Jerusalem as the Text of Culture

Dorota Muszyńska / Janusz Kręcidło / Anna Szczepan-Wojnarska (eds.)
Dorota Hartman

“A Fulfillment of All That Is Written”
(Lk 21:22): The Fall of Jerusalem in the Gospel of Luke


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It can be easily observed that Jerusalem is mentioned frequently and has a position of relevance in Luke's Gospel and in Acts. Following the motif of Jerusalem in the Third Gospel shows how meticulously Luke constructed his account

66 Dorota Hartman

At the beginning of the Gospel, the focus is not on the city as a whole, but on the Jerusalem Temple. The infancy narrative, which is widely considered to be Luke's own composition, begins in the Jerusalem Temple with the vision of Zechariah (Lk 1:8–23). The Temple appears in the early life of Jesus as his dedication takes place there (Lk 2:25–35). The city of Jerusalem itself appears for the first time as the destination of the pilgrimage for Passover (Lk 2:41; 43; 45). A twelve-year-old Jesus remains in the Temple, when his parents leave. It is emphasised that his parents returned to Jerusalem (ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἱεροσολύμα, Lk 2:45) to find him. The central section of Luke contains only one reference to the Temple (Lk 18:10), but it is referred to again at the end of the Gospel.

Jerusalem is mentioned only a few times in the section (Lk 3:1–9:50), which contains the account of the ministry of Jesus in the Galilee. In Luke (4:9), the episode describing the temptation of Jesus in the desert, the final scene of temptation takes place in Jerusalem. The parallel passage in Matthew does not contain the name of Jerusalem, which was presumably in the Q source from which the verse originates, and has only a reference to the holy city (τὴν ἅγιαν πόλιν, Mt 4:5). It is clear that Luke instead wishes to emphasize that the final temptation is connected with Jerusalem.

In 5:17 Luke mentions the Pharisees and teachers of the law who came from Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem, and again in 6:17 people from Jerusalem appear amongst the multitude that came to hear Jesus. This last passage is based on Mark 3:8, who has ἄπο τοῦ Ἱεροσολύμων, but Luke changes the name of the city to his preferred Ἱεροσολύμα.

The first reference to Jesus’ destiny which is predicted by Moses and Elijah to be completed in Jerusalem appears in the pericope of the Transfiguration: ἔλε­γον τὴν ἐξοδὸν αὐτοῦ, ἐν ἡμελέειν πληρῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμα (Lk 9:31). This verse is unique to Luke and serves to build up the expectation of the climax to be held in the holy city. The verb πληρῶ here for the first time specifies that the accomplishment of the mission is linked to the city of Jerusalem, thus preceding the intent to go to Jerusalem that Jesus himself will show in Luke 9:51. Both in the Gospel and in Acts, Luke gives great consideration to fulfillment, especially the fulfillment of the scriptural prophecy.

3 Luke 1:3.
in Luke, is often understood as a reference to Jesus’ death. But the mention of Jerusalem as the place of this fulfillment would suggest rather that ἔξοδος is connected to the ascension, ἀνάλημψις which will appear in 9:51. The mention of Jerusalem as the city of destiny, which is not present in Matthew, in the same way as the changes in the pericope of the Temptations 4:9, is a proof that Luke shows hesitation in modifying his sources taking into consideration the narrative design of his work as a whole.13

Jerusalem is viewed by Luke first and foremost as the location of Jesus’ death and ascension. The arrest of Jesus and his passion as well as the events after the resurrection take place near to the city.14 The disciples return to Jerusalem: καὶ ἀναστάντες αὐτῷ τῇ ὥρᾳ υπέστησαν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ (Lk 24:33), just as his parents returned there in 2:45. The same verb ὑποστήριζο was used, which will reappear in the last phrase of the Gospel yet again in connection with Jerusalem: ὑπέστησαν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ μετὰ χαράς μεγάλης (Lk 24:52).15 With this device of circularity the narrative function of Jerusalem is emphasized: the Third Gospel begins in Jerusalem with the visitation of Zechariah, and ends in the holy city.16

Jerusalem also becomes a link between the first volume of Lucan work and the second: the words inspired by Isaiah 2:3: Κοινωνία τῶν θεών ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἀρκέμενοι ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ “and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Lk 24:47), prepare the ground for the proclamation of the mission in Acts (1:8,22; 10:37).

1 The travel narrative: Jerusalem as a final destination

Leaving aside the prologue and the infancy narrative, it is possible to discern three main sections in the Gospel of Luke: first, the ministry in Galilee (Lk 3:1–9:50), then a long journey narrative which Luke expands on in comparison to Mark and Matthew (Lk 9:51–19:27 or 19:44) and, finally, the ministry and passion of Jesus in Jerusalem (Lk 19:28–24:53). The reason for the threefold structure is that Luke follows the Gospel of Mark as a main source, except for the so-called central section, where he departs from the Marcan order. In this central portion of the Gospel, Luke put the most of the material which he derived from his other sources: the Q source, or, on the Farrer theory, from Matthew, and from his special material (called also L).17 The particularity of the travel narrative is that Jesus is mainly teaching, he does not perform miracles, perhaps for narrative reasons; and tension is built up as he approaches his destiny in Jerusalem.18 The so-called travel notices consist in the mentions of Jesus’ being on his way towards the city.19 From the beginning of the travel narrative Jesus predicts his own fate and his death in Jerusalem is the fulfillment of what has been written.

The traditional delineation of the travel narrative considers 19:27 as a final verse, and 19:28 as a beginning of a pericope of the Jerusalem entry (19:28–19:40). However, few scholars sustain that Luke 19:28–29 and the lament over Jerusalem as the place of this fulfillment would suggest rather that ἔξοδος is connected to the ascension, ἀνάλημψις which will appear in 9:51.
Jerusalem in 19:41–44 are the climax of the travel narrative, which concludes at 19:44. Opting for this division it can be observed clearly that, while during his Galilean ministry Jesus showed no interest for the city, Jerusalem becomes his main goal from 9:51 to 19:44. In this manner, the narrative concept of the author becomes evident: the travel narrative begins with the rejection in Samaria 9:51–56 and concludes with the final rejection in Jerusalem. Jerusalem not only remains a central motif for Luke from 9:51 to the final of his gospel but serves also as a starting place for Acts 2:1.

2 The narrative shift in 9:51: Jesus sets his face to Jerusalem

Verse 9:51 is an important narrative point in the Gospel of Luke. Here for the first time Jesus reveals that his Galilean ministry is finished and announces his intention to go to Jerusalem. The section 9:51–56 is considered by some scholars, due to many Semitic elements, as originating in the pre-Lucan source L.


27 The rejection of Samaritans according to Giblin is an argument for the lack of the idea of judgment in 9:51: if Samaritans knew that Jesus intended to go against the city, they would have been more favourable, Charles Homer Giblin, The Destruction of Jerusalem According to Luke’s Gospel (Analecta Biblica 107; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1985), 32. To this Evans (“‘He Set His Face’”: Luke 9:51), 52, replies that the Samaritans were hostile to Jesus considering him as a Jewish prophet who is to fulfil his destiny in Jerusalem.
face to go to Jerusalem." The verb στηρίζω in the LXX denotes a firmness and purpose. In the Old Testament, God sets his face against rebellious people: καὶ στηρίζω τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐπὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκείνον (Ezek 14:8). The expression στηρίζων τὸ πρόσωπον has a hostile meaning: ὦτι ἄνθρωπον στήριζον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἐπὶ τὰ δρή Ἰσραὴλ καὶ προφήτευσον ἐπ’ αὐτὰ (Ezek 6:2), and is connected with judgment. The expression is frequently used in Ezekiel and since Luke makes recourse to major prophets in all his predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem, it provides the best context to understand it. In Ezekiel, στηρίζων τὸ πρόσωπον ἐπὶ is used in particular with the prophecy against Israel an Jerusalem: ὦτι ἄνθρωπον στήριζον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἐπὶ τὰ δρή Ἰσραὴλ καὶ προφήτευσον ἐπ’ αὐτὰ (Ezek 6:2), and ὦτι ἄνθρωπον στήριζον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἐπὶ Θαμιαν καὶ ἐπίβλεψον ἐπὶ Δαρωμ καὶ προφήτευσον ἐπὶ δρυμῶν ἡγούμενον Ναγεβ (Ezek 21:2); and the most poignant διὰ τοῦτο προφήτευσον ἦτε ἄνθρωπον καὶ στήριζον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἐπὶ Ιερουσαλήμ καὶ ἐπίβλεψον ἐπὶ τὰ ἄγαντα καὶ κατηνοήσατε ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ (Ezek 21:7).

In 9:51, the noun ἀνάλήματι occurs, which is a hapax in the New Testament. The meaning of ἀνάλημα in ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀνάλήματος αὐτοῦ (Lk 9:51) can be twofold. In Jewish-Greek literature ανάλήμας can mean "death" (Ps. Sol 4:18). But since the verb ἀναλαμβάνω is used with the meaning "to be taken to heaven" in the LXX (for Elijah in 2 Kgs 2:11), and also by Luke in the Acts (1:2, 11, 22) the meaning "ascension" is preferable. According to Denaux, ἀνάλήμας means more properly a bodily ascension. Therefore, all the mentions of approaching Jerusalem, are clearly connected with the perspective of ascension, preannounced by the verb of fulfillment συμπληρῶ (ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀνάλήματος αὐτοῦ).

3 The destruction of Jerusalem

Another peculiarity of the Luke's Gospel is the repeated mention of the impending destruction in store for Jerusalem. Luke has four passages that speak of the fall of Jerusalem: 13:34-35, 19:41-44, 21:20-24; 23:27-31, one of which comes probably from the Q source, while the other three are unique to Luke and have no correspondence in other Gospels. The singularity of Luke's Gospel is the prediction of the fall of the entire city. Mark and Matthew are concerned rather with the profanation of the Temple and the cult. Indeed, Conzelmann stressed the fact that for Luke the city and the Temple are separate. The destruction of Jerusalem is seen in terms similar to God's retribution for the unfaithfulness of Israel. The judgment is due to the city's failure to recognize the moment of visitation (οὐκ ἔγνως τὸν καρὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου, Lk 19:44), which means that Jerusalem will not accept the coming Jesus as a Messiah. The oracles against Jerusalem are strikingly similar to the Jewish prophetic oracles of judgment, and follow the basic outline of the so-called prophetic lawsuits or ῥίβ patterns, where the prophet states the offence of the guilty and announces their punishment. Luke, due to his profound knowledge of the Scriptures, describes the punishment of Jerusalem using Old Testament allusions and in particular he makes recourse to prophetic books in the LXX version.

There is a broad consensus in scholarship that Luke wrote his Gospel after the capture of Jerusalem by Titus' forces. It is, however, a matter of discussion whether those events influenced the Lucan redaction of the passages concerned in the Fall of Jerusalem according to Luke's Gospel. It is widely recognized that Luke is concerned with the destruction of Jerusalem described in the book of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as well as the destruction of the Temple in 2 Maccabees.

28 Evans, “He Set His Face,” but Giblin does not agree with Evans and does not see the hint of judgment, Destruction, 32.
30 Isa 50:7, ἕθηκα τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐς στερεᾶν πέτραν, where the expression denotes determination.
32 ἐν μονώσει ἄτεκνας τὸ γῆρας αὐτοῦ εἰς ἀνάλημα (Ps. Sol. 4:18); Evans, “He Set His Face,” 97, note 16.
33 Evans adduces other examples, “He Set His Face,” 97. It is worth to note the interesting suggestion of Flusser, "Lukeas 9:51–56," 167, that the noun ἀνάλῆμα is a result of a mistranslation of a Hebrew verb יָיָה that had the meaning of "to go with a pilgrimage."
with the Temple and Jerusalem. The analysis of the passages pertinent to the doom of Jerusalem, three of which are unique to the Gospel of Luke, shows that Luke took into account events that occurred after the completion of both the Gospel of Mark and the Q source. Moreover, a certain similarity with the descriptions of the destruction of Jerusalem in the works of Josephus can be noted in Lucan predictions. Even if the use of Josephus by Luke is denied by most scholars, there are strong arguments to support his indebtedness at least on the Jewish War, and some arguments that lead to suspicion of his knowledge of the Jewish Antiquities too.

4 The first prophecy on the destruction of Jerusalem, Lk 13:33–35

As seen above, Jesus in Luke 9:51 demonstrated his determination to go to Jerusalem to meet his fate, and it is possible to see even in this passage the prevision of the judgment for the city. The first explicit warning to Jerusalem comes, however, with verses 13:34–35. This pericope can also be seen as a prophetic judgment against the city, even if not all scholars accept this view. However, to introduce this pericope it must be considered together with the preceding passage that contains a warning to Jesus by the Pharisees that Herod wants to kill him and Jesus’ statement about his destiny (13:31–33). These verses are specific to the Gospel of Luke, and are often considered as coming from his Sondergut.

A closer analysis of verses 13:31–33 shows Lucan characteristics and since they fit into the narrative motif of the fulfilment in Jerusalem, it seems more probable that they do not come from the L source but are for the most part Luke’s composition. Jesus replies to the Pharisees in an enigmatic way that, after having finished his activity of exorcism and healing, he has to complete his work on the third day (καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ τελειοῦμαι, Lk 13:32). Here, as the verb πληρῶ in 9:31, which means completion of the destiny, appear another two verbs linked with fulfilment, ἀπολείπεται and τελειῶται.

Jesus continues:

πλὴν δὲ με σήμερον καὶ αύριον καὶ τῇ ἑορτῇ πορεύεσθαι, δι’ οὗ ἐνδέχεται προφήτην ἀπολείπεται ἐξω Ιερουσαλήμ (Lk 13:33).

Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.

He clearly states what was only preannounced in 9:51, the necessity to fulfil his destiny in the holy city. Because of this necessity Jesus must keep going: δὲ οὗτος ἐμοὶ πορεύεσθαι. The verb πορεύομαι belongs to Luke’s preferred vocabulary.

41 Bultmann (History, 114) considered saying an original Jewish prophecy.
42 Giblin, Destruction, 4.
The saying recalls other words of Jesus in Lk 9:22, εἰς πόνον δέ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ἀπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀρχιερέων καὶ γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἑγερθῆναι, “The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

Verse 13:33 finishes with the mention of Jerusalem and the next pericope begins with the address to the city itself: Ἰερουσαλήμ Ἰερουσαλήμ, ή ἀπεκτένουσα τῶν προφητῶν καὶ λιθοβολοῦσα τοὺς ἀπεσταλμένους πρὸς αὐτήν, ποιάς ἠθέλεσα ἐπισυνάξαι τὰ τέκνα σου ὄν τρόπον ὅρνις τὴν ἐαυτῆς νοσιαν ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας, καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλεσατε (Lk 13:34), “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”

The apostrophe, with the double vocative, recalls the lament of David for his son Absalom in 2 Sam 18:33.48 It is not frequent that Jesus shows emotions in the Gospel of Luke, who in general downplays the emotions of Jesus from his sources, but he retains the compassion of Jesus here. The verses belong to the Double Tradition (parallel in Mt 23:37–39) and there are only minimal differences in wording between Matthew and Luke.49 From the form critical point of view Bultmann considers the oracle to be a minatory saying, Neyrey instead a judgment oracle.50 The saying in fact resembles typical Jewish oracles of judgment in structure, and with its double vocative “Jerusalem, Jerusalem” is strikingly similar to the oracle against Galilee uttered by Johanan ben Zakai, who accused the Galileans of the rejection of the sage one.51

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48 LXX: “ψαλαὶ ἀμεσίσαμαι ἐς τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ μακαρίσαμαι” (2Sam 19:1).
51 David Aune, Prophecy in Early Christianity and Ancient Mediterranean World (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 144–45; Maisano, Vangelo di Luca, 253; François Bovon, Das Evangelium nach Lukas (Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament III/2; Zürich und Düsseldorf: Benziiger, 1991), 446–47; Neyrey, “Jesus’ address”: 79–80; Giblin (Destruction, 38–43) does consider the pericope as an oracle of judgment.

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The spelling of Jerusalem is Ἰερουσαλήμ, which is typical of Luke, not Ἰεροσολύμα as Matthew prefers.53 This is only the second – and last – time, where Jerusalem is mentioned in Q.54 The Q community was, unlike Luke, not particularly concerned with Jerusalem. It seems that the attitude of the Q community was hostile to cities in general, as the Q source presents all the towns negatively because of their lack of faith, contrasting their corruption with simple rural life.55

The saying introduces the theme of a persecuted prophet, which was quite widespread in Judaism and Early Christianity.56 The Q source displays a special interest in this motif, which appears in 6:22–23 (Mt 5:11–12), Q 11:47–48 (Mt 23:29–31); Q 11:49–51 (Mt 23:34–36). The Q community considered John the Baptist and Jesus to be followers of the prophets of the Scripture, encountering persecution because of their message. However, whereby Matthew does not particularly elaborate this motif, Luke gives it a special relevance and connects it to the final rejection of Jesus and his death.57 The necessity of Jesus’ death in...
Jerusalem was alluded previously to in Luke 6:22–23, 11:47 and in the pericope of the Transfiguration.

It is probable that in the Q source the saying was a final part of a longer section focused on the polemic with traditional Judaism, and that Luke decided to extrapolate it from its original context, and inserted it in the travel narrative to fit the ending of the verse 3:33 where Jerusalem is mentioned.58 In fact, Matthew employs the saying as a climax of judgment sayings against Pharisees, scribes, and against “this generation” (Mt 23:13–36) which took place at the Jerusalem Temple (Καὶ ἐξελάθων ὁ Ἱερος ἄπο ὀ του ἱερου ἐπορεύετο (Mt 24:1). In the opinion of Giblin, in the case of Matthew, the words of Jesus against Jerusalem are the consequence of the hostility he faced from the leaders of the city, who opposed him.59 In Luke, on the other hand, the lament for Jerusalem is not connected to the actual rejection, which had not yet occurred, but is grounded in the OT typology of Jerusalem as the city which rejects the prophets. These observations by Giblin on the narrative setting of the pericope are very important. It is also noteworthy that the present participles ἀποκτένουσα and λιθοβολοῦσα could indeed refer to the general attitude of Jerusalem towards the prophets, as something that repeats itself in history. In fact, the saying recalls the OT tradition and is not connected with the Roman destruction of the city, because the Q source presumably does not know of the Jewish War.60 However the problem arises with the syntax of the phrase; Jesus first directs his words to the city which is referred to singular ἀποκτενόμενον and λιθοβολοῦντα, then he describes the negative reaction to his attempts to protect the city using the plural καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησατε (13:34). It is also interesting to note that he seems to describe the rejection as an action that had repeated itself ποσάκι θέλησα ἐπιστάλαζα τὰ τέκνα σου. Since the Synoptic Gospels, differently to John’s,61 mention that Jesus visited Jerusalem once, it could be a trace of a tradition, which knows other journeys by Jesus to Jerusalem.

5 The rejection of the Gospel

After the first oracle Luke continues his narrative pursuing the theme of fulfilment in Jerusalem, and as a reminder that Jesus is always in movement he uses the travel notices.62 The passion prediction in 18:31–32 underlines that “the

ίδοι αфессионаς ὡς καὶ ὁ άνδρας ἀμωμ. λέγω ἡ ὁμ. οὐ μὴ ἔδει με εἰς [ήξει ὅτε] εἰηυπε-

ελογιωμένον ὁ ἐφήμων ἐν ὁνήματι κυρίου (Lk 13:35).

See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’

There is no consensus on the meaning of ἀνοκός in 13:35a. In LXX, ἀνοκός can mean the Temple ( Isa 56:7), but as a collective noun, it can also refer to the nation or descendants (Jer 38:33). Some scholars argue that since Luke rarely uses ἀνοκός with reference to the Temple, in the oracle he intends the whole city.63 This interpretation seems rather forced, given that Matthew 27:38 also uses ὁ ἀνοκός, which comes from Q, and it is an allusion to Jeremiah 22:5 ὃτι εἰς ἐρήμωσιν ἔσται ὁ ἀνοκός οὗτος (Jer 22:5).64 The house, ὁ ἀνοκός, refers to the Temple which is to be abandoned by God as a result of the tribulation.65 The reference to the Temple after the address to the city in the previous verse seems to form a climax: the warning of destruction comes first to Jerusalem, and second – to its most important place, the centre of the Jewish cult, which will not be spared either. John Kloppenborg makes an important observation that the abandoned house recalls the motif of the God who leaves the holy place after the capture by enemies (evocatio deorum), also known from the Old Testament and Jewish literature (ἔγκαταλέλοπα τὸν οἶκόν μου, Jer 12:7).66

63 Gaston, No Stone on Another, 244; Jan Lambrecht, Die Redaktion der Markus-Apokalypse (Analecta Biblica 28, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967), 76, Weinert. However, Luke uses ὁ ἀνοκός meaning 'temple' in his Gospel three times: εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ (Lk 6:4); μεταξύ τοῦ θυσιαστήριου καὶ τοῦ οἴκου (Lk 11:51); γέγραπται· καὶ ἔσται ὁ ὁκός μου ὁκός προσεύχης (Lk 19:46).

64 The manuscripts D, N, Δ, Θ, Ψ and others after ὁ ἀνοκός ὡς αὖ ἐν ἐρήμωσι, an attempt of harmonisation with Matthew.


66 On the motif of evocatio deorum known from the Roman praxis, and its possible reminiscence in Mark 13:2; see: John Kloppenborg, "Evocatio Deorum."

67 The study of the section is in Jan Lambrecht, “Reading and Rereading Lk 18:31–22.6,” in À cause de l’Evangile. Mélanges offerts à Dom Jacques Dupont (Lectio Divina 123;
going up to Jerusalem" (ἀναβαίνω) is necessary to fulfill the destiny predicted by the prophets.  

Παραλαβών δὲ τῶν δώδεκα ἐπέν πρὸς αὐτὸς ἰδιοῦ ἀναβαίνοντος εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ, καὶ τελεσθήσεται πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα διὰ τῶν προφητῶν τῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ αὐθαίρου- (Lk 18:31) παραδοθήσεται γὰρ τοῖς ξένοις καὶ ἔμπαθήσεται καὶ ὄρφωθῃ καὶ ἐμπυθώθηση (Lk 18:32).

Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon.  

Jan Lambrecht noted that the passion prediction in 18:31 opens a new Gospel section which is concerned with approaching to Jerusalem, and in which Luke consciously limits geographical notions, because he wants to concentrate the narrative on the activity of Jesus in the holy city.  

6 The Parable of the Pounds

Near the end of his journey Jesus recounts the Parable of the Pounds, which is also known as the Kingship Parable. The parable is connected implicitly to the motif of the destruction of Jerusalem because its focus is the lack of recognition of the kingship claims and the punishment of the opponents. The parable is assigned to the Double Tradition, though Matthew places his Parable of the Talents in the context of the Eschatological Discourse. The Parable of the Pounds in Luke has an important narrative function. Luke Timothy Johnson noted the editorial link between the kingship parable and the entry to Jerusalem (19:29–44). Jesus tells the parable "because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately" (Ακουόντων δὲ αὐτῶν ταῦτα προσθῆκες εἶπεν παραθέναι διὰ τὸ ἐγγὺς εἶναι Ἰερουσαλήμ αὗτον καὶ δοκεῖν αὐτούς ὅτι παραχρῆμα μελέτῃ ἢ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναφαίνεσθαι: Luk 19:11). The parable is situated between verses 19:11 and 19:28 which form an inclusio from two indications of moving towards Jerusalem. The parable the verb ἀναβαίνω (cf. 18:31) appears again, and Jesus goes up to Jerusalem (ἀναβαίνοντι εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα). The second prediction of the fall of Jerusalem (19:41–44) is found only in the Gospel of Luke, and it concludes the travel narrative. The approaching to Jerusalem is underlined again three times by use of other verb of movement, ἐγγίζω.

7 Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem (Lk 19:41–44)

The second prediction of the fall of Jerusalem (19:41–44) is found only in the Gospel of Luke, and it concludes the travel narrative. The travel narrative begins with Jesus’ decision to go to Jerusalem, and has its climax in the rejection of Jesus by the city. The good servants of the parable, as the disciples of Jesus, recognize the king’s authority, the enemies who did not want the king instead, bear resemblance to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The punishment of those who did not recognize the king in 19:27 corresponds to the destruction of the city in 19:43–44, of which, in fact, Jesus will be concerned shortly afterwards. The approaching to Jerusalem is underlined again three times by use of other verb of movement, ἐγγίζω.

72 Luke makes Jesus recount the parable because the people were thinking of the imminent parousia. The parable makes it clear that the return of the master to judge his servants is not imminent (he went to the distant country ἐπορεύθη εἰς χώραν μακρῶν Lk 19:12). This is one of the places where Luke seems to rewrite his sources because he is aware of the delay of the parousia, cf. Christopher M. Tuckett, “Luke,” in John Riches, William R. Tellford and Christopher M. Tuckett, Synoptic Gospels (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 276 (originally published as Christopher M. Tuckett, Luke (New Testament Guides 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).
74 In 19:11 Luke uses as his usual the biblical name Ἱεροσολύμα but in 19:28 the Hellenistic Ἰεροσόλυμα, the use of the profane name may be due to the fact that the city will not recognize Jesus.  
75 ὡς ἤγιοισεν εἰς Βρυθισμανίαν (Lk 19:29); ἐγγίζοντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἔδη πρὸς τῇ καταβάσει τοῦ δρόου τῶν ἐλαιῶν (Lk 19:37); ὡς ἤγιοισεν ἰδίων τῆς πόλιν (Lk 19:41), see: Giblin, Destruction, 47.
76 In the opinion of many scholars, the limit of the travel narrative is 19:28, the last verse of the Parable of the Pounds. For the overview of the scholarship, see: Denaux,
of the city to recognize the Messiah. For the third time Luke repeats that Jesus was approaching the city connected to his final rejection:77

77 “Travel Narrative,” 10–11. Luke in this section was following Mark, but he inserted the verses 19:41–44. Note the response to the Pharisees: ἐὰν οὐκ εἰσώρισατε, οἱ λίθοι κράζουν (Lk 19:40), an allusion to Habakuk 2:11 δότι λίθος ἐκ τούτου βοήσεται καὶ κάναρος ἐκ ἐξουθενίζεται αὐτά. Habakuk meant the coming of the Chaldeans to destroy Israel as a punishment.

Jesus approached Jerusalem by the way of Bethphage and Bethany (Lk 19:29), and then descending from Mount Olivet (Lk 19:37). However, the expression "to go up to Jerusalem" is also frequently used in the LXX: ἐγγον ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ καὶ σὺ τὸ πρῶτο εἰρήνην νῦν δὲ ἐκρύβη ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου. 78

78 Bultmann classifies 19:41–44 to the admonitions, History, 123.


Kim Paffennroth considered the possibility of it being pre-Lucan and coming from the L source.82 The passage, however, shows no clearly un-Lucan vocabulary.83 The only trait that could be considered pre-Lucan is the parataxis, which Luke usually avoids.84 In 19:43–44 καὶ appears seven times between verbs.85 The mention of Jesus weeping: "seeing the city he wept over it": ἔκλαυσεν ἐπὶ αὐτήν (Lk 19:41) is also not usual for Luke who normally avoids any references to Jesus’ emotions, but the LXX allusion can explain it.86 Furthermore, it is poignant that Luke mentions weeping on the destiny of Jerusalem twice: the first time before Jesus’ entry, and the second time, during Jesus’ way to the cross (Lk 23:28): it seems a stylistic device.

The passage contains numerous scriptural allusions and in particular from the major prophets (Isa 29:3, 37:33; Jer 6:6; 22:8–9, 23:38–40; Ezek 4:2).87 On these grounds Dodd decided that the oracle in Luke is composed entirely from the Old Testament language and is not connected in any way to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.88

The saying in Q 13:44–45 shows that there existed a tradition of Jesus’ prophecy on the destruction of Jerusalem. As aforementioned, the other prophecies of the fall of Jerusalem were circulating in the 1 century. Josephus records a certain Jesus ben Ananias who in 62 CE prophesized the destruction of the Temple (Bell. History, 123).
The L source, if it were a written document, which is a matter of discussion, consists of Jerusalem that has been foretold (Bell. 6.109) and uttered a lament on the destiny of Jerusalem, and stated that the destruction of the city was due to its pollution.

The description in Luke 19:41–44 is modeled on the LXX of Jeremiah who is the main prophet of the fall of Jerusalem. Jeremiah also showed his grief when prophesying the city’s doom (Jer 8:18). The image of the siege of Jerusalem (паρειμαβαλούσιν οἱ ἐξήρθοντοι οἱ χάρακα εἰς Ιερουσαλήμ) comes from Jeremiah 52:4 (περιπτεράκων; περικυκλώσουσιν σε καὶ συνέξουσιν σε πάντοθεν (Lk 19:43) from περισκοπὸν αὐτὴν τετραπέδου λίθου κύκλῳ (Jer 52:4), and καὶ ἥλθεν ἡ πόλις εἰς συνοχήν (Jer 52:5); τὸν καρόν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου (Lk 19:44) is parallel to καὶ ἐν καρίῳ ἐπισκοπῇ (Jer 6:15).38 The image of the children crushed on the ground and ἐδαφισθοσίν σε καὶ τὰ τέκνα σου ἐν σοί (Lk 19:44) is borrowed from the LXX descriptions as Psalm 136:9 ἐδαφεῖ τὰ νηπία σου πρὸς τὴν πέτραν (Psa 136:9, also Nah 3:10; Ezek 31:12). Josephus also uses the noun ἐναντίον in the descriptions of destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem, and in particular, when describing the crushing of children of Jerusalem, albeit for different reasons.97

After having uttered the prediction, Jesus entered the Temple (Lk 19:45: Καὶ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸ ἱερόν). It is surprising, given the emphasis on the approaching to Jerusalem through the Gospel of Luke, that in the moment of climax Luke does not mention explicitly the entry of Jesus in the city. Conzelmann stated that Luke consciously separated the city and the Temple.100 According to Denaux, Luke’s lack of mentioning of Jerusalem is due to the city’s guilt in not recognizing...
Another compositional choice made by Luke consisted of shortening the description of the purging of the Temple (Mk 11:15–16; Mt 21:12) to only one fact: Καὶ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν ἤρεσαν ἐκβάλλειν τοὺς πυλωντάς (Lk 19:45). Goulder observed that the prediction of the fate of Jerusalem could explain why Luke has so abbreviated the Purging of the Temple, omitting all the colorful details from Mark. It is because the cleansing of the Temple is pointless for Luke's Jesus, as the real purging of the city, which did not repent, will come in its destruction.

8 The Parable of the Wicked Tenants Lk 20:9–19

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants in the Gospel of Luke belongs to the section concerned with the teaching in the Temple. Luke describes the hostility of the scribes and the priests to Jesus (19:47), meanwhile the people (ὁ λαὸς ἀπας) were favorable to him and were listening. In several places Luke underlines the guilt of the Jewish leaders for Jesus' death and the non-complicity of the λαὸς. The Parable of the Wicked Tenants belongs to the Triple tradition, but there are hints that Luke did not use Mark as a source for his parable, but another, pre-Marean version. However, the arguments on the use of the pre-Marean version are discussible, and the differences could be due to Lucan editorial hand. It is not easily explainable why Luke omitted the details regarding the vineyard of the Marcan parable (Mk 12:1) which come from the Song of the Vineyard in Isaiah 5:2, reducing the introduction to a simple "A man planted a vineyard" (Lk 20:9). As Luke likes and is usually abundant in scriptural quotations, the explanation could be that he deleted the allusions to Isaiah 5:2 because he did not want his readers to identify the vineyard with Jerusalem. This would mean that he saw the destiny of the owner of the vineyard in more distant eschatological terms, and not connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, which he clearly knows that has already happened. But the narrative setting of the parable shows that it was considered by Luke as pertinent to the Jerusalem motif: the parable in the Lucan narrative has the function of connecting the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem in 19:41–44 and the detailed description of razing the city to the ground and massacre of her inhabitants in the eschatological discourse in 21:20–24. In the first two predictions Jesus accused the city of being guilty of not having recognized him. The Parable of the Wicked Tenants moves the accusation further: the inhabitants are going to cast him out and kill him.


109 The Lucan addition of the expression ἄρχων ἡσαυρίου could be also a reference to the delay of the Parousia, but it is a matter under discussion: John Dominic Crossan, In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus (New York: Harper&Row, 1973), 87.
violently. Telling the parable, Jesus warns the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and in particular their leaders, of the consequences of what they are going to do. The punishment for slaying the son of the owner of the vineyard is ineluctable.

9 The days of vindication in Lk 21:20–24

The next prediction of the fall of Jerusalem is contained in the pericope that belongs to the synoptic eschatological discourse, present also in Mark and Matthew. The teaching on the end takes place on Mount Olivet in Mark 13 and Matthew 24, whereas in Luke 21 it is instead in the Jerusalem Temple. Luke also includes the motif of the destruction of Jerusalem in 21:20–24. This pericope is probably like the previous one, a prophecy ex eventu, related to the destruction of the city in 70 CE. Mark (13:14) and Matthew (24:15) have only a reference to the profanation of the Temple, Luke instead does not mention the Temple, but the siege of the entire city.

Luke locates the teaching in the Temple to indicate that Jesus had a broad public, whereas it is true that Luke, who writes in the diaspora, is addressing readers. Whereas it is true that Luke, who writes in the diaspora, is addressing the gentile public, he is also targeting a Jewish audience. He broadly adopts Septuagintal language in his Gospel, so he takes for granted the knowledge of Scripture among his readers. The reason for removing the apocalyptic only from

110 Giblin, Destruction, 73.

111 Luke locates the teaching in the Temple to indicate that Jesus had a broad public, Conzelmann, Theology, 79.


21 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people;

22 they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Luke describes Jerusalem under siege, because he is probably influenced by his knowledge of the destruction of the city by Titus' forces (cf. Josephus, Bell. 6:130–7:4). Dodd on the other hand, contrary to this opinion, argued that the description of the siege in Luke is based entirely on the allusions to the Septuagint, and therefore has no connection with the historical events of the Roman war. The reason for casting the oracle entirely in military imagery coming from the LXX may also be because of Luke's attitude in general, noted by Goulder: when Luke writes on a theme familiar to him, his language is "Lucan" and hapax legomena are rare; when he writes about more technical matters, as the siege for example, he often employs the Old Testament allusion. The passage is full of scriptural allusions to the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC by Nebuchadnezzar. In section 21:20–24 which derives from Mark 13:14–20, where Mark applies the apocalyptic imagery from the book of Daniel, Luke describes a siege of the city in military language. The verses have a strong similarity to the prediction of the fall of Jerusalem in Luke 19:41–44. In the opinion of Fitzmyer, Luke did not adopt the apocalyptic language of Mark, because of the target of his Gospel: the gentile readers. Whereas it is true that Luke, who writes in the diaspora, is addressing the gentile public, he is also targeting a Jewish audience. He broadly adopts Septuagintal language in his Gospel, so he takes for granted the knowledge of Scripture among his readers. The reason for removing the apocalyptic only from


117 Conzelmann, Theology, 134.

this passage was probably that indicated by Conzelmann: Luke described the siege as a historical account.\footnote{Conzelmann, Theology, 135}

The doom of Jerusalem (το βδέλυγμα της ερημώσεως) is viewed as approaching (ήγγικεν ἢ ερημώσεις αὐτῆς Lk 21:20). The word for desolation, ἐρήμωσις comes from Mark 13:14, who draws it from Daniel 12:11, where it refers to the profanation of the Temple. Luke, instead, although he keeps the word ἐρήμωσις, uses it as a reference not to the Temple, but directly to the city 'Οταν δὲ ίδητε κυ κλουμένην υπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἰερουσαλήμ, τότε γνώτε δι' ἡγγικεν ἢ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς (Lk 21:20): “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.”

Since ἐρήμωσις is frequently used also in LXX Jeremiah (4:7; 7:34 etc.) where it pertains not to the Temple, but to the land (εἰς ἐρήμωσιν ἦσσα πᾶσα ἡ γῆ Jer 7:34), it seems that Luke was inspired by the main prophet of the fall of Jerusalem. As in other passages that concern the fate of Jerusalem, a verb of fulfilment appears (here πύπτημι "τούτο πλησιάζει") Lk 21:22\footnote{Luke uses πύπτημι also with reference to time: ἐπλήσθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι (Lk 1:23).} which recalls the necessity that the fate of the city, which has been predicted, must be completed. The context of judgment on Israel is evoked by the expression "the days of vindication" ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως (Lk 21:22) cf. ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκδικήσεως (Dt 32:35); ἡκασιν αἱ ἡμέρας τῆς ἐκδικήσεως (Hos 9:7)\footnote{This scriptural expression is not present in Mark.} The doom of the city is seen as a necessity ἀνάγκη μεγάλη (Lk 21:23)\footnote{Another word connected in Luke with inevitability and fulfilment, cf. Fitzmyer, Luke I–IX, 180, but appears also in Josephus’ description.} Luke, although avoiding the apocalyptic imagery from Daniel, introduces the prophetic language from Jeremiah and the disaster of 587 a.c., as in the previous prediction for the fate of Jerusalem. The first element which demonstrates that he thought of the Roman siege of Jerusalem, is his mention of the encircling of the city κυκλομένην υπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἰερουσαλήμ (Lk 21:20), which was also described by Josephus: κυκλώσασθαι τε γὰρ τῇ στρατιᾷ τὴν πόλιν (Bell. 5:496).\footnote{Josephus described how after the attempt to take the city with the machines failed (Bell. 490–91), Titus was advised to surround the city and take it with famine (Bell. 493)} An interesting detail is that Luke omits the Marcan reference to the winter προσεύχομαι δὲ ἵνα μὴ γένηται χειμῶνος (Mk 13:18) “pray that this will not be in winter.” This shows that Luke indeed had in mind the Roman siege of Jerusalem, which began in the spring, and the fall of the city in August.\footnote{Fitzmyer, Luke IX–XXIV, 1346.}

The context of judgment on Israel is evoked by the expression "the days of vindication" ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως (Lk 21:22) cf. ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκδικήσεως (Dt 32:35); ἡκασιν αἱ ἡμέρας τῆς ἐκδικήσεως (Hos 9:7). The context of judgment on Israel is evoked by the expression "the days of vindication" ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως (Lk 21:22) cf. ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκδικήσεως (Dt 32:35); ἡκασιν αἱ ἡμέρας τῆς ἐκδικήσεως (Hos 9:7). The context of judgment on Israel is evoked by the expression "the days of vindication" ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως (Lk 21:22) cf. ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκδικήσεως (Dt 32:35); ἡκασιν αἱ ἡμέρας τῆς ἐκδικήσεως (Hos 9:7).

The deportation of the captives (Lk 21:24) is also probably an echo of the events that succeeded Titus’ capture of the city. Josephus mentions the large number of prisoners taken after the fall of Jerusalem.\footnote{Josephus, Bell. 6.420 counts 97000 captives. Philip Esler, Community and Gospel in Luke–Acts, 27–28.}

The meaning of the last phrase is discussed: καὶ πεσοῦνται στόματι μαχαίρας καὶ αἰχμαλωτισθήσονται εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πάντα, καὶ Ἰερουσαλήμ ἦσσα πατομένη ὑπὸ ἔθνων, ἄχρι οἱ πληρωθῶσιν καιροί ἔθνων (Lk 21:24): “they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Mark also describes the limit to the days of tribulation given by the Lord (ἀλλὰ διὰ τούτων ἐκκλησίων οὐκ ἔλελεξα οἰκολόγους τὰς ἡμέρας, Mk 13:20). The trampling of the sanctuary occurs in Daniel 8:13, and in Daniel 8:14 the prediction of the time when the sanctuary will be restored is given. From Daniel 8:23 comes the verb πληρώσων: καὶ ἐπὶ ἐσχάτου τῆς βασιλείας αὐτῶν πληρομένῳ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν ἀναστήσεται βασιλεὺς ἀναδίκης προσώπων διανοούμενος αἰγίγματα, “when the sins [of the Gentile kings] are fulfilled.” Luke in 21:2 makes an allusion to the Gentile mission, which was mentioned in Mark 13:10, and which theme he develops further in Acts: γυναῖκον οὖν ἔστω υἱὸν ὑμῶν τίς αὐτοῦ ἐν οἷς ἐπεστάλη τοῦτο τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ–αυτῷ καὶ ἀκούσονται (Acts 28:28).

The changes Luke made to the eschatological discourse in comparison with Mark 13, describing the events of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, are significant because they mean that Luke did not interpret the eschatological discourse as referring really to the end of times.\footnote{Tuckett, Luke, 277.} This involves the whole question of Lucan eschatological expectations and his editorial changes to his sources, in order to modify the texts that speak of the imminent parousia.\footnote{The concept, today no longer considered valid, is due to Hans Conzelmann, Theology, cf. also Richard H. Hiers, “The Problem of the Delay of the Parousia in Luke–Acts,” New Testament Studies 20 (1974): 145–55.}

10 Woe to the Daughters of Jerusalem (Lk 23:27–31)

It is remarkable that Luke made Jesus predict the destruction of Jerusalem again during his way to the cross. The last of prophetic texts of Jesus regarding

\footnote{10 Tuckett, Luke, 277.}
Jerusalem is the woe to the women who were accompanying him, together with a large crowd, on his last way.128

29 He looked at them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

30 For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed:

31 But Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

32 For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed;

33 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us’.

34 For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?’”

This passage is unique to Luke and has often been considered as originating in a pre-Lucan source, as the previous texts concerned with the destruction of Jerusalem.129 The analysis of the language and the scriptural allusions support the Lucan authorship of the passage. The formal analysis by Jerome Neyrey shows that the saying has the same structure of a judgment oracle, like all Jesus’ other sayings where the Daughters of Jerusalem or of Zion are mentioned (Cant. 2:7; 129 Fitzmyer, Luke X–XXIV, 1494). Neyrey considers the oracle a composition of Luke.130

The woe to the pregnant and nursing mothers from Lucan eschatological discourse (21:23) is reformulated in 23:29, with an allusion to Isaiah 54:1, and the reversal of the blessing of Luke 11:27, where the words κόπα and μαστοὶ appeared together as a pair.131 Verse 23:30 (τοῦ δὲ λαόν ἐγένετο ἡμέρα τῆς γεννήσεως ἡμῶν) is a quotation from Hosea 10:8: ἐγένετο τοῦ δασοῦς καλύτερα ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῖς μουσαι τοὺς παραπτώματα ἡμᾶς, the only difference being that the order of the verbs παραπτώματα καλύτερα ἡμᾶς is inverted.132 A similar saying to the mountains appears in Revelation where also the context is of judgment and wrath: ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτῶν (Rev 6:17). It is worth observing that the mountains and other parts of nature as heaven, earth, appear as witnesses in the OT ἔρμα passages, another proof of Luke’s knowledge of the prophetic lawsuit.133 The meaning of words of Jesus in 23:31 is interpreted 23:27) following Jesus, is because Luke wants to make a distinction between the two groups.134 Luke repeatedly underlined that the λαός was not guilty of Jesus’ death.135 The Daughters of Jerusalem instead are symbolic figures that represent the city which rejects and kills the prophets, and the leaders of which were responsible for condemning Jesus. The chiastic construction of the phrase 23:28 μὴ κλαίετε ἐν αἷς ἔφυγον· κακῶρα δι’ αἰώνια καί αἰώνια καὶ εἰπή ταῦτα ὑμῖν (Lk 23:28) is typical of Luke.136 Jesus, according to Luke, wept when approaching the city ἐκλαύσθην ἐν αἷς ἔφυγον (Lk 19:41) because he knew of her destiny, and in the last moments of his way again Luke mentions weeping for Jerusalem and her people: μὴ κλαίετε ἐν αἷς ἔφυγον (Lk 23:28). Luke, as previously, gives a Septuagintal flavor to Jesus’ prediction of the fall of Jerusalem. The expression “the days to come” ἐρχονται ἡμέραι (Lk 23:29), was used previously in 5:35; 17:22; and especially in the same context of the prediction for Jerusalem (ἡμέραι λύτρου Lk 19:43), is typical of the LXX; ιδοὺ ἡμέραι ἐρχονται (Jer 7:32) where it is associated with the judgment of the Lord.137

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128 Included by Bultmann among the minatory sayings, Bultmann, History, 115–16.

A prophetic oracle according to Neyrey, “Jesus’ Address,” 79.


The saying similar to 27:29 is in Gospel of Thomas 79.


132 Neyrey, “Jesus’ Address,” 75–76.


135 Bultmann, History, 116, supposed an Aramaic source as an origin of the saying.

136 An allusion maybe to LXX of Gen 49:25.

137 The Hebrew text has the same order as the LXX. The manuscript A of the LXX has the same order of the verbs as Luke, but it could be due to the Christian scribes who harmonised the text of Hosea with Luke.

138 Nielsen, Yahweh, 74.
in various ways: ὅτι εἰ ἐν τῷ ψυχρῷ ξύλῳ ταῦτα ποιοῦσιν, ἐν τῷ ξηρῷ τί γένηται
(Lk 23:31), “For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when
it is dry?”

The best explanation is that the reference is again to the destruction of
Jerusalem. If the inhabitants of the city condemned Jesus (the green wood) who
came to save them, to death, the treatment reserved for them (the dry wood) will
be much worse and will be accomplished in the terrible destruction involving
not only the vanquishing of the leaders but also women and children.139

11 Conclusions

The passages that speak of the fall of Jerusalem can reveal much of the Lucan
mode of constructing a narrative. The author of the Third Gospel consciously
reworked his sources to pursue his literary aim. Luke inserted in his travel nar-
rative the notions of approaching to Jerusalem, changed the context of the Q
saying on Jerusalem, and introduced three other sayings, probably of his own
composition, concerned with the fall of the city. The emphasis on Jerusalem is
linked with eschatological expectations, and with the theme of the restoration of
Israel, which cannot be pursued here.140

Luke, who depicted Jerusalem and the Temple as a centre of the Jewish cult, in
his infancy narrative underlining the event of the fall of the city and the Temple
also implicitly meant that Jerusalem would not regain that importance after
the destruction. However, when in Acts 1:8 Luke makes Jesus address his disci-
iples: “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and
to the farthest parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8), he means that although Jerusalem
failed to accept the Messiah, it nonetheless becomes the place from where the
new, good message will depart.

139 Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to
St. Luke (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1922), 529–30, also accepted by Fitzmyer, Luke X­
XXIV, 1498–99.

140 For the overview of the meaning of Jerusalem and the Temple for Luke’s eschatology: J.
Bradley Chance, Jerusalem.