that follows his lead.

The Boat in Jewish Literature

The best example of the boat as a metaphor for a corporate body in Jewish literature is found in the Testament of Naphtali:

> I saw our father, Jacob, standing by the sea at Jamnia and we, his sons, were with him. And behold a ship came sailing past full of dried fish, without sailor or pilot. Inscribed on it was 'The Ship of Jacob.' So our father said to us, 'Get into the boat.' As we boarded it, a violent tempest arose, a great windstorm, and our father, who had been holding us on course, was snatched away from us. After being tossed by the storm, the boat was filled with water and carried along on the waves until it broke apart. Joseph escaped in a light boat while we were scattered about on ten planks; Levi and Judah were on the same one. Thus we were all dispersed, even to the outer limits. Levi, putting on sack cloth, prayed to the Lord in behalf of us. When the storm ceased, the ship reached the land, as though at peace. Then Jacob, our father, approached, and we all rejoiced with one accord. (*T.Naph.* 6:1-10 [Charlesworth OTP])

In this text, the nation of Israel is represented by the ship that was broken apart but will one day be restored. The significance of this text for our study is that Israel is represented collectively by the ship. The provenance of this text, however, is problematic. The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* has been somewhat notorious for difficulties in establishing dating and provenance. Proposed dates for the writing of the *Testaments* range from the third century B.C.E. through the second century C.E. The issue is complicated by the suggestion of many scholars that the *Testaments* contain a number of

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sentiments in the account of Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27. Warren Carter, "Aquatic Display: Navigating the Roman Imperial World in Acts 27" *NTS* 62 (2016), 79-96.

Christian interpolations. With the *Testament of Naphtali*, however, we are in a somewhat

better position because this testament has been preserved in a fragment from Qumran,

and in two seemingly independent recension, one in Greek and the other in Hebrew.[4] The

earliest witness to the text is the Qumran text (4Q215 or 4QNapth). Based on

paleographic evidence, this text has been dated to around the turn of the era (30 B.C.E. to

20 C.E.).[5] Unfortunately for our purposes, the portion of the text which refers to the ship

of Jacob is not a part of the fragment found at Qumran. This complicates confidently

describing the provenance of this portion of the Testament. We will need to look at the

two other versions of the Testament available to us—the Greek version of the text and the

version preserved by Rabbi Moses. The critical edition of the Greek version was

published by R. H. Charles in 1908[6] and provides the text for Kee's translation.[7] The

later Hebrew version of the Testament is included by an eleventh century Rabbi known as

Moses the Preacher of Narbonne in his *Midrash Beresit rabbati*.[8] A full discussion of the

relationship between these two texts is beyond the scope of this project, but recent

scholarship has shown that Rabbi Moses preserves a version of the text which is based on

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[4] In fact the text has been preserved also in Armenian and Slavonic as well, but both of these are translations, apparently from the Greek texts. For a full discussion see H.C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* vol. 1 edited by James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 775-77.

[5] Michael E. Stone, "Testament of Naphtali" *JJS* 47.2 (1996): 314. Stone cites a private conversation with Frank Cross.

[6] R. H. Charles, *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908).

[7] H. C. Kee, "Testaments."

[8] The Hebrew text is available in Rabbi Moses, מדרש בראשית רבתי : נוסד על ספרו של ר׳ משה הדרשן (Translated by Chanoch Albeck: Yerushalayim: Mekitse Nirdamim, 1967).

a Hebrew *Vorlage* rather than being based on a Greek text (as was assumed earlier). For our purposes it is enough to say that both the Greek text and the later Hebrew text include a reference to the ship of Jacob. In both cases the ship is used as a metaphor for all of Israel, which is threatened by a storm.

Here the boat stands in for the nation as it does in Greco-Roman literature. As in other literature, calamity is represented by shipwreck. It also serves as a symbol of Israel's judgment and eschatological reconciliation. Another nautical symbol from Jewish literature which was associated with judgment and reconciliation was the ark of Noah.

The Ark of Noah in Jewish and Christian Literature

Noah's ark is perhaps the more relevant for the development of the boat as a symbol for the Church. In Jewish literature, Noah and his ark came to symbolize impending judgment. In Ezekiel 14:14 we find Noah as a warning of impending judgment. Here Noah, along with Daniel and Job, is put forward as an example of someone who was spared because of his righteousness. In the book of Wisdom, the ark is used as symbol of salvation: "wisdom again saved it, steering the righteous man by a paltry piece of wood" (10:4 NRS). By the second temple period, the flood and Noah's ark were increasingly seen as symbols of judgments, and Noah's story was a reoccurring theme in Jewish apocalyptic literature.[9]

In Christian literature, the ark of Noah was a symbol of impending judgment and salvation.[10] In Matthew 24:38 and Luke 17:27, the coming judgment is compared to the

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[9] See Daniel H. Street, "As it was in the days of Noah: the prophets' typological interpretation of Noah's flood," *CTR* 5 (2007): 33-51.

[10] Fuller discussion of the importance of Noah's Ark for early Christian Theology can be found in H.S. Benjamins, "Noah, the Ark, and the Flood in Early Christian

days of Noah. In these parallel passages, the story of Noah serves to illustrate how judgment can catch the judged off guard. In Hebrews 11:7, Noah is an example of faithfulness because he trusted the warning of God and "built an ark to save his household." In 2 Peter 2:5, Noah's generation is again invoked as an example of God's willingness to judge the sinners. In 1 Peter 3:20, we find a somewhat more difficult mention of Noah and his ark. This passage, more than any other in the New Testament, employs the flood and the ark as symbols of God's deliverance. In this passage, however, the emphasis falls on the waters of the flood more than on the ark itself. Noah's generation is again mentioned as objects of judgment, and Noah and his family were saved "through water." Logically, we might say that Noah and his family were saved in the ark or from the water, rather than through the water, but the point of the passage is to draw a parallel between the salvation of Noah and the salvation that comes through baptism. Although some have seen in this passage the first example of the ark itself being used as a symbol of the Church, the point is salvation through water. So the references to Noah and his ark in the New Testament itself do not explicitly connect the ark with the Church.

In early Christian literature outside of the New Testament, however, Noah's ark was quickly associated with the cross and then with the Church. In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin takes the metaphor of the ark and applies it to cross. He writes:

> Now, Christ, the first-born of every creature, founded a new race which is regenerated by him through water and faith and wood, which held the mystery of

Theology: The Ship of the Church in the Making" in *Interpretations of the Flood,* ed. Florentino Garcia Martinez and Gerard P. Luttikhuizen (Boston: Brill, 1990), 134-49; and Jean Danielou, *Primitive Christian Symbols*, trans. Donald Attwater; Baltimore (Helicon Press, 1963) 58-70.

the cross (just as the wood saved Noah and his family, when it held them safely on the waters). (Justin *Dial.* 138 [Falls])[11]

In the work of Tertullian we begin to see a more fully developed use of the ship as a metaphor for the church. He concludes *De idolatria*, with:

> Amid these reefs and inlets, amid theses shallows and straits of idolatry, Faith, her sails filled by the Spirit of God, navigates; safe if cautious, secure if intently watchful. But to such as are washed overboard is a deep whence is no out-swimming; to such as are run aground in inextricable shipwreck; to such as are engulphed is a whirlpool, where there is no breathing-even in idolatry. All waves thereof whatsoever suffocate; every eddy thereof sucks down unto Hades. Let no one say, "Who will so safely foreguard himself? We shall have to go out of the world!" As if it were not as well worthwhile to go out, as to stand in the world as an idolater! Nothing can be easier than caution against idolatry, if the fear of it be our leading fear; any "necessity" whatever is too trifling compared to such a peril. The reason why the Holy Spirit did, when the apostles at that time were consulting, relax the bond and yoke for us, was that we might be free to devote ourselves to the shunning of idolatry. This shall be our Law, the more fully to be administered the more ready it is to hand; (a Law) peculiar to Christians, by means whereof we are recognised and examined by heathens. This Law must be set before such as approach unto the Faith, and inculcated on such as are entering it; that, in approaching, they may deliberate; observing it, may persevere; not observing it, may renounce their name. We will see to it, if, after the type of the Ark, there shall be in the Church raven, kite, dog, and serpent. At all events, an idolater is not found in the type of the Ark: no animal has been fashioned to represent an idolater. Let not that be in the Church which was not in the Ark. (*Idol.* 24 [*ANF* 3:77])

Perhaps most significantly for our study, in his treatise on baptism, Tertullian makes a direct link between the disciples' boat and the Church in a discussion of the story of Jesus calming the storm:

> But that little ship did present a figure of the Church, in that she is disquieted 'in the sea,' that is, in the world, 'by the wave' that is, by persecutions and temptations; the Lord through patience, sleeping as it were, until, roused in their last extremities by the prayers of the saints, He checks the world, and restores tranquility to His own." (*Bapt.* 12 [*ANF* 3:669])

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[11] See also 1 *Apol.* 55 where Justin mentions the ship among other cruciform symbols.

Modern readers of the gospels have also found the boat symbolizing the Church in these passages. A classic example is that of Günther Bornkamm's "The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew," in which he argues that Matthew in particular develops the story of the stilling of the storm "with reference to discipleship, and that means with reference to the little ship of the Church."[12]

In later literature the boat was increasingly seen as a symbol for the Church, and in the gospels the boat was frequently associated with the Church in the reading of pre-modern Christian interpreters of the New Testament. While the earliest available commentaries on these passages naturally post-date the writing and reception of the Luke's Gospel, they at least demonstrate that the suggestion that a pre-modern audience might be expected to make this connection is not at all unreasonable. When combined with the strong evidence we have seen in Greco-Roman literature for understanding the boat as a symbol for the collective fate of a community (in particular the boat in peril—an image not at all foreign to the gospels), the evidence bookends the publication of the Gospel of Luke, and makes it likely that the model audience which the texts develops readily connects the boat to the Church.

Preaching from the Boat in Matthew, Mark, and Luke

In this section I will discuss the narratives of Jesus preaching from the boat as found in the other Synoptic Gospels. This will allow us to see the significance of the narrative context into which this event is placed and explore how the inclusion of the miracle of the catch casts a new light on the image.

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[12] Günther Bornkamm, "The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), 52-57.

The accounts of Jesus preaching to a gathered crowd from the deck of the boat found in Matthew 13:1-2 and Mark 4:1 have an obvious relationship to Luke 5:1-11. Matthew and Mark are quite similar in their telling, while Luke's version differs significantly. In all three passages, Jesus, pressed by the crowds, uses a waiting boat as a pulpit from which to preach. Similarities end here, however. In Matthew and Mark, the content of Jesus's preaching is given, while in Luke 5, we are only told that the crowd had come to hear the "word of God" (5:1). In fact, what is shared between Luke and the other Synoptic Gospels is less narrative than setting. But what does the inclusion of this setting from Jesus tradition mean for our reading of Luke 5? I will argue that the setting found in Matthew and Mark is the more traditional and that by moving this setting to the commissioning scene the gospel challenges the audience to reconsider the place of the relationship of the Christian community and those outside.

It is possible that the setting is brought to Luke 5 simply to allow Jesus to both preach to the crowds and be present for the catch. If, however, the boat serves to represent the Church in all three versions, then Luke's assigning this setting to the call of the first disciples and the miracle of the great catch gives that image a different shade of meaning.

Commentators, both modern and ancient, have identified in both Mark and Matthew's versions of Jesus preaching from the boat an emphasis on the gulf that separates those inside the Church who hear and understand and those who remain outside and are kept from inside information about the meaning of Jesus's teaching. Luke's version of the story, through the inclusion of the miracle of the great catch, softens the distinction between inside and out. Not only does Jesus's proclamation of the gospel from

the deck of Peter's boat help to shape the meaning of the metaphor of people-fishing, but the image of drawing in the catch, which is present in the metaphor and enacted in the miracle, helps to soften the distinction between those in the boat and those outside. The fundamental orientation of those in the boat is turned outward.

In Mark, Jesus requests that his disciples prepare a boat from which he might speak in 3:9. The disciples are asked by Jesus to prepare a boat "because of the crowds so that they would not crush him." Immediately afterward Jesus ascends the mountain to appoint the twelve and then goes back to the house where he again teaches a crowd. It is not until 4:1 that the prepared boat is put to use. Here Jesus is again by the sea and a great crowd has gathered to hear and see him. Matthew omits the earlier request of Jesus to make a boat available, but in both Matthew and Mark the story of Jesus teaching from the deck follows immediately after Jesus's dismissal of his mother and brothers and his establishment of a new family based upon those who do the will of the Father (Mk 3:31-34; Mt 12:46-50). Thus the narrative is introduced into a situation in which some are kept out while others are brought in. Further, in both Matthew and Mark, Jesus begins his teaching from the boat with the Parable of the Sower. In both gospels this parable is followed by Jesus's private explanation to his disciples of its meaning. The way in which Jesus accomplishes this explanation is not perfectly clear in either narrative. In Matthew it seems that Jesus's disciples are in the boat with him, and in Mark the explanation of the parable could be read as an interruption in narrative time, in which the author explains what will happen later—as though Jesus explained the parable to the disciples at some later but unspecified time. In both accounts Jesus's disciples ask for the reason for

teaching in parables and his answer emphasizes the difference between the crowd and the

disciples. In Mark, Jesus gives his description of the purpose of the parables:

> When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that 'they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.'" (Mark 4:10-12, NRS)

Matthew's somewhat expanded version further emphasizes the distinction:

> And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him shall *more* be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes Lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them.' But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear For truly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. (Matt 13:11-17 NRS)

In the case of Mark and Matthew, the literary context of the story emphasizes the

disciples' status as insiders while the crowd is left out.

Ernest Best suggests that the boat be consistently read as a symbol for the Church

in the Gospel of Mark. In support of this position he writes:

> If we put together the references from the redaction and from the tradition we see; (i) the ship is the means of conveyance. (ii) It appears regularly in miracle contexts, moving Jesus to and from them and providing the place where they are discussed (8.14); only at 4.1 is there no direct or indirect relation to miracles. (iii) The occupants of the ship whenever they are explicitly named are always Jesus and the disciples, and usually where they are not named this is implied in the context; neither the crowd nor Jesus's enemies are ever in the ship. In addition to these general points there are two clearly redaction passages in which the ship is related to teaching: in 4.1 it is the pulpit from which Jesus addresses the crowd; in 8.14 it is the setting for private instruction of the disciples. In 8.14 and 3.9 its

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purpose is to separate Jesus from the crowd; this is probably also its significance in 4.10-12.[13]

It is perhaps not surprising that neither the crowds nor the enemies should ever be in the boat, and the frequency of miracles in the Gospel of Mark might render the connection to miracle stories less significant. Nevertheless, these factors do make the boat an attractive option as a symbol for the Church. Best's last point (that the boat stories emphasize the separation of the disciples from the crowds) is shared by other scholars. Tim Woodroof builds on this association of the boat with the Church in Mark. He notes that the boat plays a significant role in the story only in 4:1-8:21 and that in this section "the boat provides the primary organizing motif for Jesus's travel and work."[14] In this section the boat marks a private space for the disciples to receive instruction from Jesus. Woodruff describes the importance of the boat in this way:

> It is in this context that the shift from Galilee and a general audience (1:14-3:35) to the boat and the disciples (4:1-8:21) becomes significant. For if (in the context of Mark's narrative) the reader is intended to see Galilee as a setting in which many will hear but few will listen, the boat, by contrast is a setting in which those who do listen and respond are gathered together with Jesus. Galilee, representing the subset of all possible hearers of Jesus's message, is contrasted with the boat, representing the subset of those who hear and obey. As we will see, the disciples "in the boat" with Jesus are sharply distinguished from those "on the outside." All of this prepares the reader to understand that the boat is more than a mode of transportation; it is a metaphor for the disciples who leave and follow.[15]

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[13] Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 231.

[14] Timothy J. Woodroof, "Church as Boat in Mark: Building a Seaworthy Church," *ResQ* 39 (1997): 233. This organization around the boat and sea crossings is noted by other scholars of Mark as well. Norman Peterson, "The Composition of Mark 4:1-8:26" *HTR* 73 (1980): 185-217; Robert P. Meye, *Jesus and the Twelve: Discipleship and Revelation in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 63-73.

[15] Woodroof, "Church as Boat," 234.

Woodruff goes on to attempt to unpack the symbolism of the boat in the Gospel of Mark.

He concludes that one major function of the boat is to set the disciples apart with Jesus.

He describes it as

> a place for communion between Jesus and his true followers, as a boundary distinguishing those who have been given the "secret" from those "on the outside." Never are representatives of the crowd or members of the religious establishment in the boat with Jesus. The boat is for those who are called and are willing to share the ministry and the sufferings of their Lord.[16]

In the Gospel of Mark the boat serves as a symbol of the Church set apart from the crowds.

Ulrich Luz finds a similar function for the boat in Matthew. In connection with Jesus teaching from the boat in Matthew 13, he writes that "In the Gospel of Matthew the ship always implies a certain distance from the crowds,"[17] and cites 14:13 and 15:39, in which Jesus and the disciples escape from the crowds by boat, as other examples in Matthew. R. T. France outlines this emphasis on separation and the role that the boat plays.

> Jesus has just spoken of the special privilege of his disciples, to be regarded as his true family, and this discourse will underline that privilege. It is they, and not the crowds "outside," who have been given the ability to perceive the hidden truths of the kingdom of heaven (v. 11), and their privilege will be underlined in vv. 16-17 . . . In this introductory scene, the boat already serves that purpose: Matthew does not mention here that the disciples were in the boat with Jesus, but their private approach to him in v. 10 indicates that they were . . . The boat forms a convenient pulpit in view of the pressing crowd, but it also serves symbolically to distance Jesus (and his disciples) from the crowd (who, like Jesus's family in 12:46 are 'standing' separate from the disciple group), and thus to underline the editorial distinction between public and private teaching.[18]

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[16] Woodroof, "Church as Boat," 244-45.

[17] Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 233.

[18] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapid: Eerdmans, 2007), 501.

Everything about the context of Matthew 13 points to distinction. As Douglas Hare

writes: "this emphasis on *contrast* and *separation* dictates both the substance and the

structure of the discourse."[19] Within this context the water surrounding the boat becomes

a moat separating those on the shore from those aboard.

> We can find a similar emphasis on separation in ancient commentators.

> There is an underlying principle for the reason that the Lord sat in the boat and the crowd stood outside. He necessarily spoke in parables and indicates by the genre that those who are located outside of the Church can find no understanding of the divine word. The ship presents a type of the Church, within which the Word of life is situated and preached. Those who lie outside in barren and fruitless places, like the desert, cannot understand. (Hilary of Poitiers, *Commentary on Matthew*, [Williams 153]).

When the relationship between Jesus, the disciples, and the crowd is presented more

positively, this is achieved by invoking the image of people-fishing in language more

consistent with Luke than either Mark or Matthew.

> He sits beside the sea in the middle of crowds and begins his discourse; and because there is not enough open space due to the over-crowding of the multitude, he gets onto a boat. Actions come about constructively when there is a need. . . . Since he performed many signs, he now grants them the benefit of his teaching. And he sits on the boat, fishing and entangling those on the land in his net. And this is how he sat for the Evangelist has not put this in simple terms, in order that he might describe the scene in detail. (*Cat. Marc. 301.28* [Lamb, TENT])

> In a sense then, this reading is the exception that proves the rule. While it is

possible that, even without the Lucan version of the story, teaching from the boat might

have been heard as an enacting of Jesus's commission to be fishers of people from earlier

in both gospels, the contexts into which Matthew and Mark place the story work against

it. In both gospels the boat most naturally functions as a marker of distance between the

gathered crowds and Jesus and his disciples. The sea and the shore serve to illustrate the

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[19] Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2009), 147.

gap between those who see and hear and those who are kept from understanding. The crowds are depicted as those on the outside and are, at best, the soils from the parables— places where the seeds of the gospel are cast (Mark 4:1-9; Matt 13:1-23), but the success of that casting is mixed.

In the Third Gospel, the image of a casting net (rather than casting seed) serves to illustrate that the crowds gathered are the primary goal of the mission to which Jesus will call his disciples. While the setting is the same (Jesus in the boat with the crowds on the shore), the context into which the story is placed tends to minimize this distinction and the central emphasis of the story is the guaranteed success of the mission. If the boat is seen as a symbol for the Church in Luke, its fundamental orientation is turned outward, and those on the outside are those to be brought in.

In this section I have argued that the boat served as a metaphor for the shared fate of a community in contemporary literature and quickly became clearly associated with the Church in early Christian literature. This allows the narrative to build on this image in the minds of the model audience. By bringing the story of Jesus preaching from the boat into the commissioning narrative, the Gospel of Luke makes its own claims about the nature of the mission to which Jesus called Peter and his companions and the nature of the Church itself. If in the synoptic accounts the Church keeps a safe distance from those on the outside, in Luke those outside are brought into the boat in dramatic (even dangerous) fashion. The boundary between those inside the church is made porous and all hands are called upon to labor to bring them in.

The Great Catch of Fish in John 21

This section will explore the relationship between our pericope and the final parallel passage in John 21. We will begin with the question of source. Here there is something of a consensus among scholars, and this study will not significantly advance the discussion, but a review of the literature is in order. Next we will consider the question of the meaning of the miracles within the context of John. Special attention will be given to the question of whether the miracle in John 21 should be considered an example of the people-fishing metaphor. Finally, we will explore the implication for our reading of Luke 5:1-11, focusing on differences between the narratives.

Source

There are obvious similarities between the two miracles. On the surface both recount a large catch of fish made possible by the direction of Jesus which follows immediately after an unsuccessful night of fishing. The settings for the two stories, however, are quite different, and there are a number of key differences that have led to speculation about how these two stories may (or may not) be related to one another. Perhaps not surprisingly, pre-modern biblical interpreters tended to see the two stories as recounting two distinct episodes in the life of Jesus. Thus, there is no question of a shared source. This is not to say, however, that early readers did not make connections between the two. Augustine, although he reads the two stories as separate incidents, finds a strong connection between the two narratives. The first catch (Luke 5), according to Augustine, represented the church as a *corpus mixtum*. He points out that in the Lucan passage the catch is described only as large; the nets are on the verge of breaking and the boats nearly sink. This precarious situation represented for Augustine the state of the earthly Church.

> So both boats were filled, overloaded, and almost sunk. This represented Christians living bad lives, and overloading the Church with their bad morals. But all the same, the vessels were not sunk; the Church, you see, puts up with those who live bad lives. It can be overloaded, it can't be sunk. (Augustine *Sermon 252A* 3 [Hill])

The second catch (John 21) represented the true Church for Augustine.

> So now, those nets which were cast previously, and caught a countless number of fish, and overloaded two boats, and the nets were breaking, and the nets weren't cast on the right-hand side; but nor did it say on the left: the mystery of this catch is already being fulfilled in this present time. But that other mystery, which he had good reason to enact after his resurrection. . . . So it wasn't pointless that that one took place before the passion, this one after the resurrection. There, neither to the right nor to the left, but simply cast the nets (Lk 5:4); here, though, cast to the right (Jn 21:6). There, no number, but only a vast quantity, so that it almost sank two boats; because that too was mentioned there; while here, both number and size of the fish is mentioned. Again, there the nets were breaking, here the evangelist made it his business to say. And though they were so big, the nets were not broken. (252.2 [Hill, 131])

Thus, for Augustine, while the similarities invite comparison, the differences provide the interpretive key. While Augustine's extended comparison stands out, other pre-modern readers of the two stories understood them as closely related, but distinct miracles.

In critical scholarship at the end of nineteenth century, the question of the relationship between the passages moves from a chiefly theological one to a question of source. Bernard Weiss, in his *Leben Jesu*, argues that the Lucan narrative is dependent upon reminiscences of the post-resurrection appearance of Christ as narrated by John. He suggests that in Luke's source "the narrative of the call of Peter had evidently been confused with that of his reinstatement in the office which had been conferred on him, and so the story of the miraculous draught of fishes which is connected with the one is

now conjoined with the other."[20] Alfred Plummer, however, was not convinced that such

a confusion was probable given the differences between the two passages which he lists:

> 1. There [John] Jesus is not recognized at first; here [Luke] He is known directly
> He approaches [sic]. 2. There He is on the shore; here He is in Peter's boat. 3.
> There Peter and John are together; here they seem to be in different boats. 4.
> There Peter leaves the capture of the fish to others; here he is chief actor in it. 5.
> There the net is not broken; here it is. 6. There the fish are caught close to the
> shore and brought to the shore; here they are caught in deep water and are taken
> into the boats. 7. There Peter rushes through the water to the Lord whom he had
> lately denied; here, though he had committed no such sin, he says, 'Depart from
> me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' There is nothing improbable in two miracles
> of a similar kind, one granted to emphasize and illustrate the call, the other the re-
> call of the chief Apostle.[21]

Others have also emphasized the differences between the passages as evidence for

distinct (even if related) sources. John Bailey, in his monograph *The Traditions Common*

to the Gospels of Luke and John, takes the unusual position that the author of the Fourth

Gospel used the Gospel of Luke as a source. In spite of this proposed dependence in other

areas, however, Bailey contends that the differences between the miracles in John 21 and

Luke 5 exclude literary dependence. He gives his own list of important differences.

> In Luke Jesus is in the boat which catches the fish, two boats in all are involved,
> and the incident culminates in Jesus's call of Peter to discipleship; in John the
> need for food is stressed, only one boat is mentioned, Jesus remains on shore, the
> fishing is concluded by a meal, above all, the whole scene constitutes a
> resurrection appearance. A direct relation between the two accounts, i.e. literary
> dependence of one on the other, is excluded by the fact that the only two
> significant words common to both are ιχθύς and δίχτυον.[22]

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[20] Bernhard Weiss, *The Life of Christ*, trans. M. G. Hope; vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T. &
T. Clark, 1883), 58.

[21] Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel of S. Luke* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1898), 147.

[22] John A. Bailey, *The Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John*
(Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 12. This assessment is shared by Darrell L. Bock (*Luke* 1.
449).

In contrast to those who emphasize the differences, others have pointed to the similarities. Raymond Brown, in his commentary on John, provides a thorough list.

> 1) The disciples have fished all night and have caught nothing. 2) Jesus tells them to put out the net(s) for a catch. 3) His directions are followed and an extraordinarily large catch of fish is made. 4) The effect on the nets is mentioned 5) Peter is the one who reacts to the catch (John xxi mentions the Beloved Disciple, but that is clearly a Johannine addition). 6) Jesus is called Lord. 7) The other fishermen take part in the catch but say nothing. 8) The theme of following Jesus occurs at the end (cf. John xxi 19, 22). 9) The catch of fish symbolizes a successful Christian missionary endeavor (explicitly in Luke; implicitly in John). 10) The same words are used for getting aboard, landing, net, etc., some of which may be coincidental. The mutual use of the name 'Simon Peter' when he responds to the catch (Luke v 8; John xxi 7) is significant, for this is the only instance of the double name in Luke.[23]

After noting these similarities, Brown concludes "that independently Luke and John have preserved variant forms of the same miracle story," adding that "we say independently because there are many differences of vocabulary and detail."[24] We see then that even when Brown emphasizes the similarities, he does not suggest literary dependence. Few, in fact, do suggest such dependence. One important exception is in the earlier work of Rudolf Bultmann. For Bultmann, Luke likely had no source for the miracle of the great catch of fish, but rather "[t]he miracle could have been developed out of the saying about 'fishers of men.'"[25] This suggestion leaves Bultmann with the problem of how the similar account made it into the Gospel of John. To address this, Bultmann suggests that "[t]he variant in Jn. 21^{1-14} seems to be a later version, which in some way derives from Luke."[26]

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[23] Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 1090. Brown also notes that both passages mention the Sons of Zebedee, but dismisses this as insignificant.

[24] Brown, *John*, 1090.

[25] Bultmann, *History,* 217.

[26] Bultmann, *History*, 218.

This assessment of the relationship was not widely received, and in his commentary on John Bultmann moves away from this idea and suggests a shared source.[27] In spite of the nuances of understanding, there is widespread agreement among scholars that the sources which both evangelists use share a common ancestor.[28]

If we assume that there is a common source behind both accounts (even if the connection lies somewhere upstream of the traditions received by the evangelists) the next question that receives considerable attention is the original setting for the story. Raymond Brown, whose commentary on John provides perhaps the most comprehensive study of these questions, concludes that the original tradition began with the fishing miracle, and that the function of that miracle was to provide an opportunity for Peter to recognize the risen Jesus. This was then followed by a scene in which Peter "acknowledged his sin and was restored to Jesus's favor, and that Peter received a commission that gave him eminent authority in the community."[29] The narrative as found in John 21, according to Brown, "preserved a reasonably faithful form of this story, with some admixtures of another scene."[30] In Brown's assessment, then, the original story was

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[27] Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: a Commentary* 2 vols., trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray, R.W.N. Hoare, and J.K. Riches (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), 704-06.

[28] There are of course exceptions. Leon Morris concludes that the differences between the accounts are "too many and too great" for the stories to be variants of the same story. He argues that the stories are based on two separate and historical events (Leon Morris, *Luke,* 123).

[29] Brown, *John*, 1092.

[30] Brown, *John*, 1092. The other scene to which Brown refers is the meal scene in which Jesus eats bread and fish with his disciples. This is important because this division of sources separates the miracle of the catch of fish from the eating of fish later in the story.

set after the resurrection and included both Peter's confession (for his denial of Jesus) and

commission. Brown's overall conclusion, that the tradition on which both Luke 5 and

John 21 are based goes back to a resurrection appearance, is shared by a number of

scholars. In fact, the majority of critical scholars who address this question suggest that

the original setting of the miracle in oral tradition was a post-resurrection appearance of

Jesus. This would make the Johannine setting of the miracle the more original. Those

who suggest that the version of the story in Luke has been moved from its original setting

argue that it retains many elements of its post-resurrection setting. These elements

include: 1) Peter's confession of sinfulness makes better sense after his denial of Jesus; 2)

Simon's use of the title "Κύριος" is not appropriate for this early point in the story; 3)

The dual name "Simon Peter" is common in John, but this is the only occurrence in

Luke.[31] These reasons, in and of themselves, are not compelling reasons for placing the

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[31] The following espouse one or all of these reasons for placing the original story in a post-resurrection setting: Adolf Harnack, *Luke the Physician: The Author of the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. J. R. Wilkinson (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 227; Burton S. Easton, *The Gospel According to St. Luke: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1926), 61-62. Alan Richardson, *The Miracle Stories of the Gospels* (London: S C M Press, 1941), 110; Rudolf Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 705; John Martin Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960), 73-73; Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1982), 43; Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium Lukas* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1966), 127; Leopold Sabourin, "The Miracles of Jesus (III): Healings, Resuscitations, Nature Miracles" *BTB* 5 (1975): 146-200; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 563; Bailey, *Traditions Common*, 14; Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and theological Study* (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter Varsity Press, 1999), 325; Harnack made the novel suggestion that the story formed the lost ending to the Gospel of Mark (Adolf Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, 227). But note that von Wahlde finds a number of aspects of the story in John 21 'That one would normally expect to have appeared much earlier in the Gospel' (Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John. Vol 2 Commentary on the Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 885).

scene in a post-resurrection setting. I would point out first of all that within the context of

the fishing miracle, John 21 does not include Peter's declaration of sinfulness. Even later

in the narrative, where echoes of Peter's denial are so often noted, Peter's confession is

only that he loves Jesus. If this was present in the tradition, and if this fits so well into a

post-resurrection account, why does the author of John 21 leave it out? Concerning the

second reason, we note that there are numerous examples of characters addressing Jesus

as "Κύριος" in the Third Gospel.[32] One such example follows immediately after our

pericope in verse 12 when the leper refers to Jesus as Lord ("κύριε, ἐὰν θελῃ δύνασαί με

καταρίσαι"). If a secondary character can refer to Jesus as Lord at this early stage in the

gospel, surely this is not a convincing reason for assuming a post-resurrection context.[33]

Another reason for downplaying the significance of these two points is that Luke's

treatment of the call has arranged the materials to correspond with a typical Old

Testament motif—the commissioning story.

Benjamin Hubbard lists our pericope as an example of the commissioning story.[34]

He finds this type scene in many call narratives in the Old Testament, including the

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[32] 5:12, 7:6, 9:54,61, 10:17,40, 11:1, 12:41, 13:23, 17:37, 18:41, 19:8,34, 22:33,38.

[33] For a more complete discussion of the meaning of κύριος in the Gospel of Luke, see C. Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).

[34] Our pericope is not listed in the table of Lucan commissioning accounts in the 1977 *Semeia* article (Benjamin Hubbard, "Commissioning Stories in Luke-Acts: A Study of Their Antecedents, Form, and Content" *Semeia*, 8 (1977): 103-26) but it does appear in the table given in the 1978 essay (Benjamin Hubbard, "The Role of Commissioning Accounts in Acts" 187-98 in *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. Charles H. Talbert [Danville VA: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978], 190). There is no reason given for the absence in the 1977 article, and the 1978 chart shows that our pericope has all the essential elements of a commissioning account.

calling of Gideon, Moses, and Isaiah.[35] According to Hubbard, the basic elements of the

commissioning story are "1) circumstantial *introduction*, 2) *confrontation* between

commissioner (usually the deity) and commissioned, 3) *reaction* to the holy presence

(sometimes), 4) *commission* proper, 5) *protest* to commission (sometimes), 6)

reassurance by deity, 7) *conclusion*."[36] Hubbard demonstrates that this form is common

in both Luke and Acts. Further, by Luke 5, the audience has already encountered this

type-scene three times in the birth narrative (1:5-25, 26-38; 2:8-20). When we compare

Peter's response to Jesus, with responses from other scenes of this type, we find it

entirely consistent. It is similar to Isaiah's response to the vision of the divine throne

room in which he lamented, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I

live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts"

(6:5 NRS), or Gideon's response to the realization that he had encountered the Angel of

the Lord, "Help me, Lord GOD! For I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face"

(Judges 6:22 NRS). If Hubbard is correct in suggesting that Luke has crafted the narrative

to fit this typical epiphanic scene, Peter's fearful declaration of his own sinfulness and the

use of the term Lord do not point to a post-resurrection context for the story. Rather, the

form casts Simon Peter in the role of the divinely appointed servant and Jesus in the role

of divine messenger. While recognizing this form in the texts undermines the argument

that elements are out of place for a pre-resurrection narrative, we cannot say whether

Luke has adapted a post-resurrection story to a pre-resurrection context or John has done

the opposite.

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[35] For a more complete listing see Hubbard "Commissioning Stories," 107.

[36] Hubbard, *Role*, 77, 103; emphasis original.

There are some commentators who have suggested that the Lucan chronological context is the more likely. François Bovon suggests that while "most of the accounts in the gospels circulated 'context free' for a time," Luke follows the tradition more closely, and Bovon finds the scene more appropriate as a revelatory scene than a post-Easter appearance.[37] If, in fact, the story of the great catch was passed on without context, both versions of the story would represent a fairly significant departure because the context of both is so central to the meaning of the story. If not connected with the call as in Luke or with a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus as in John, the symbolic power of both stories is lost, or at least significantly diminished. That is to say that both have been carefully placed into their contexts. This is at the very least true of Luke's version. Even if the story of the great catch of fish was originally associated with a pre-resurrected Jesus, it is probable that placing the miracle story in the context of the call is a Lucan innovation.[38]

The Meaning of the Metaphor in John 21

The final question to be considered is whether the connection between the miracle of the great catch and the metaphor of fishing for people was also a Lucan innovation. A majority of interpreters of John 21 have assumed that the miracle carries the same

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[37] Bovon, *Luke.* 1.167ff. See also Darrell Bock, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 1.459.

[38] Bovon, however, suggests that the "the tradition of the catch of fish found its form-critical conclusion and punch line in the prophecy to Simon, which alludes to the metaphorical significance of the catch" (*Luke*, 171). It seems to me that there is very little to suggest that the call should be an original conclusion to the narrative. Bovon makes more of Luke's version of the call language, which he suggests is no longer a call but a prophecy, than the text can bear. Other aspects of the narrative have clearly been imported from independent traditions and there is no reason to suspect otherwise in this case.

metaphorical payload in John as it does in Luke 5. Thus the great catch of fish is consistently associated with those who come to faith through the preaching of the apostles. When read canonically, this is a very natural conclusion. The Third Gospel makes the connection explicit, and when encountered in the Fourth Gospel, where the connection is not made clear, a similar meaning is attached. Augustine's influential reading of both texts (outlined above) is a good example of this kind of reading.

Many more recent attempts to understand the meaning of the great catch in John 21 have also assumed that it has the same significance in both gospels. As mentioned above, Raymond Brown suggests that the miracle was originally one through which Peter recognized the risen Jesus.[39] He speculates that the symbolic significance of the catch developed only later. This symbolism is the same in both stories. He writes: "The symbolic meaning that developed around the catch of fish in John xxi is the same as in Luke v 10: it symbolizes the apostolic mission that will 'catch men.'"[40] Although he argues that this symbolism was a development of the tradition, he suggests that this development predates both gospels. Thus, according to Brown, the association of the catch with the missionary success of the Church was present already in both branches of the tradition which gave rise to the Johannine and Lucan forms of the story. In Luke the miracle was then woven into the call narrative, and in John into the story of cooking the fish on the shore with Jesus. But it is the inclusion of the meal scene in John which creates something of an awkward situation when a story about catching fish which represent people becomes a story about eating fish. If Luke's account has in any way

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[39] That the Beloved Disciple recognizes Jesus in John is, according to Brown, a Johannine innovation.

[40] Brown, *John*, 1097.

softened the negative implications of fishing for people, it seems that the story in the

Gospel of John, when read in this way, highlights one of the fundamental difficulties of

the metaphor. Rather than seeing this as a problem for reading the symbolism in John's

catch in this way, most interpreters have addressed the difficulty of fish who are at first

symbolic of people and then the meal by suggesting that the incongruity is the result of

sloppy editing.[41] Bultmann's assessment gives voice to this position when he writes: "So

ends the story, which in the form that lies before us offers such a remarkable confusion of

motifs that one can hardly say wherein the real point lies."[42] Even when the redactor is

not viewed so negatively, scholars attempt to allow the two metaphors to simply sit

uncomfortably together. Alan Culpepper writes: "The two stories unite the preaching

mission of the church in gathering new converts and the sacramental mission of the

church in nourishing believers with the body of Christ and the presence of the risen

Lord."[43]

One reason that interpreters often associate the fish caught in John 21 with the

Church is the description of the catch that John gives. The fish taken are described as 153

large fish. The specificity of the description of the fish leads most to conclude that there

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[41] A notable exception is found in Francis Moloney's commentary, in which Maloney writes: "Whatever might have been the prehistory of the account of the miracle and the Easter meal, they are skillfully joined" (Maloney, *Gospel of John*, [Collegeville, MN: The Order of St. Benedict, 1998], 550). Maloney is able to make this claim, however, because he does not suggest that the fish caught symbolize people.

[42] Bultmann, *John*, 710.

[43] Alan Culpepper, "Designs for the Church in the Imagery of John 21:1-14" in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: terms, forms, themes, and theology of Johannine figurative language*, eds. Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 376.

is some symbolic significance.[44] The number 153 has given rise to disparate speculations

going back at least to Jerome and continuing into modern critical scholarship. In a

commentary on Ezekiel 47:10, Jerome writes:

> Writers on the nature and properties of animals, who have learned *Halieutica* in Latin as well as in Greek, among whom is the learned Oppianus Cilix, say there are one hundred and fifty three kinds of fishes.[45]

The oft noted problem with this solution is that Jerome's states sources do not agree with

his count.[46] Ammonius suggested that the number could be reached by adding together

one hundred which represented the gentiles who would come to faith with fifty which

represented Jewish believers and 3 for the trinity.[47] Difficulties compound with this

interpretation. First why 100 and 50 should be associated with the gentile and Jewish

believers is not at all clear. Second, a reference to the trinity would be an anachronism in

the Gospel of John.

Other interpreters appeal to gematria to explain the significance of the number.

Gematria, in which letters are assigned numerical value and thus hidden significance, is

most familiar to scholars of the New Testament from Revelation 13:18. While the

significance of 666 is disputed, the suggestion that the key is gematria has been taken

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[44] Bultann writes: "The more unclear the whole narrative, confused as it is through the redaction, the more certain it is that the exact statements of v.11 have an allegorical meaning" *John*, 708.

[45] Cited in E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber and Faber ltd, 1948), 554.

[46] See for example Morris, John, 866; Keener, *The Gospel of John* vol. 2 (Peabody, Mass.; Hendrickson, 2003), 132. Talbert points this out but points out that it is of course possible that Jerome's source(s) is lost (Charles Talbert, *Reading John: a literary and theological commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* [Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005], 270).

[47] Ammonius, *Fragments on John*, 637.

seriously by many biblical scholars and remains a leading explanation.[48] The suggestions

for the word or phrase for which 153 stands have varied widely, and there has been no

consensus among proponents of this interpretive method. Further the solutions proposed

are obscure and there is no clear link to the context of John 21.[49]

A third possible key for understanding the number's significance is by pointing

out that 153 is a triangle number. Augustine appealed to this mathematical technique to

decipher the number's significance. A triangle number is the sum of a sequential whole

numbers beginning at one. 153 is the sum of 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. up to 17. To arrive at 17,

Augustine proposes that 10 represents the commandments and 7 the Sabbath. This

solution might be more appealing if one could demonstrate the significance of either of

the symbols to the context of John 21. Nevertheless, finding significance in triangular

numbers is not unheard of. Philo was fond of explaining biblical numbers through

triangle numbers. *Vita Mos.* 2.77 accounts for the number of pillars in the temple

(through a rather creative counting scheme) arrived at the number 55 or "the sum of

successive numbers from one to the supremely perfect ten" (Colson, LCL). In *De*

Plantatione, Philo explains the significance of the number four by claiming, among other

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[48] For an excellent summary see: David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publisers, 1998), 771-72.

[49] Gamatria has been used with a number of words or phrases. One of the earliest and best know looked at two place names from Ezekiel 47 En-gedi and En-eglaim. The number was reached by adding the numbers in both Hebrew (J. A. Emerton, "Gematria in John 21:11," *JTS*, 11 [1960], 335-36) and Greek (Peter R. Ackroyd, "The 153 Fishes in John XXI. 11 – A Further Note," *JTS* 10 [1959]: 94). See also Paul Trudinger, "The 153 Fishes: A Response and a Further Suggestion," *ExpT.* 102 (1990): 11-12. O. T. Owen suggested a connection to Mt. Pishgah where Moses died ("One Hundred and Fifty Three Fishes," *ExpT.* 100 [1988]: 53-54). N. J. McEleney suggested a unique approach that involved counting backward through the Greek alphabet ("153 Great Fishes [John 21,11] – Gematriacal Atbash," *Biblica* 58 (1977): 411-17.

things, "The number 4 is also called 'all' or 'totality' because it potentially embraces the numbers up to 10 and 10 itself. That it so embraces the numbers that come after it also. Add together 1+2+3+4, and we shall find what we wanted. For out of 1+4 we shall get 5; out of 2+4 we shall get 6; 7 out of 3+4; and (by adding three instead of two numbers together) from 1+3+4 we get 8; and again from 2+3+4 we get the number 9; and from all taken together we get 10; for 1+2+3+4 produces 10. This is why Moses said "in the fourth year *all* the fruit shall be holy" (123-25 [Colson]). Philo's frequent use of triangular numbers at least demonstrates that this way or interpreting texts was in use at the time of the writing and reception of the Third Gospel.

One modern reader, who also turns to triangle numbers as key, suggests another way of getting to seventeen. He is convinced that triangle numbers were in common enough use at the time of the composition and reception of the Gospel of John to support this as a tenable solution to the problem, but he remains unconvinced by previous attempts to explain the significance of seventeen. He argues that if a solution for the problem of seventeen could be found within the Gospel of John itself, this would be a more satisfying answer to the riddle of 153.[50] Rissi finds this in the numbers associated with the feeding miracle in John 6 and in particular with the bread; five loaves were distributed and twelve baskets were collected after the miracle, the sum of which is, of course, seventeen. This connection is strengthened for Rissi by other connections to the feeding miracle in John 6 which are found in the meal scene of John 21. Rissi also noted

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[50] "Die Auslegung der 153 als Dreieckszahl wäre nur glaubwürdig, wenn es gelänge, die Zahl 17 aus dem Kontext des Joh. Selbst sinnvoll zu erklären. Das scheint mir tatsächlich möglich zu sein." (Rissi, "Voll grosser Fische," 82).

that "es ist bezeichnend, dass in Joh. 21 das Word vom Menschenfischen fehlt."[51] He

goes on to note that interpreting the fish as people is problematic because the fish are

caught for a meal.[52] Rissi's larger goal in the article is to suggest that the redactor of John

21 was attempting to free the Johannine community of a particular view of the Eucharist,

and this contention has not been widely accepted. Nevertheless, his association of the

miraculous catch in John 21 with the feeding miracle in John 6 has found a better

reception, and his solution to the problem of the 153 fish at least has the advantage of

referring to numbers that can be connected to the passage within the Fourth Gospel.[53]

There are a number of clear links between the miraculous catch and the feeding

miracle in John. Both are set at the Sea of Tiberias that is mentioned only in these two

stories (6:1,23; 21:1).[54] Jesus's words in John 21:13 bear enough similarity to the early

story of the distribution of bread and fish in 6:11 to connect these two accounts in the

minds of an audience.

> ἔλαβεν οὖν τοὺς ἄρτους ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εὐχαριστήσας διέδωκεν τοῖς ἀνακειμένοις
> ὁμοίως καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀψαρίων ὅσον ἤθελον (6:11)

> ἔρχεται Ἰησοῦς καὶ λαμβάνει τὸν ἄρτον καὶ δίδωσιν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ὀψάριον ὁμοίως.
> (21:13)

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[51] M. Rissi, "Voll grosser Fische," 81.

[52] "Die Deiutung der Fische auf Menschen ist aber auch fragwürdig, weil die Fische – gemäss der Auslegung der Fischzugsgeschichte durch den Redaktor – für das Mahl gefangen wurden." (Rissi, "Voll grosser Fische," 81).

[53] Mikeal Parsons connects the number 17 to 18, the "numerical value of the suspended form of the Name Jesus IH" ("Exegesis by the Numbers," *PRSt* [2008]: 25-43).

[54] In the second occurrence (6:21), the mention of the Sea of Tiberias is explicitly tied back to the feeding miracle.

And if Rissi's suggestion for the meaning of 153 has any merit, this is another reason to connect the narratives. These similarities are often recognized by interpreters, but the implications for the meaning of the miraculous catch are not always considered. Rissi's observation that there is nothing in the context of John 21 to suggest the presence of the people-fishing motif has been echoed by other interpreters. D. Moody Smith notes that while "[i]t is sometimes thought that the fish represent the 'catch' of believers or churches . . . this is nowhere said in John and Jesus's command seems to consider the fish as food (v. 10)." [55] Also, Rudolf Schnackenburg asserts that "[t]he Johannine editor does not have in mind, like Luke, the missionary ministry of Peter (and the other disciples)."[56] In comparing the Lucan narrative to the Johannine, Jerome Neyrey writes:

> In both, a ritual occurs with the catch of fish. In Luke, Peter is transformed from mere fisherman to "Fisher of People" (Luke 5:10). In John, however, although his status as a fisherman is confirmed, better roles await him in 21:10-19.
> But the comparison also reveals important differences. The Lucan version functions both as a miracle of plenty and a commission, whereas the Johannine one is first an appearance of the absent Jesus and then a miracle symbolic of plenty – all leading to a commissioning."[57]

Thomas Brodie notes that the theme of provision is present throughout John 21:

> One of its most basic motifs is that of food and the providing of food. The opening section (vv 1-6) tells of the search for fish, then of having no food at all, and finally having fish in abundance. The scene of landing (vv 9-14) tells of finding a meal being prepared, of an invitation to eat, and then of the actual meal. Later, in Jesus's address to Peter, there is a repeated commission to provide food ("Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my little sheep" vv 15, 17). And finally, as the

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[55] D. Moody Smith, *John* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 393-94.

[56] Rudolf Schanckenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3 vols. (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 3.358.

[57] Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 334.

beloved disciple (v 20), there is an explicit allusion to reclining in love "at . . . supper."[58]

It seems to me that without any knowledge of the Lucan version of the miracle of the great catch this would be the most natural way to read John 21. The significance of the great catch in twenty-one is tied to the significance of the feeding in chapter six.

If, in fact, the miracle of the great catch in John 21 does not carry the same symbolic payload in John as it does in Luke, this opens the possibility that the tradition behind both narratives may not have already been tied to the fishers-of-men motif, and that a model audience might hear the use of the miracle in Luke 5:1-11 as a fresh and even surprising twist on a familiar story. Other differences in the narrative offer insights into the significance of the elements of the Lucan account.

Implications for Luke 5:1-11

In this section we will explore the ways in which the two narratives diverge and press these distinctions for meaning. We cannot be certain of the state of the tradition when it may have been encountered by the author or audiences of the Gospel of Luke, but by comparing the two stories we can at least explore where the Third Gospel may have diverged from tradition. Where the stories overlap we can be confident that these elements were part of the tradition. Where they diverge we may be seeing the modification of either or both authors. Since this cannot be known with certainty, we will explore the differences between the stories as we have received them.

One significant difference between the two stories is the position of Jesus relative to the catch. In John 21, Jesus stands on the shore at some distance from the disciples and

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[58] Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel of John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 579.

the catch must be brought to him. In Luke 5, Jesus is in the boat. This detail may be a necessary result of the immediate context. In Luke, Jesus has been preaching from the boat and so naturally remains in the boat for the catch. The situation is somewhat more complicated when it comes to the Fourth Gospel. While on the surface it may seem more natural for John's Jesus to be on the shore, there is nothing about the immediate context which demanded it. Jesus had already appeared to his disciples suddenly in a locked room (20:19). It would be no less natural for Jesus to appear suddenly on the boat. Jesus might also have walked out to them on the water (6:19). In fact, C. H. Dodd saw similarities between the two miracles and suggested that Jesus walking on the water in John bears the marks of a post-resurrection appearance.[59] Even if the narrative required a delay in recognizing Jesus, there no need for Jesus to remain at a distance; the risen Jesus had gone unrecognized in John (20:11-18) and in Luke (24:13-35). So, while the traditional story may have had Jesus in either location, the scales tip slightly in the direction of having Jesus directing the disciples from the shore. The presence of Jesus in the boat in Luke's version is important because of what it means for the boat as Church metaphor. The presence of Jesus in the boat ensures the success just as his presence in the Church is the key to the success of its mission.

In Luke 5:1-11, the near breaking of the nets, the signaling for the second boat, and the near sinking of both boats all serve to emphasize the scale of the catch. There is no count as there is in John, nor is there any description of the size. To indicate scale the narrative appeals to the audience's senses. Ancient rhetorical texts call this ἔκφρασις.

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[59] C. H. Dodd, "The Appearances of the Risen Christ: An Essay in Form-Criticism of the Gospels" in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), 27.

Theon describes it in this way: "Ecphrasis (*ekphrasis*) is descriptive language, bringing what is portrayed clearly before the sight" (Theon *Progymnasmata* 118, Kennedy 45). The description of the near breaking of the nets, the summoning of the second boat, and the near sinking of both vividly emphasize the scale of the catch. The question remains, however, whether these elements of the story serve to do more than just vivify the scale of the miracle.

If not merely to graphically illustrate the size of the catch, the summoning of the second boat may merely be an attempt to incorporate James and John into the narrative.[60] In Matthew and Mark, the call narrative is split into two incidents. In the first, Peter and Andrew are called (Mark 1:18-18; Matt 4:18-20), and in the second, James and John (Mark 1:19-20; Matt 4:21-22). In Luke, Andrew is absent completely,[61] and James and John are brought into the narrative near the end and play no significant role. They are included in the call as Peter's partners (κοινωνοὶ), presumably the same partners (μετόκοις) who were summoned to help bring in the catch.[62] This connection, however, is not made explicit, and the place that they occupy in the narrative gives the impression that they were simply tacked on as an afterthought. It may be understood as a failed

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[60] Nolland, *Luke*, 1.223.

[61] Perhaps it is best not to read too much into the absence of Andrew from the story. Most likely he is not introduced into the narrative to keep the emphasis on Simon Peter.

[62] Green notes that first "Luke uses the more technical term for a 'business partner,' but in verse 10 he employs a more general description, 'Those who share with Simon' This alteration may be deliberate, a way of hinting that these business partners are about to undergo a change of relationship" (Green, *Luke*, 234). Plummer suggests that the κοινωνοί may refer to those in Simon's boat while μέτοχοι refers to those in the other boat. (Plummer, *Luke*, 146). Such a distinction, however, strains the differences in vocabulary.

attempt to smoothly incorporate these characters into the story.[63] Their presence in the story would be a bit less jarring, perhaps, if they had been mentioned as the occupants of the second boat. We must chose, then, whether to read their late introduction into the narrative as the result of poor editing, or as significant to the meaning of the story. We cannot know what the author intended. Bad editing and poor prose are always possibilities with real authors. If we read the text with the aim of understanding what a competent audience able to realize the intention of the text (model audience) encounters in the narrative, then we cannot simply chalk it up to sloppy writing. Further, to dismiss the move as a literary blunder cannot possibly produce new insights into the meaning of the text. Therefore, we will press forward assuming that an audience could recognize some significance beyond poor prose to see what fruit might come of it.

There are at least two principles of ancient rhetoric that would suggest that the text may intend more by the late introduction of James and John. The first is the principle of narrative order and the second is the narrative virtue of conciseness.

Theon discusses the concept of properly ordered story telling first in his discussion of fable. In describing the proper *topoi* for refuting the fable he writes: "We shall argue on the basis of the order when complaining that what should have been said first in the fable is not stated in the first lines and what should be in the conclusion is elsewhere; and generally in regard to each part however we can, that it is not said in the appropriate order" (Theon, *Prog*. 77 [Kennedy]). His discussion of narrative builds on the previous discussion of fable and suggests a number of different sequences in which a narrative might be told (Theon, *Prog*. 86-87 [Kennedy]). What we can take generally

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[63] Bovon writes: "Luke takes up the sons of Zebedee as well as he can, but in a rather clumsy narrative fashion" (Bovon, *Luke*, 1.171).

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from this discussion is that elements of well-told stories should be thoughtfully arranged in appropriate sequence. Further, the text prepares the hearer for a narrative which is well ordered (1:3). To read with the model audience we will attempt to hear the text as it intends.

Further, according to the narrative virtue of conciseness, it would be inappropriate for Luke to include details that did not add to the rhetorical aims of the narrative. The virtue of conciseness was not a simple matter of being brief. Theon defines conciseness as "language signifying the most important of the facts, not adding what is not necessary nor omitting what is necessary to the subject and the style" (Theon, *Prog.* 83 [Kennedy]). Thus, conciseness demands economy of language. Theon criticizes writers who stack up synonymous adjectives or use unnecessarily lengthy euphemisms, but he urges caution "lest from desire for conciseness one fall into an idiosyncrasy or obscurity without realizing it" (Theon, *Prog.* 84 [Kennedy]). Good narrative has everything necessary and only what is necessary. What this means for our reading of Luke is that details matter, and when the narrative includes details they are not incidental. Therefore we should not expect Luke to include the reference to the second boat if it did not serve his rhetorical aims, nor should we pass lightly over the fact that Luke has delayed identifying the owners of the second boat until the end of the narrative.

The effect of leaving the occupants of the second boat anonymous, however, is to invite speculation as to the significance of the boat. Throughout the history of interpretation, readers have found significance in this second boat.

Ancient commentators tended to understand the two boats as representing the Jewish and gentile churches. Ephrem the Syrian seems to read the second boat as

symbolic of the gentile mission when he writes: "The two boats represent the circumcised

and the uncircumcised." Augustine also saw the two boats as representing the Jewish and

gentile churches. He writes: "Those two boats, though, stood for the two peoples, Jews

and gentiles, synagogue and church, those circumcised and those uncircumcised"

(Augustine Sermon 248.2 [ACCNT, 3:88]). Of the second ship, Bede writes:

> [T]he other ship is the Church of the Gentiles, which itself also (one ship not being sufficient) is filled with chosen fishes. For the Lord knows who are His, and with Him the number is sure. And when He finds not in Judaea so many believers as he knows are destined to eternal life, He seeks as it were another ship to received His fishes, and fills the hearts of the Gentiles also with grace of faith. (Bede, *Catena Aurea*, 176 [Newman])

Martin Luther reads the second boat in this way as well:

> This draught of fishes is so great that the one boat alone (hitherto representing the church of the Jewish people) is not able to draw it up or large enough to contain it. Those in the boat must beckon to their partners in the other to come and help them. This other boat is the assembly and Church of the Gentiles which has been established and spread by the Apostles. Thus were the two boats filled with one and the same draught of fishes, that is, with one and the same sort of preaching, and with a corresponding faith and confession.[64]

Others, however, see the other boat simply as other believers who would join in the

mission of the apostles. Cyril of Alexandria writes:

> But note that neither Simon nor his companions could draw the net to land. Speechless from fright and astonishment-for their wonder had made them mute— they beckoned to their partners, to those who shared their labors in fishing, to come and help them in securing their prey. For many have taken part with the holy apostles in their labors, and still do so, especially those who inquire into the meaning of what is written in the holy Gospels. Yet besides them there are also others: the pastors and teachers and rulers of the people, who are skilled in the doctrines of truth. (Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Luke, Homily 12* [ACCNT, 3:88])

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[64] Martin Luther, *Sermons of Martin Luther*, trans. John Nicholas Lenker et al; ed. John Nicholas Lenker (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 165.

For modern commentators, the boat is also sometimes seen as an indication of two factions in early Christianity. Hanz Conzelmann detects "a polemical note reflecting the rivalry of two groups, one evidently gathered round Peter (and the sons of Zebedee) and another round the relatives of the Lord."[65] Zillesen sees in the second boat the Pauline mission to the gentiles, which received its legitimacy only through Peter.[66] Bovon will also suggest, "That two boats are needed for this fishing expedition may have something to do, in Luke's presentation, with the twofold character of the Christian church as Jewish and Gentile." But he adds, "Luke does not draw any explicit allegorical parallels between the boats and the church."[67]

The breaking nets and sinking ships have been consistently seen by pre-modern interpreters as the perils the Church faced due to heresies and schisms. Bede, for example, writes:

> But the fact that the ships, when filled, begin to sink, i.e. become weighted low down in the water; (for they are not sank, but are in great danger,) the Apostle explains when he says, *In the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be lovers of their own selves, etc*. For the sinking of the ships is when men, by vicious habits, fall back into that world from which they have been elected by faith. (Bede *Catenae Aurea*, 177 [Newman])[68]

That the boats do not, in fact, sink is seen as a testimony to the endurance of the Church in spite of these challenges. Modern commentators have tended to find less symbolism in

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[65] Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, 43.

[66] Pfarrer Klasus Zillessen, "Das Schiff des Petrus und die Gefährten vom andern Schiff zur Exegese von Luc 5:1-11," *ZNW* 57 (1966): 137-39.

[67] Bovon, *Luke*, 1.171-72.

[68] See also Augustine's reading outlined above.

the breaking nets and sinking ships, even where they attach some significance to the second boat.

The description of the near breaking of nets and near sinking of ships serves to illustrate the magnitude of the catch. If these details are meant to foreshadow some difficulty in the Church, we might expect some others clues in the narrative that pointed to such a warning. Since the thrust of the narrative points to overwhelming success rather than to impending trouble, it seems more prudent to see in these details an *ekphrastic* description of a catch that was so overwhelming as to cause Simon Peter to see Jesus in an entirely new light.

The second boat, however, is more difficult to dismiss as an addition to add color to the story. Not only does the boat appear when it is time to bring in the great catch, but there are two boats on the shore at the beginning of the pericope. It may be that commentators are correct in suggesting that the second boat represents the gentile mission. A number of aspects of the story fit well when we try on this way of reading. Jesus's presence in and teaching from Simon's boat fit nicely. The second boat is summoned only after the great catch has begun and its occupants build on the work of the first boat. To identify the boat specifically with the gentile mission or the ministry of Paul, however, may be reading the plot of Acts too much into the gospel. The second boat might also represent the next generation of the Church generally. In this way, the model audience is invited to see themselves as the crew of the second boat. Peter's signal is a signal to the audience to come and participate in bringing in the catch.

There is good evidence to suggest that a common tradition lies behind the two miracles of a great catch of fish narrated in Luke 5 and John 21. Although the traditions

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may have diverged before, they were incorporated into the gospels, there are enough similarities in the accounts to suggest that a traditional story in which Jesus leads his disciples to a great catch of fish was available and possibly been known by a model audience of Luke. The differences between the stories can help to identify special points of emphasis in Luke's account.

In John 21, the miracle points to provision and paves the way for Peter's commission to provide and care for the sheep at the end of the chapter. In Luke, the miracle represents the mission of the Church and Peter's commission to continue that effort. In both stories, one aspect of Jesus's ministry is emphasized and Peter is called upon to lead the Church in continuing that ministry.

In John 21, the nets are unbroken, while in Luke 5 the nets are at the point of breaking. The difference is sometimes overemphasized since the nets do not in fact break in Luke. While there may be some symbolism in the breaking nets—perhaps an indication of the struggles of the Church—there is nothing in the context of the gospel that would support this reading. Rather, the straining nets serve to illustrate the size of the catch, helping the audience to experience the miracle in as vivid a way as possible. In John 21, there is only one boat, while in Luke 5 there are two. It is difficult to say whether the second boat is a Lucan addition or whether it was added in his source. The second boat may have simply served to more closely match Mark's account of the calling. It is also possible that the two boats represent the Jewish and gentile churches. This is not entirely inconsistent with the gospel and even more so if we allow Acts to be considered. I have argued however, that the second boat may serve as an entry point for the audience to respond to Peter's signal and participate in bringing in the catch.

In the end we are hard pressed to confidently reconstruct the source which is behind either story, but a consideration of the meaning of the miracle in John and the function of the various elements points us to a better understanding of the miracle in Luke.

Conclusion

Gaining a better understanding of the traditions which shape both the story of Luke 5:1-11 and the model audience's reception of the story enables us to become a better audience ourselves. Recognizing the symbolism of the boat in our passage only tells part of the story. When we recognize that the same symbol is already at work in the tradition, we become aware of the ways in which the text builds on and even subverts the meaning of the symbol. The symbolism of the boat has been enriched as we have tuned-in to the subtle shift in meaning. As in Matthew and Mark, Luke's boat serves as a symbol for the Church. The image of the Church in Luke, however, is not an island set apart from those on the outside, but rather the intended destination of those who are pulled from the depths. The miracle of the catch shifts the emphasis of the story and focuses the Church outward. The story of the miracle, which the model audience knows in some form, is itself enriched as it is woven together with the story of Jesus's preaching from the deck. If the story was not already associated with the metaphor of people-fishing, Luke's Gospel makes that connection explicit when brought together with call narrative.

Again, this demonstrates what is accomplished by the expansion of the *chreia* into a more complete narrative. This elaboration, which is accomplished through the integration of various traditional elements, results in a story that says more than any of its component parts could say alone. They function in a manner that is mutually

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interpretive, and the meaning of the metaphors is clarified and enriched. Thus, the composite nature of the narrative is more than a problem for critical scholarship to unravel. When we listen to the text with the traditional elements as inter-texts rather than raw material, we hear more than we might hear in a simply redaction- or narrative-critical reading. By bringing these traditions together the text imports meanings which are built upon and transformed for the model audience.

CHAPTER SIX

Reading Luke 5:1-11

Introduction

The previous chapters have focused primarily on material outside of the Gospel of

Luke. In this final section before concluding we will focus on the text itself and its

relationship to the rest of the gospel—especially to the first four chapters which prepare

the model audience to hear our pericope. Thus this section will be more narrative critical

in its approach and will analyze the text in terms of its setting, characters, and plot.

Setting

The Gospel of Luke places the call of Peter, James, and John beside and upon the

Lake of Genesserat. This body of water is always referred to in Matthew and Mark as the

Sea of Galilee and in John generally as the Sea of Tiberias.[1] The term "Sea of Galilee"

has not survived in documents outside the New Testament which predate the gospels.[2]

Commentators generally suggest that the shift from "Sea of Galilee" to "Lake of

Genesserat" reflects Luke's preference for a term that more accurately describes the body

of water.[3] Luke consistently refers to this body of water as a lake, rather than a sea, but

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[1] In John 6:1 the sea is called both the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberius.

[2] David Garland, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 225.

[3] Bovon is typical "Luke knows enough to differentiate between a lake and a sea" (*Luke*, 1.168).

the designation "Lake of Genesserat" is found only here in Luke.[4] The geographic setting

of 5:1 must also be related to the setting of 4:44 in which Jesus is said to be preaching in

the synagogues of Judea. This closing to chapter four is a variant of the tradition found in

Mark 1:39 in which Jesus's preaching (and exorcism) was located in the synagogues of

Galilee. While some have suggested that the reference to the synagogues of Judea in

Luke 4:44 indicates a rough spot in the narrative,[5] others have suggested that the end of

chapter four represents a turning point in which the ministry of Jesus expands beyond

Galilee, though Galilee is included.[6] In any case, Luke 5:1 is something of a surprise after

4:44. Jesus is still in the region of Galilee and he is preaching outside rather than in the

synagogues. While a setting of the Lake of Genesserat still places Jesus in the region of

Galilee, using this term for the body of water rather than Mark's "Sea of Galilee" does

allow for the possibility of seeing a greater break from the ministry in Galilee which is

mentioned before.[7] The model audience would certainly notice the shift in description.[8]

For the audience, the shift marks the beginning of a new period of the ministry of Jesus,

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[4] Luke refers to a 'Lake' λίμνη again in chapter five and three times in chapter eight.

[5] Fitzmyer writes "This is again part of Lucan inconsistency. Does he want the reader to conclude that Jesus has left Galilee or not?" (*Luke*, 558).

[6] Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 256-58; Luke refers to all of Jewish Palestine by the term Judea (1:5, 6:17, 7:17, 23:5); See Nolland, *Luke*, 1.216; Bovon, *Luke*, 1.164.

[7] Marshall asked "Has Luke avoided the term 'Galilee' here in view of his earlier alteration in 4:44?" (Marshal, *Luke*, 201).

[8] Evidence that "Sea of Galilee" was a part of the Jesus tradition apart from Mark (and Matthew) comes from the use of the term by the Fourth Gospel. In John 6:1 the term appears with a gloss indicating that the Sea of Galilee is the same as the Sea of Tiberius. That the ministry of Jesus was associated with this body of water, known specifically by this name is evidenced by John's use of the phrase (which he seems to feel a need to clarify).

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and though Jesus's journey to Jerusalem does not begin in earnest until 9:51, the Gospel

is already asking the audience to widen its view of the ministry of Jesus beyond the limits

of Galilee.

Another element of the setting is Peter's boat. The boat functions as both a

podium for Jesus's teaching and the vessel for the miracle of the great catch of fish. In

chapter five, I argued that the boat functions as a metaphor for the Church in Luke 5:1-

11, as well as in Matthew 13:1-2 and Mark 4:1. Outside of Luke 5, however the setting of

Jesus preaching from the boat presented an image of the Church which emphasized its

being set apart from the world. The water between the crowd on the shore and Jesus and

his disciples in the boat represented a gulf between those insiders who were privy to

Jesus's private teaching and those outsiders who though hearing did not understand.

Luke has taken this same setting but has shifted the emphasis through the inclusion of the

miracle. The same boat from which Jesus preaches becomes the destination for the

multitude of fishes brought into the boat. When the symbolism of the boat as the Church

is combined with the symbolism of the fish as those who respond to the message of the

Word of God, the emphasis is no longer separation from the crowds, but rather bringing

the crowds in. The focus shifts outward from the boat to the gathered crowds.

Characters

The Crowd

Luke 5 begins with the crowd. After the typically Lucan "Ἐγένετο δὲ," the scene

for our pericope is set in relation to the crowds. "As the crowds were pressing upon him

and listening to the word of God, he was standing by Lake Gennesaret" (5:1). In a sense,

the crowds function more as setting than as character. Mark Allan Powell remarks that

"the crowds in our Gospel narratives should be treated as characters when they are represented as espousing a particular point of view."[9] It would be difficult to attach a point of view to the crowd in our pericope, but they do act; they press on Jesus and listen to the Word of God. I will include the crowd as a character in the narrative because the crowd is a recurring character in the Gospel of Luke, and this passage plays a role in defining the relationship of the crowd to Jesus and his disciples. While not in the foreground, the crowd is not merely set dressing.[10] This reference to the crowd is the fourth occurrence of some form of the word ὄχλος in the Gospel of Luke.[11] The first two uses of the term are applied to the crowds gathered to hear John the Baptist. Although John refers to the gathered crowds as a "brood of vipers" (3:7), the crowd does respond to the message of repentance and even asks what they should do to act on his preaching (3:10). We are not told whether the gathered crowds who came to hear John followed the specific instructions that are given in chapter three, but on the whole the response is positive. They have come to be baptized and are attending to his preaching. The third use of ὄχλος occurs just before our pericope, in 4:42. Here, the crowds have sought for and have found Jesus who had attempted to separate himself from them. They attempt to keep

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[9] Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 70.

[10] Contra Meyer, "In the Gospels it [ὄκλος] denotes for the most part the anonymous background to Jesus' ministry" *TDNT* 5.585.

[11] There are other words which the author of Luke uses in the opening chapters to describe gathered crowds. The word πλῆθος was used to describe those who were gathered outside while Zachariah was offering incense (1:10). And the same group was described with the term λαος as they waited for Zachariah to emerge (1:21). The word λαος was also used to describe the crowds gathered to hear John the Baptist (3:15,18).

Jesus for themselves, but Jesus tells them that he must take his message to other cities.[12]

David Garland is probably correct in his assessment of this crowd.

> This desire [to detain Jesus] would seem to be positive compared with the violent reaction in Nazareth. The people of Nazareth tried to destroy their own prophet who would not favor them above all others; the people of Capernaum now try to keep him (κατεῖχον, a conative imperfect) for their own. But the motivation behind these actions is similar. They both want a miracle man to serve their selfish ends.[13]

This assessment is reinforced in the narrative by Jesus's pronouncement of woe on Capernaum in 10:13-15. Whatever their motive for trying to keep Jesus with them, their presence is an indication of the success of Jesus's ministry. As Jesus's whirlwind tour of preaching and deliverance comes to a close, we are reminded once more of his enormous success. If the miracle of the great catch serves as a guarantee of similar success for the ministry of the disciples, this passage would indicate that this success is not without its downside. The introduction of the crowd in 5:1 points backward to the crowd that pursued Jesus at the end of chapter four. There is also an element of the Nazareth mob in this passage. In Nazareth Jesus had to escape from the edge of the cliff, and here in chapter five, Jesus must escape from the edge of the lake. The motive of the crowd in chapter five is that they want to be with Jesus and to hear his words. The infinitive ἀκούειν in verse one is often translated as an indication of purpose (e.g. the NRS "the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God"). Grammatically, ἀκούειν is not

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[12] In the following verse we are told that Jesus continued to preach in the synagogues of Judea. This statement from Jesus points forward to the travel narrative in which Jesus is always moving toward Jerusalem. In the immediate context this makes it something of a surprise that Jesus is again in Galilee as chapter five opens.

[13] Garland, *Luke*, 217-18.

an infinitive of purpose, but functions with ἐν τῷ to indicate contemporaneous time.[14]

Thus a more literal translation would be "as the crowds were pressing on him and listening to the word of God . . ." While this may be the case grammatically, logically hearing the Word of God provides the reason for the crowds pressing presence.[15] In the Gospel of Luke, coming to Jesus and hearing his words is commendable, but it is only part of what is required. Three times in the Gospel of Luke hearing the message of Jesus is the first of a two part response. In chapter six, those who build on a foundation of stone are "Πᾶς ὁ ἐρχόμενος πρός με καὶ ἀλούων μου τὸν λόγων καὶ ποιῶν αὐτου" (6:47). In chapter eight, Jesus's true mother and brothers are "οἱ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀκούοντες καὶ ποιοῦντες" (8:21). And in chapter eleven, those who are blessed are "οἱ ἀκούοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ φυλάσσοντες" (11:28). In this way the crowds are presented as potential but not actual disciples. They have come to Jesus and are listening to his words; whether or not they will act upon them remains to be seen. It is worth noting, however, that the response of the crowds to the message is not mentioned in this passage. All that we are told explicitly about the crowds is that they are pressing and listening (5:1) and that Jesus teaches them (5:3). From verse four forward, the crowd disappears from the narrative. This is important in the passage for two reasons. First, the narrative draws a fairly straight line between the teaching of Jesus and the catching of the fish, a description of the response of the people would create distance which might diminish this connection. Second, the absence of the crowd in the second half of the passage allows the

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[14] Culy, Parsons, and Stigall, *Luke*, 154.

[15] Perhaps this is why scribes often substituted τοῦ ἀκούειν for καὶ ακούειν, matching the grammar to the logic. For this scribal error see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 1:565.

catch of fish to stand in place of the crowds. As Jesus's teaching is to casting the nets, so

the crowds gathered to hear the message are to the multitude of fish. In fact, Luke's

description of the catch as a multitude (πλῆθος) further connects the fish to the crowd as

the gospel frequently uses this term to describe crowds.[16] It looks forward to the great

multitude of disciples who will gather to hear Jesus in 6:17 and, if we allow a look

forward into Acts, the multitude who will gather to hear Peter in Acts 2:6. The crowd, as

a character in our story, can disappear because the function of the narrative is not to

describe a particular incident of Jesus preaching or of a particular crowd responding.

Rather, the narrative describes the response to the gospel message as a whole, beginning

in the ministry of Jesus and continuing with the ministry of the disciples. The response of

those gathered at the lake is not the focus, rather the focus is on the guaranteed

overwhelming response to the Word of God that the disciples, and Peter in particular,

could expect to respond to their proclamation.

Jesus

The second character in order of appearance in our pericope is Jesus. In addition

to what Luke's model audience already knows about Jesus from acquaintance with the

tradition, there is a great deal that has been revealed about him in the first four chapters of

the gospel. Gabriel's announcement to Mary concerning the son she would bear has

already presented Jesus in royal terms as the "Son of the Most High" to whom the Lord

would give "the throne of his father David" and who would rule over the house Jacob in

an endless kingdom (1:32-33). And in chapter two the angels announce to the shepherds

that Jesus would be a savior and the Christ (2:11). The struggle that would accompany

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[16] 1:10, 6:17, 8:37, 19:37, 23:1, 27.

Jesus's ministry was foreshadowed in the prophesy of Simeon who said: "This child is

destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be

opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce

your own soul too" (2:34-35 NRS). The narration of his prodigious knowledge of the

Scriptures as a youth in the Temple (2:40-52) is also presented as evidence for his

greatness. In chapter three, John says of the coming Christ that he is worthy of

significantly more honor and was in possession of a greater power. This has the effect of

taking all that had been said about John in chapter one and the description of the success

of his ministry in chapter three and ascribes that honor to Jesus. If John is great, and we

have seen that he is, Jesus is even greater. And the genealogy at the end of chapter three

shows Jesus's royal heritage and connects him to significant characters in Israel's history.

Perhaps most significantly, however, Jesus's actions at the beginning of his

ministry have developed the character of Jesus for the model audience. The nature of

ministry is most clearly defined in his reading in the Nazareth synagogue and is

demonstrated in the ministry which follows in chapter four.

Jesus's reading from Isaiah is programmatic for the gospel as a whole and

establishes the lines along which Luke develops its distinct picture of the ministry of

Jesus. Jesus begins his reading in 4:18 with the declaration, "The Spirit of the Lord is

upon me." Earlier, in chapter three, we were told that the Holy Spirit had descended upon

Jesus at his baptism, and this is certainly brought to the mind of the model audience as

well as the fact that Jesus was said to have returned to Galilee "filled with the power of

the Spirit" (4:14 NRS). Jesus's reading in verse 18 emphasizes the good news to the poor,

and the deliverance from oppression. This will point forward to Jesus's ministry in the

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chapters which follow, but it also points back to the prophetic speeches given earlier in the gospel. In the infancy narrative, the angel tells Zachariah that John the Baptist will be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth (1:15), Gabriel tells Mary that the Holy Spirit would come upon her (1:35), Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit when she hears the greeting of Mary (1:41), Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit (1:67), and, finally, it is said of Simeon that the Holy Spirit rested upon him (2:25). All of these characters have an opportunity for prophetic expression. Elizabeth's declaration that Mary was the mother of her Lord is presented as a prophetic outburst in response to the coming of Mary and having been filled with the Holy Spirit. Mary's response which follows immediately after also has the character of prophetic speech and the theme of reversal is a message of good news to the poor. Zachariah's speech is clearly presented as prophetic utterance as the speech is introduced with "Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy" (1:67 NRS). The clear indication that we are to understand this speech as prophetic utterance helps to underscore that the speech of the other characters can be heard in the same way. The theme of Zechariah's speech is deliverance and salvation from oppression and from sin.

Simeon's speech is also presented as inspired speech. He came to the Temple under the guidance of the Spirit and prophesied of the salvation and division that would come through Jesus. Finally, all of John's message in chapter three can be understood as Spirit-inspired speech from the one who was said to have been filled with the Spirit from birth. When Jesus reads from Isaiah that the Spirit of the Lord is upon him and that the purpose of this Spirit anointing was the proclamation of the good news to the poor and of deliverance for the oppressed—themes which echo the prophecies of Mary and

Zachariah—the model audience draws lines between the Spirit-enabled speech of Jesus and that of other characters who have already prophesied. This is not to lower Jesus to the level of Zachariah or Simeon. The special role that Jesus will play has been made clear in the narrative and will be further emphasized in our pericope. That Jesus's ministry of proclamation and deliverance should be understood as the result of Spirit empowerment (which has already been at work in other characters) is important for the reading of Luke 5:1-11. The crowds gathering in chapter five are said to be listening to τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ (v. 1). The genitive here is best read as a genitive of source.[17] In other words, the message which Jesus is preaching is the message from God. The specific contents are not given, because again the message of the story is not what Jesus preached to a particular crowd on a particular day, but rather the nature of Jesus's preaching generally and the nature of the ministry to which Jesus was calling Peter and the others. The first four chapters of Luke prepare the model audience to understand Jesus's preaching in 5:1, 3 as Spirit-inspired speech. These chapters have also prepared the audience to understand that this kind of ministry is not limited to Jesus. Others have already spoken words from God through the Holy Spirit, and the audience is prepared to believe that Peter can also follow Jesus in continuing the ministry of the proclamation of freedom and salvation.

Our pericope further elevates the character of Jesus through the use of the commissioning scene, which is discussed below in connection with the development of the character of Peter. In the course of this scene Peter refers to Jesus with the vocative κύριε (5:8). While interpreters often read Luke's use of κύριος as ascribed to Jesus as

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[17] Bock, *Luke*, 453.

little more than 'sir,'[18] the first four chapters of Luke have pointed beyond this mere polite title. The audience has already encountered this title ascribed to Jesus in Elizabeth's greeting to Mary (1:43)[19] and the angel's announcement to the shepherds (2:11), it is also used of Jesus by the narrator. Twice, in reference to John the Baptist, κύριος is used in such as way that the meaning could be either Jesus or the God of Israel or possibly both (1:17, 3:4). Κύριος is used 26 times in the first four chapters where it is a clear reference to the God of Israel.[20] Using this title for Jesus in the same context cannot but elevate the character of Jesus. Whether the use of κύριε in 5:8 goes as far as to ascribe full divinity to Jesus is a matter of debate. John Nolland reads it this way, he writes "Κύριε is here probably not Luke's usual 'Sir,' but the 'supreme Lord' of 1:43 and 2:11—and of Luke's own narrational designation of Jesus as Lord."[21] Others are not willing to go as far. Joel Green, for example, does not find a full recognition of deity in Peter's response but allows that it "encourages the view that Peter recognizes in Jesus the agency of God."[22] Likewise, Darrell Bock finds the ascription of full-deity by Peter

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[18] For example Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1951) 1.55; Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963, 232 G. D. Kilpatrick, "ΚΥΡΙΟΣ in the Gospels," in *The Principles and Practices of New Testament Textual Criticism* (ed. J.K. Elliott; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990). For a fuller discussion of this phenomena see Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 85-89.

[19] Kavin Rowe notes: "In this crucial moment of Jesus' introduction, Elizabeth's confession effects a duality in the referent of the word κύριος between the as yet unborn and human κύριος of Mary's womb and the κύριος of heaven, who has taken away Elizabeth's shame" (*Early Narrative Christology*, 40).

[20] 1:11,15,16,25,28,32,38,45,46,58,66,68; 2:9,15,22,23,24,26,39; 4:8,12,18,19; these include references to the law of the Lord, and the Angel of the Lord.

[21] Nolland, *Luke*, 1.222.

[22] Green, *Luke*, 233.

"unlikely at this point in Peter's understanding."[23] Bock's comment points to a

fundamental question that must be addressed in understanding the significance of κύριε

in 5:8. The comment relates to the understanding of Peter at this point in the narrative.

But this only addresses the question from one point of view. If we ask whether the

character of Peter is convinced of the divinity of Christ in this passage, then we could

point to Luke 9:20 where Peter's declaration that Jesus is God's Christ seems to be a

development in his understanding. But if we ask what the model audience would hear in

Peter's use of κύριε, the problem is more complex. In the first three chapters, the way that

the title has been ascribed to Jesus intermingled with references to God, it would seem

that the audience is prepared to hear the statement as an attribution of divinity to Jesus,

even if not in the later Nicene sense. Joseph Fitzmyer is probably correct in his

assessment when he writes:

> In using *kyrios* of both Yahweh and Jesus in his writings Luke continues the sense
> of the title already being used in the early Christian community, which in some
> sense regarded Jesus as on the level of Yahweh. This is not yet to be regarded as
> an expression of divinity, but it speaks at least of his otherness, his transcendent
> character. . . . The use of the title *kyrios* for Jesus in the Lucan writings, then,
> expresses the influence of the risen Christ on his followers. In retrojecting the title
> born of the resurrection back into earlier parts of his story, Luke surrounds the
> character of Jesus with an aura more characteristic of the third phase of his
> existence. This again is a form of Lucan foreshadowing.[24]

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[23] Bock, *Luke*, 459.

[24] Joseph Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 201. In addressing Peter's use of the term in 5:8,
Fitzmyer notes: "Here it is found in the Greek text in an unemphatic final position, a form
of polite address" (568). My response to this reading would be the same as above. If the
passage is read from the perspective of Peter at this point in the narrative, that may be an
accurate assessment. The model audience, however, is well prepared by this time in the
narrative to hear more than "sir."

This foreshadowing is easily received by a model audience who has already accepted the concept of Jesus as Risen Lord. When Peter refers to Jesus as "Lord," the audience hears more than Peter says.

The final way that the text of Luke 5:1-11 fills out the character of Jesus is through the demonstration of his power through the miraculous catch of fish. Luke vividly describes bringing the catch into the boat, but the precise nature of the miracle is never made explicit. Scholars vary widely in their description of what takes place in this story. Craig Blomberg represents the most minimal understanding of the miracle. He suggests that "strictly speaking, nothing transcends the natural course of events here, except for Jesus's timing and insight."[25] It is hard to explain Simon Peter's reaction to the catch if it is merely a matter of Jesus's good timing. Something akin to the multiplication of loaves could be at work, and Jesus has miraculously increased the size of the catch as the disciples draw in the nets. Some scholars, however, are hesitant to ascribe creative power to Jesus in this episode. Alfred Plummer argues that it is not a miracle of creation based on the fact that "[i]n no miracle before the Resurrection does Jesus create."[26] There is certainly no reason within the text to suggest that Jesus created the fish in the net, but then again no reason to exclude it outright. Some have suggested that the miracle is a miracle of knowledge, in which Jesus simply has supernatural knowledge of where the fish would be.[27] Others have suggested that in the miracle Jesus is exercising control over

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[25] Craig L. Blomberg, "The Miracles as Parables," in *The Miracles of Jesus* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 345.

[26] Alfred Plummer, *Luke,* 143-44. See also S. O. Abogunrin, "The Three Variant Accounts of Peter's Call: A Critical and Theological Examination of the Texts," *NTS* 31 (1985): 591.

[27] Darrell Bock, *Luke,* 1.457; Abogunrin, "The Three Variant Accounts," 592.

nature and directing the fish into the nets. At minimum, we can embrace Fitzmyer's

cautious description: "The huge catch of fish is obviously meant as something

extraordinary, manifesting Jesus's power in preparation for the promise to be made to

Simon."[28] Ultimately Simon Peter's response of awe and reverence for Jesus to the

miracle is the response that the narrative seeks to evoke.

Simon Peter

The importance that Peter is given in Luke's version of the call is greater than in

any other gospel. Throughout the narrative, Peter (also called Simon or Simon Peter)

remains at the center. When Jesus sees the boat on the shore, it is Simon's boat which he

chooses. Simon is asked to push out from the shore, and after the preaching, Simon is

asked to go out into the deep.[29] Most importantly, Jesus's commission to become a fisher

of people is addressed to Simon in the singular. In this section we will consider the

portrait that the story is painting of Simon Peter and its significance for the model

audience.

One of the most important ways that the Gospel of Luke develops the character of

Peter is through allusion to other commissioning stories. Benjamin Hubbard's category of

commissioning story was introduced in chapter five as part of a discussion on the original

setting of the fishing miracle in the tradition. We return to this category now in order to

better understand what this scene says about the commissioning of Peter in Luke. In the

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[28] Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 567.

[29] Jesus's instructions in verse four are directed to Simon, the verb ἐπανάγαγε (push out) is singular, though the second verb χαλάσατε is plural. This reflects the fact that the net required more than one person to manage it more than an indication of a change in the focus to include the others.

first publication of Hubbard's work on the commissioning scene in Luke and Acts, Luke

5:1-11 is absent from his list of examples of the form in Luke and Acts.[30] It is only in a

later essay that he includes our pericope.[31] In this essay, Hubbard remarks:

> The chart [of occurrences of the commissioning scene] also makes clear the
> frequent use of the commissioning form in the Lukan infancy gospel (three times)
> the resurrection account (twice) and at strategic points throughout Acts. It
> appears that divine interventions in the form of commissions were needed both
> before and after Jesus's earthly ministry. The only exception is Lk. 5:1-11, a
> pericope without parallel in Mark and Matthew which corresponds in some
> respects to Jn. 21:1-11, the post-Easter apostolic commission of Peter.[32]

It may be that he is explaining the presence of the commissioning scene in Luke 5 by

suggesting that it goes back to a source which had a post-resurrection setting; Hubbard is

not clear on this point. Below, I will suggest other reasons for relating the commission of

Peter to those in the infancy narrative. Other than this comment, Hubbard does not

remark on the omission of our pericope from the *Semeia* article. He does, however, refer

to the work of Terence Mullins who independently published an article on the use of the

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[30] Benjamin Hubbard, "Commissioning Stories in Luke-Acts: A Study of their Antecedents, Form and Content," *Semeia* 8 (1977): 103-26. Hubbard lists the following examples from Luke-Acts in the *Semeia* article: The Announcement of John the Baptist's Birth (Luke 1:5-25), The Annunciation to Mary (1:26-38), The Angelophany to the Shepherds (2:8-20), The Christophany to the Disciples (Luke 24:36-53), The Angelophany to the Apostles (Acts 5:17-21), The First Account of Paul's Commission (Acts 9:1-9), Cornelius' Angelophany 10:1-8), Peter's Vision 10:9-23), Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia (16:9-10), A Christophany to Paul (18:9-11), Paul's Temple Christophany (22:17-21), The Third Account of Paul's Commission (26:12-20), Paul's Angelophany during the Voyage to Malta (27:21-26). Hubbard introduced the category of commissioning in *The Matthean redaction of a primitive apostolic commissioning: an exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20* (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974).

[31] Benjamin Hubbard, "The Role of Commissioning," 287-298.

[32] Hubbard, "Role," 189, 91.

scene in Luke and Acts.[33] Mullins's list includes Luke 5:1-11 and five other passages

from Luke which were not included in Hubbard's *Semeia* list. The commissioning of

Peter is the only example from Mullins's list that Hubbard adds to his own.[34] Mullins's

contribution is not only that he included Luke 5:1-11 but also that he divided the passage

into Hubbard's categories in a different way that Hubbard does in the later article.

Hubbard divided Luke 5:1-11 into the categories of the commissioning type scene in this

way: *introduction* – 1-2, *confrontation* – 3, *reaction* – 8-10a, *commission* – 4,10c, *protest*

– 5, *reassurance* – 10b, *conclusion* – 11.[35] This has Peter's commission including both

Jesus's instruction to cast the nets into deeper water (5:4) and the commission to fish for

people (5:10). Mullins includes the request to cast the nets as a part of the confrontation

and the commission is limited to 5:10. *Introduction* – 1-2, *confrontation* – 3-4, *reaction* –

5-7, *commission* – 10c, *protest* – 8-10a, *reassurance* – 10b, *conclusion* – 11.[36] I prefer

Mullins's breakdown; verse four can hardly be included in the commission proper.[37] This

breakdown is helpful for establishing that our pericope, in fact, is modeled after the Old

Testament commissioning scene. Joel Green suggests a simpler breakdown modeled after

the call of Isaiah in Isaiah 6:1-10. Green's categories are *epiphany* (Luke 5:4-7 [9-10a]

and Isaiah 6:1-4), *reaction* (Luke 5:8 and Isaiah 6:5), *reassurance* (Luke 5:10b and Isaiah

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[33] Terence Mullins, "New Testament Commission Forms, Especially in Luke-Acts," *JBL* 4 (1976): 603-614.

[34] For Hubbard's rationale for the rejecting these passages as authentic examples of the form, see Hubbard, "Role," 191.

[35] Hubbard, "Role," 190.

[36] Mullins, "Commission Forms," 605.

[37] Although Charles Talbert includes only verse four under this heading (*Reading Luke*, 61).

6:7), and *commission* (Luke 5:10b and Isaiah 6:8-10).[38] Green's analysis has the

advantage of simplicity and shows more clearly the affinity with the call narrative. I

would propose an alternate way of describing these parts which is something of a hybrid

between Hubbard and Green's categories (table 6.1).

This comparison allows us to understand the function of the miracle in the story.

The great catch of fish is the revelation of Jesus's divine power to Peter and the others. It

inspires the same kind of response in Peter that the vision of the throne room had evoked

in Isaiah. It is through this miracle that Peter recognizes who Jesus is. In this way it is

similar to the commissioning of Gideon who did not recognize the Angel of the Lord

until after having had confirmation by signs. Because of the signs Gideon exclaimed:

"Help me Lord God! For I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face" (Judges 6:22

NRS). Not only does the story echo commissioning scenes from the Old Testament, but

within the Gospel of Luke the model audience has already encountered three examples—

the commissioning of Zechariah in 1:5-25; of Mary in 1:26-38; and of the shepherds in

2:8-20. The first two accounts are in close parallel. Both include not only news of a

miraculous birth, but a description of the significance of the one who will be born.

Although the text presents the two responses to the message somewhat differently, it is

made clear to both what will happen and why it will matter. This is consistent with

announcements of miraculous births in the Old Testament. The births of Isaac, Samson,

and Samuel were all presented in a similar way. The importance of the life of the hero

was made clear in the announcement of his birth. In the context of the Gospel of Luke,

however, this sets a precedent for a rather complete revelation accompanying the

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[38] Green, *Luke*, 233.

Table 6.1 – Luke 5:1-11 as a Commissioning Scene

Luke 5 (NRS)	Isaiah 6 (NRS)
epiphany (4-7)	*epiphany* (1-4)
[4] When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." [5] Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." [6] When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. [7] So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.	[1] In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. [2] Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. [3] And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." [4] The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.
reaction (8-10a)[39]	*reaction* (5)
[8] But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" [9] For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; [10] and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.	[5] And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"
reassurance (10b)	*reassurance* (6-7)
Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid;	[6] Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. [7] The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out."
commission (10c)	*commission* (8)
from now on you will be catching people."	[8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"
response (11)	*response* (8b)
[11] When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.	And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

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[39] I have included verses 9-10a as part of the reaction to the epiphany rather than the epiphany proper.

commission. The third example, while not as close a parallel as the first two, nevertheless follows the commissioning pattern. The message that the angel brings is not as complete as what we find in Gabriel's message to Mary, but at this point in the narrative such a description is perhaps unnecessary. It is sufficient to say that the Messiah has been born in the city of David. We are also told that his birth is "good news of great joy for all people" (2:10).

In these three stories we can also find three responses to the commission and the accompanying sign.[40] In the case of Zechariah, he responds to the message precisely as had Abram, with a measure of incredulity and a request for a sign. Abram was shown the stars as a sign, but Zechariah was struck mute. Mary also responded with an objection to the message. It is clear from the narrative that the audience is to understand the objection of Mary as less objectionable than that of Zechariah. Perhaps we are to understand Mary's question as a request for clarification rather than an expression of doubt.[41] Her response is so typical of the commissioning type scene, however, that it is difficult to hear her response as something other than objection. Nevertheless, Mary's response to the explanation in verse 38 marks her out as a model hearer of the gospel.[42] But like Zechariah, Mary is given a sign as confirmation of the message: her relative Elizabeth has conceived in her old age.

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[40] Hubbard's work on the commissioning scene is certainly the better known, but in his work he is dependent upon the earlier work of Norman Habel. Habel's final category was the sign which he locates in a number of Old Testament call narratives. Norman C. Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *ZAW* 77 (1965): 297-323.

[41] Richard B. Vinson, *Luke* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2008), 38.

[42] Vinson, *Luke*, 39.

For the shepherds the commission and the sign are so closely connected as to be almost indistinguishable. The announcement of good news is followed by the description of the accompanying sign. The shepherds will find the child wrapped in cloths in a manger; this is both the sign and the mission. The shepherds respond without objection and go quickly to find the child. After finding the child they spread the news to others, becoming the first to bring the gospel message of the birth of Jesus. In each case the commission comes in the indicative case, and the response to the commission is framed in terms of faith. Zechariah was sanctioned because he had failed to believe Gabriel's message, and Mary is marked out as a person of faith in the speech of Elizabeth who exclaims "blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord" (Luke 1:45). The shepherds' quick response demonstrated their confidence in the angel's message.

Another element of these three commissioning scenes is that the immediate task to which the message refers is fulfilled in short order. By the end of chapter two, Elizabeth and Mary have given birth and the shepherds have found the promised child. The full implications of those events as described in the angel's message have not yet been fulfilled, but the portion in which the recipients of the message would play a direct role had been realized.

When the audience comes to Luke 5, the presence of the commissioning form is significant because it not only calls to mind the Old Testament examples, but it creates an expectation in the audience that the commissioning of Peter will unfold in a manner similar to earlier examples. In the first three instances, the commissioning is accompanied by the promise of a sign. In Luke 5:1-11, there is no promised sign. The miracle of the

great catch of fish fills this role. As muteness was a sign to Zechariah, and Elizabeth's

pregnancy was a sign to Mary, the miraculous catch of fish was a sign for Peter which

guaranteed that what was prophesied would be fulfilled. What is striking about the

commissioning of Peter as it relates to examples from the infancy narrative is that while

we do see Peter follow Jesus, we do not find him fulfilling the role of fishing for people

in this passage. In previous examples the commission in the form of prophecy had been

both made and fulfilled. In the case of Peter, the fulfillment is lacking. This in spite of the

fact that Jesus said the disciples would be thus engaged "from now on" (5:10). While it

could be argued that their participation with Jesus in his ministry was the beginning of

their fishing for people, the Gospel of Luke does not foreground this participation by the

disciples, including Peter. It is not until Acts 2 that we find Peter bringing in the

multitudes.[43] The unfulfilled prophecy leaves the audience looking forward to its

fulfillment in the text.

While Peter's exclamation "I am a sinful man" (5:8) is consistent with the form,

this does not exhaust its significance for the Gospel of Luke. That is not to say that Peter

was a sinner in an extraordinary way. While it has been suggested that Peter's occupation

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[43] Joel Green writes:
Although this section begins with the call of the first disciples, disciples are either conspicuously absent (5:12-26; 6:6-11) or appear as little more than cardboard figures, undeveloped as characters (5:30-6:5). This is startling because Jesus explicitly calls these fishermen for the purpose of active service in ministry ('from now on you will be catching people' v 10), thus establishing a narrative need that remains unfulfilled. In fact, the disciples have little role to play in the Third Gospel, a reality that, in retrospect, is easily explained: (1) the disciples will move into the foreground with the onset of Luke's second volume, Acts, where they will indeed be involved in 'catching people'; (2) in the interim, their primary role is to learn" (*Gospel of Luke*, 228).
If the commission is fulfilled in the gospel it is in 9:1-6 where the twelve are sent out to "proclaim the kingdom of God, and to heal" (9:2 NRS). See Nolland, *Luke,* 1.223.

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would have marked him off a sinner within society,[44] evidence for this view is lacking in first century literature.[45] Introducing Peter in this way "lays the groundwork for Jesus's ministry of forgiveness and the growing reputation of Jesus as 'friend of sinners.'"[46] Zechariah had declared that Jesus would bring salvation through the forgiveness of sins (1:77), and Jesus's ability to forgive sins is emphasized in the story of the healing of the paralytic later in chapter five. Thus Peter, like the sinful woman in chapter seven, becomes a model of the one who approaches Jesus aware of his or her sin and receives forgiveness.

James and John

The final two characters in the story can be considered together. James and John are first introduced in the story only after the description of the miracle of the great catch of fish. I argued in chapter five that this delay served to allow the audience to see themselves as partners with Peter in the other boat. The fact that these characters are introduced by name at all, however, remains to be considered. The mention of these two characters is complicated by the fact that Andrew is not mentioned. Andrew's absence prevents us from simply concluding that James and John are present simply because they are present in the source. Nolland suggests that Andrew is omitted because he is "less

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[44] Rengstorf suggested that Peter was considered a sinner by the community because of his occupation (ἁμαρτωλός, ἀναμάρτητος [*TDNT* 1:334]). See also H. Van Der Loos who asks "was he thinking of his occupation, which many regarded as dishounorable?" *The Miracles of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 671.

[45] Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (München: Beck, 1961), 1. 187; Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 270; Bock, *Luke*, 458 n 21.

[46] Green, *Luke*, 231.

important" to Luke and "could not be introduced into the account without sacrificing the central focus on Simon."[47] The first may be true, but it is difficult to see how the mention of Andrew with James and John would have sacrificed the focus on Simon any more than had the mention of James and John. The omission of Andrew may simply be an accident of Luke's having combined the fishing tradition with the commissioning tradition. If Simon was central in the fishing narrative, when James and John were included, Andrew was left out because he appeared with Peter in the call narrative.[48] It is possible that the mention of James and John (and omission of Andrew) is meant to prepare the audience to connect this story with others from later in the gospel. Peter, James, and John represent a special inner circle of Jesus's disciples and are privy to special revelations of his glory. These three are the only ones allowed in with Jesus to witness the resurrection of Jairus's daughter. They are also the only disciples present for the transfiguration (9:28-36). The presence of these three may point to a special revelation of Jesus. Ultimately, there is little we can say conclusively about the absence of Andrew. If there are reasons rooted in the history of the early Church these, are lost to us now.

More to the point of our reading, the presence of James and John in the narrative prevents the focus of the narrative from being on Simon Peter to the exclusion of all others. While Peter remains the focus of attention throughout the narrative, the inclusion of other characters in the story helps to extend the implication of the story beyond just a description of the special role of the chief apostle.

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[47] Nolland, *Luke*, 1.223.

[48] R. Pesch, "La rédaction lucanienne du logion des pêcheurs d'homme (Lc., V, 10c)" in *L'Évangile de Luc: Problèmes Littéraires et théologiques* (Gembloux Belgium: J. Duculot, 1973), 237.

The Plot

One of the features of Luke's call narrative that sets it apart from the calling of the first disciples in Matthew or Mark is the development of a plot. In these terse accounts, Jesus simply walks by and calls the disciples to follow him. Luke has elaborated this simple *chreia* into a narrative with a complete plot. In chapter three, I argued that this development happened along the lines of elaboration as described by Aelius Theon, or *paraphrasis* as it is discussed in the rhetorical tradition more broadly. Like other examples of *chreiai* that have been developed into narrative, the expansion of the original call into the narrative of Luke 5:1-11 functions as an interpretation of the meaning of the original. This is accomplished by integration of other traditional elements (Jesus teaching from the boat, and the great catch of fish), and the arrangement of the narrative into the form of a commissioning scene. This arrangement serves to clarify the meaning of the metaphor and to form a more compelling and rhetorically plausible narrative that invites the audience to experience the calling of the disciples and respond.

One of the effects of Luke's more complete narrative is that Simon Peter's decision to follow Jesus is made more plausible. There are two ways that Luke's Gospel accomplishes this. First, Jesus and Peter are introduced earlier in the narrative. Luke has moved the healing of Peter's mother-in-law earlier in narrative time so that Peter has already witnessed Jesus's power to heal, and has presumably heard his message. Second, by moving Peter step by step toward his response to the call of Peter. Rudolf Bultmann calls the effect of this arrangement "psychologically more plausible."[49] While this is

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[49] Bultmann, *History of the Synopitic*, 363. See also Grundmann, *Lukas,* 127. See also *Eduard Schweitzer, The Good News According to Luke*, trans. David E. Green

certainly true, it does little to help us better read the text. Mikeal Parsons has suggested that it is more fruitful to consider the arrangement in terms of rhetorical plausibility.[50] This is a more helpful category, because it points to the function of the arrangement. Still the point is not to make the call of Peter believable to the audience; our model audience is not in need of this kind of assurance. Rather, the rhetorical effect of Luke's arrangement is to create the narrative space for the audience to walk with Peter toward his calling and positive response.[51]

In discussions of rhetoric, among the most consistent elements is the discussion of the three "virtues" of narrative: clarity, conciseness, and credibility.[52] When rhetoricians speak of the narrative virtue of credibility, they do not mean plausible according to a positivistic view of the universe. So it is not a question of natural versus supernatural, but appropriate versus inappropriate. For a narrative to be credible, it must be appropriate to the setting and characters and explained in terms of causal links. The concept of plausibility is a cultural construct. This is evident in Theon's example of a credible narrative. He describes Thucydides's discussion about the Plataeans and Thebans. According to Theon, the plausibility of this narrative is based upon an audience expectations about the responses of humans generally (e.g. people attacked at night may

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(Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984); Leander Keck, *Luke* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1996), 114.

[50] Mikeal Parsons, *Luke: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist, 25.*

[51] As Luke Timothy Johnson writes, "By delaying Peter's call, Luke enables the reader to pause over Jesus' personal prophetic ministry of liberation," *Luke*, 86.

[52] *Theon, Prog, 79, 84-85*; Ps. Cicero, *Ad Heren* 1.8.14; Cicero, *De Inv* 20.28, *Topica* 26.97; Quintilian 4.2.

be expected to behave in a certain way), certain people groups (Plataeans and Thebans may be expected to be at odds with one another), particular types of people (traitors may be expected to act "out of private hatred for some of their fellow-citizens"), and genders (women may be expected become frightened and to be driven to madness and irrational action when threatened and to be moved to pity even for an enemy) (Theon, *Prog.* 84-85). So we see that plausibility is a measure of whether characters respond in a manner appropriate to the actions and appropriate to their expected virtues and vices in accordance with the expectations of the audience.

The Gospel of Luke creates a more rhetorically plausible narrative through the arrangement of the material as well as the progressive nature of Simon Peter's move toward following Jesus. When the call is narrated, Peter (and the audience) has already encountered Jesus as teacher and healer. The nature of the ministry was described in the Nazareth scene through the Isaiah reading and then demonstrated in the rest of chapter four. Jesus's ministry is well under way when he calls the first disciples to join him. In this way the audience is prepared to better understand the nature of the mission to which the disciples are being called.

Within the actual narrative of the call there is also a clear development of obedience in Peter. It begins with Jesus's request that Peter shove off a bit from the shore so that Jesus could preach from the deck. It requires Peter to leave the washing of the nets, but it is not otherwise particularly taxing. After the sermon, Jesus asks Peter to move out into the deep and let down the nets. Here Jesus's request is much more of an imposition, and Peter's objection makes it clear that he is not convinced that it will be worth the effort. But Peter is obedient to Jesus, calling him master ἐπιστάτης, a title of

deference. When the catch is brought in, Peter is so overwhelmed by its magnitude that he recognizes divine power in Jesus, now calling him κυριός. When the call finally comes to follow Jesus, Peter (and the audience) has been brought along incrementally to the place of total obedience.

Conclusion

The narrative of Luke 5:1-11 paints a vivid picture of the call of the first disciples. Building on the foundation laid in the first four chapters and a common Old Testament motif, the story characterizes Jesus as a divine miracle worker and Peter as a commissioned leader. The arrangement carefully sets traditional stories about Jesus together so that they are mutually interpretive. Jesus's preaching from the boat, the miracle of the great catch of fish, and the calling of the first disciples are all skillfully brought together into a cohesive narrative which draws the audience into participation, and leads them to a particular view of the Church and its mission. The mission is to follow Jesus in bringing in the catch through the proclamation of the Word of God, and the success is guaranteed by the presence of the Lord.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

Throughout this study we have attempted to read the narrative of Luke 5:1-11 along with a model audience. I have argued that the model audience is composed of Christians who are not new to the story of Jesus but are already familiar with individual stories about Jesus and even entire gospels.

Chapter two addressed the form of the gospel traditions as they were known and shared in early Christian communities. Early form critics, particularly Rudolf Bultmann, argued that the preservation of the stories about Jesus and his disciples was an unstable process in which traditions were transformed by the pressures of the theological and polemic needs of the Church.[1] In response to this folk-tradition model, scholars like Vincent Taylor argued that the continued presence of the apostles and their students within these communities would have had a stabilizing effect on the traditions and that the testimony of eye witnesses would have helped to protect against the distortion of the tradition. Another point of discussion was the nature of these units of tradition. Dibelius has specifically rejected the category of *chreia*, finding it inappropriate for the originators of the tradition for whom "elegant speech was altogether foreign" and who "had no share in that world of culture out of which the witty sentences of the 'Chriae' arose."[2] Bultmann adopted the same position in regard to the *chreia*, but Taylor was more open to

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[1] While Dibelius was less pessimistic of the historicity of the gospel tradition, his methods were based on similar models based in folk tradition.

[2] Dibelius, *Traditions,* 157.

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models from Greco-Roman literature and proposed the concept of pronouncement story. This model would be important in later decades for a move to the *chreia* as a model for units of gospel tradition.[3]

Over the second half of the twentieth century, much of the debate continued along these lines. Form critics argued for a fluid tradition that was shaped by the needs of the community, and more conservative scholars argued for a stable tradition vouchsafed by the leadership of eye witnesses. The weakness of the former view was that it could not account for the continuing presence of the eye witness in the community. The weakness of the latter was that it could not account for the form of the gospel traditions as we have them. In order to solve this problem there was need a process of traditioning that resulted in formal units as we find clear examples of in our gospels, but still had a place for the testimony of those who had been with Jesus and their direct disciples. Gerhardsson attempted to provide this social situation and form with reference to the rabbinic schools, but this model was overly rigid and the evidence with which he supported it too late to convincingly connect it to first century Christians. Bailey, with his "Informal Controlled Oral Tradition" attempted to strike a *via media* providing models from his observations from modern examples of the preservation of tradition in Middle Eastern communities. Bailey's model is helpful, but it does not benefit from first century examples and because the traditions that Bailey observed never moved from oral to written traditions, they lack analogy for our gospels. More recently there has been renewed interest in the

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[3] Robert Tannehill's work on Taylor's pronouncement story was instrumental in moving in this direction. And the work of Burton Mack and Vernon Robbins continued this move toward the *chreia*, spawning a number of studies to approach gospel texts in this way. Chapter three addresses one major development of this way of reading the gospels and offers a corrective.

preservation of traditions about Jesus and the role of memory. Generally, however, these studies have suffered from a failure to provide adequate description of the shaping of tradition into the forms that we find in the gospel. Alan Kirk pointed out this shortcoming suggesting that it is not enough to speak of memory. We must also address memorializing—the processes and social structures which shape memories into tradition. The model which proved most promising for providing these social structures and formal examples was that proposed by Loveday Alexander. Alexander offered the Hellenistic school and the *chreia* as structure and form for the preservation of the tradition. Alexander's proposal does not suffer the anachronisms of Gerhardsson or Bailey's models and has the advantage of having been preserved in literary form, thus providing a useful analogy for the composition of the gospels.

In chapter three, I build on this suggestion that basic units of gospel tradition were analogous to the Greco-Roman *chreiai* and suggest a model for understanding the expansion of such a unit into a fuller narrative. A number of studies have attempted to describe this expansion through an appeal to the elaboration of *chreiai* which are preserved in Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks and in particular the exercises of Hermogenes.[4] These studies have failed to demonstrate a high degree of verisimilitude between the biblical narratives they examine and the elaboration exercises in the *progymnasmata*. The fatal flaw for this method is that the exercise does not produce a narrative. The analogy can only be made by appealing to the hypothetical category of

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[4] The most important study for this work is Burton Mack and Vernon Robbins *Patterns of Persuasion*.

narrative elaboration.[5] I have suggested that only one portion of the larger elaboration exercise, the *paraphrasis*, serves as an adequate model for the expansion of a *chreia* into a narrative. *Paraphrasis* was a concept in Greco-Roman rhetoric long before the publication of our extant *progymnasmata*, but the exercises provide us with examples. Beyond the theoretical discussions, I have included examples from literature in which both a short *chreia* and a longer narrative have been preserved. Further I have demonstrated that kernel of the Gospel of Luke's call narrative which is found in Mark 1:16-18 corresponds closely to the Greco-Roman form known as the *chreia* and that the fuller narrative of Luke 5:1-11 shows a relationship to the *chreia* of the call that is similar to the relationship between the *chreia* and the paraphrastic narrative from the models in *progymnasmata* and Hellenistic literature. The function of this elaboration was the explication of the original, that is to say, the extending of the *chreia* into a narrative was an interpretive act. Thus the Lucan elaboration of the *chreia* of the call of the first disciples is best understood as an interpretation of the form present in the tradition.

In chapter four, I catalogued examples of the metaphor of fishing for people in Greco-Roman, Jewish, and early Christian literature. In Greco-Roman literature the concept of fishing for people was associated with duplicity and guile. Within the philosophical polemic against sophism, the sophists were betrayed as fishermen who victimize their audiences by luring them in with their words all for the purpose of netting their riches. Lucian, a sophist himself, embraces the role of fisher, but casts the

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[5] Mack suggested that when early Christians developed the *chreiai* into an argument they placed the entire argument in the mouth of Jesus (*Who Wrote the New Testament: the Making of the Christian Myth*, 59-60). Mack, however, offers no examples of this practice in literature outside the New Testament.

philosophers in the role of fish that are drawn in by their greed.[6] An audience of the

Gospel of Luke might find it odd to hear Jesus or Peter playing the part of fishers of

people. In the Greco-Roman milieu this would place them in the role of huckster. In

Jewish literature, the concept of fishing for people was consistently associated with

judgment and especially being dragged into captivity for failure to keep the covenant.

While some have suggested that this is, in fact, the original meaning of the metaphor,[7]

this is hardly consistent with the message of the Gospel of Luke. Difficulties in the

metaphor have been played down, especially in the commentary tradition. The survey of

literature in chapter four demonstrates that there was real possibility for

misunderstanding inherent in the metaphor. In Luke's Gospel, however, the possibility

for misunderstanding the metaphor is minimized. By Luke 5, the ministry of Jesus has

been defined as a ministry of setting captives free and proclaiming liberty through his

inaugural sermon in Galilee and his miracles of deliverance in Luke 4. Further, by clearly

associating the metaphor of people-fishing with Jesus preaching to the crowds on the

shore, the Gospel of Luke leads the model audience to hear the calling of Peter, James,

and John as a call to continue Jesus's ministry or restoration and deliverance through the

proclamation of the "Word of God."

In chapter five, I argued that the symbolism of the narrative extends beyond the

metaphor of fishing for people. By the time of the writing and reception of the Gospel of

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[6] While Lucian's work post-dates the Gospel of Luke, it plays on the metaphor of fishing for people which had been present in literature for centuries.

[7] See especially Smith, "Fishers of Men." Smith does not argue that the judgment motif is present in Luke, or in fact in any gospel, but rather that it was present in the metaphor when it was originally spoken by Jesus. It was subsequently cleaned up to be more positive by the author's of the gospels.

Luke, the boat was already a symbol for the shared fate of a community in Greco-Roman and Jewish literature. In the early centuries of the Christian Church, the boat was frequently used to symbolize the Church and its position in the world. Scholars of the New Testament, both ancient and modern, have recognized the boat as a symbol for the Church in the gospel narratives. If we allow that the boat was already being associated with the Church in the first century, we can learn something of the picture of the Church that Luke's Gospel paints with this image. In parallel passages in Matthew (13:1-2) and Mark (3:9, 4:1) that have Jesus teaching from a boat, the boat serves to emphasize the gulf between the Church and the world. The Gospel of Luke brings the setting of Jesus preaching from the boat together with the miracle of the great catch, and the call of the first disciples to be fish for people. The intersection of these traditions allows the narrative to shift the meaning of the symbol of the boat from isolation from the world to engagement with the world.

We also explored the relationship between the fishing miracle in our pericope and the similar miracle in John 21:1-14. There is almost certainly a relationship between the two narratives, even if they spring form separate branches of the tradition. I argued that, in John, the miracle is not associated with bringing in people, but provision. Thus the retelling in the Gospel of Luke may be the first time the miracle is connected to the metaphor for the model audience. This further enhances the impact of the convergences of the three elements of the tradition into one narrative. The second boat, which is absent in John, provides a space for the audience to find themselves in the story and embrace their role in partnering with Peter in bringing in the nets. It is the boat of the Church

which continues without the physical presence with Jesus, but nevertheless has a role to play in continuing his mission.

Finally, I have argued that the narrative of Luke 5:1-11 builds on the first four chapters of the gospel to construct a narrative which establishes Jesus as a divine figure who exercises control over nature and functions in the role of the divine, or at least divinely appointed messenger in the commissioning of the disciples. In this narrative Peter's decision to follow Jesus is expressed in incremental moves toward total obedience. This allows space for the audience to go through the steps themselves and commit themselves to the mission of Jesus. Even the inclusion of the minor characters creates an opportunity for the audience to see themselves as partners with Peter, responding to his signal to come and participate in bringing in the catch.

Miracle and Mission in Luke 5:1-11

The study as a whole has attempted to shed light on the meaning of Luke 5:1-11 and in particular the vision of the Church and its mission which the narrative projects. To conclude I would like to offer a précis of the mission of the Church according to Luke 5:1-11.

The mission of the church is the proclamation of liberty. While the metaphor of fishing for people by its nature points to ensnarement, Luke's ordering of the narrative so that the call follows the programmatic reading from Isaiah in the Nazareth synagogue and the subsequent ministry of deliverance defined the mission and message of Jesus as one of deliverance. By associating Jesus's preaching from the boat with the miracle of the great catch, the story makes it clear that Jesus's commission to fish for people meant

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continuing his ministry of the proclamation of the good news to the poor and freedom to the captives and the oppressed.

The success of the mission is guaranteed by obedience to the word of Jesus. On their own the disciples had fruitlessly toiled through the night, but in the presence of Jesus the result is overwhelming success. Through the inclusion of the miracle, the calling of the disciples to follow Jesus has been enhanced with a promise of that mission's success. The great multitude of fish brought into the boat at Jesus's direction represents the multitudes who would respond to the message of the disciples. The formula that the gospel prescribes is simple obedience to the word of Jesus.

The boat of the Church is a place of encounter with the Lord Jesus. To be in the boat of the Church is to find the presence of the Lord Jesus and to recognize him for who he truly is—and in this to recognize ourselves for who we truly are and to say with Simon "get away from me, for I am a sinner." Luke presents this encounter as one which inspires awe and even fear, but the remedy for the terror is not retreat from the presence of the Lord. Rather, Luke presents pursuit as the only appropriate response to this encounter. Obedience leads to encounter and encounter leads to discipleship. This is the model presented in the call of Peter.

The invitation to follow Jesus in this mission is still open. The story of Luke 5:1-11 is carefully crafted to draw the audience into the experience as every opportunity. The miracle of the catch is described in vivid language. The nets are on the verge of tearing and the boats on the verge of sinking. This ecphrastic language allows the audience to experience the wonder and share in Peter's awe at the power of the Lord. Through the

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inclusion of the second boat, the narrative creates a space for the audience to see themselves as being summoned by Peter to continue the mission which Jesus began and the apostles continued.

There is room for the multitude in the boat of the Church. In the gospels of Matthew and Mark, the story of Jesus teaching from the boat presents the Church as a place to be alone with Jesus, to have questions answered, and be kept from the chaos of the world outside. Luke's account of Jesus preaching from the boat allows the Church this function as well—a refuge from the pressing world around. But Luke's Gospel also reminds us that this is not the Church's primary mission. The crowds on the shore become the multitude of fish which are brought into the boat. The story does not allow for the Church to remain distant from the world. The catch must be brought into the boats. The success of the mission will not result in comfort and security but will stretch communities almost to the point of breaking and strain resources to the point of near sinking. But the nets will not break, and the boats will not sink; the one that guarantees the success of the catch will also preserve the fishers.

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