

A UNIQUELY LUKAN WORDPLAY ON ΛΙΜΟΣ (“FAMINE”) AND
ΛΟΙΜΟΣ (“PESTILENCE”)

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In their accounts of Jesus’ eschatological discourse, the Synoptic Gospels record him describing, largely in similar terms, the signs of the end times (Mark 13:1–37; Matt 24:1–44; Luke 21:5–36). All three versions are drawn from Old Testament prophecies, and they are expressed in Septuagintal language. However, Luke’s version of the discourse diverges in several passages from the other two, and in some of the passages where it does it appears to be drawing also from common vocabulary, idioms, and concepts of Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature. Some New Testament scholars have attributed Luke’s unique material in his version of the eschatological discourse to a pre-Lukan, non-Markan “special source,” such as a Jewish apocalyptic prophecy.¹ Others have regarded it as Luke’s own redaction of Markan material.² My proposal, which identifies some vestiges of influence from Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature, favors the latter view while still leaving room for influences other than Mark. That is to say, Luke clearly bases his version of the eschatological discourse on Mark’s version, but he also draws eclectically from other sources, including Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature, in a highly original manner. I will propose two possible reasons for this at the end of this article; let it suffice for now to ob-

1. E.g., Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel*, 101–25; Manson, “Sayings of Jesus,” 615–29; Dodd, “Fall of Jerusalem”; Winter, “Treatment of his Sources”; Gaston, “Sondergut und Markusstoff”; Schramm, *Der Markus-Stoff*, 171–82.

2. Conzelmann, *Die Mitte der Zeit*, 116–24; much more exhaustively, Zmijewski, *Die Eschatologiereden*; Keck, *Die öffentliche Abschiedsrede Jesu*; Verheyden, “Source(s)”; Fusco, “Le Discours Eschatologique Lucanien.”

serve that Luke was motivated to refashion Mark's rather cryptic version of the discourse, which is especially full of references to the Old Testament and composed in Septuagintal language, into a version more relatable to his gentile audience.

All three Synoptic Gospels include a verbally identical section of the eschatological discourse in which special pity is expressed for women who are pregnant or nursing (Mark 13:17; Matt 24:19; Luke 21:23): "Woe to those with child and nursing in those days." Mark and Matthew then continue with an admonition, drawn from the Septuagint version of Dan 12:1, to pray that it not be winter, since there will be θλίψις ("tribulation") such as has never occurred since the beginning of creation (Mark 13:18–19; Matt 24:20–21). Luke, however, goes his own way here and continues with a warning that ἀνάγκη μεγάλη ("great necessity") will be upon the earth and anger against the people (Luke 21:23). Generally in this verse, as well as in what follows, Luke, like Mark and Matthew, appears to be drawing from the diction of the Septuagint (e.g., Zeph 1:15), but this is not the case with the expression ἀνάγκη μεγάλη, which is found nowhere else in the New Testament or in the Septuagint. Rather, ἀνάγκη μεγάλη is a phrase that expresses a concept deeply embedded in the fatalistic worldview of the ancient Greeks, and it is found regularly throughout Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature, from Herodotus in the fifth century BCE to Plutarch in the second century CE. The concept is sometimes even elevated to the level of a divinity, as in Callimachus, *H. Del.* 122: ἀναγκαίη μεγάλη θεός ("Great Necessity is a god" or "Necessity is a great god"). The phrase became so universal that it developed into an idiom used to answer a question in the positive: ἀνάγκη μεγάλη came to mean "This is an absolutely necessary conclusion," "Most certainly," or "Yes, indeed" (e.g., Isaeus, Plato, Dionysius of Halicarnassus).

Again, while in Mark 13:24–25, which is followed almost verbatim in Matt 24:29, there is described in some detail the heavenly signs of the end times—the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers in the heaven will be shaken—Luke abbreviates the description, stating simply that there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars (21:25a). Then Luke includes the following unique passage (21:25b–26a):

καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς συνοχὴ ἔθνῶν ἐν ἀπορίᾳ ἤχους θαλάσσης καὶ σάλου, ἀποψυχόντων ἀνθρώπων ἀπὸ φόβου καὶ προσδοκίας τῶν ἐπερχομένων τῇ οἰκουμένῃ.

And there will be upon the earth distress of nations because of their lack of recourse against the roaring of the sea and the surge of the waves, as men faint from fear and expectation of what is about to happen in the world.

It is remarkable how many words and phrases in this passage are completely at home in Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature but are otherwise unattested in the New Testament: ἐν ἀπορίᾳ (“in a state of lack of recourse”); ἤχος θαλάσσης (“roaring of the sea”); σάλος (“wave-surge”). Particularly remarkable is the pair of words φόβος καὶ προσδοκία (“fear and expectation”), which is a well-worn pair of terms in Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature but does not appear elsewhere in this combination in the New Testament (or the Septuagint). The pairing φόβος καὶ προσδοκία in Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature, like here in Luke 21:26, describes the trepidation of people about an imminent catastrophe: Thucydides (*Hist.* 6.63.2) reports that in their expedition against Sicily the Athenians did not immediately attack, contrary to the initial “fear and expectation” of the Syracusans; Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1382b) speaks of the “fear and expectation” of suffering some fatal misfortune; Plutarch (*Ant.* 75.4) reports that the people of Alexandria were dejected because of their “fear and expectation” of what they would suffer at the hands of Caesar. The bond between the pair of words is also secured by a definition of φόβος (“fear”) attributed to Plato and reiterated throughout Greek literature: namely, that φόβος (“fear”) entailed the προσδοκία (“expectation”) of κακός (“evil”) (*Prot.* 358d; cf. *Def.* 415e5).³

Again, while all three Synoptic Gospels catalogue the persecutions that the followers of Jesus will suffer (Mark 13:9–13; Matt 24:9–14; Luke 21:12–19)—trials, imprisonment, betrayal, hatred, even death—at the end of this catalogue Luke uniquely appends the aphorism καὶ θριξὶ ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ ἀπόληται (“and in no way will a hair from your head be destroyed”) (Luke 21:18). Parallels are often observed both in the Septu-

3. This definition is reiterated by Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1115a; Chrysippus, fragments 407, 463; Galen, *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 4.2.1; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* 7.112.838. It appears in the Byzantine lexicon called the *Suda* under the entry φόβος.

agint and in the Gospels, but these are somewhat different both in diction and, though less so, in context.⁴ Either Luke has another source, or he is improvising here. The aphorism, in fact, seems rather out of place in the present context. One might even say that it contradicts what immediately precedes. For Jesus has just proclaimed a rather impressive catalogue of all the terrible things that his disciples will suffer: wars and tumult, civil strife, great earthquakes, famine and pestilence, persecution, imprisonment, the betrayal of friends and family, and even the death of some of them. The aphorism “in no way will a hair from your head be destroyed” that immediately follows is a bit jarring, and commentators throughout history have struggled valiantly to resolve the incongruity.⁵ But there is no easy way around the fact that Luke has inserted an aphorism that is not really appropriate to the context.

If we omit the conjunction *καί* (“and”), which simply serves to connect the aphorism to what precedes in the narrative, the aphorism is revealed to be a full dactylic hexameter verse:

4. Leaving aside for the moment the close Lukan parallel in Acts 27:34, the closest parallel is 1 Sam 14:45, where the Israelites defend Jonathan from the threats of his father king Saul by asserting, “As the Lord lives, shall a hair of his head fall to the ground?” Later, king David is tricked into saying something very similar about his son Absalom in 2 Sam 14:11: “As the Lord lives, shall a hair of your son fall to the ground?” And, later still, king Solomon says something similar about David’s son Adonijah in 1 Kgs 1:52: “If he becomes a son of power, shall any of his hair fall to the ground?” A somewhat similar proverb occurs in Jesus’ words in Luke 12:7 and Matt 10:30: “But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.”

5. Augustine (*Serm.* 214.12) claimed that the aphorism referred to the resurrection of an incorruptible body in the afterlife, and some modern commentators have followed this line of thought (e.g., Geldenhuys, *Commentary*, 527). Other commentators have interpreted the aphorism to mean that some individual Christians will perish at the hands of the Romans but that the Christian community of Judea as a whole will escape the dire fate of the unrepentant Jews (e.g., Godet, *L'évangile de saint Luc*, 333). Many commentators have understood the saying to refer not to physical but to spiritual survival (see Plummer, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 480; Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Luc*, 526; Easton, *Gospel According to Saint Luke*, 309; Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 769; Evans, *Matthew–Luke*, 449; Jeffrey, *Luke*, 244; Edwards, *Gospel According to Luke*, 601).

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θρίξ ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ ἀπόληται

Not only does the verse scan perfectly from the perspective of external metrics (i.e., the combinations of long and short syllables), including the regularly dactylic fifth foot, but it also observes many of the internal features of a proper dactylic hexameter verse form. Most notably, it features a strong masculine caesura in the third foot and a diaeresis between the fourth and fifth feet (the “bucolic diaeresis”), as well as a diaeresis between the first and second feet, and masculine caesurae in the second and fourth feet. Furthermore, it successfully avoids feminine caesurae in the second and fourth feet, and diaereses between both the second and third, and third and fourth feet. Moreover, the diction of the verse, and even the positions of the words and phrases in the verse, are characteristic of Greek dactylic hexameter poetry. That is to say, the three main words in the verse—θρίξ, κεφαλή, and ἀπόλλυμι—all of which appear in extant epic verses, are here placed in metrical positions in which they also appear regularly in those verses.⁶ Luke is probably not quoting an actual epic verse here, for the use of the definite article τῆς is very prosaic, the pronoun ὑμῶν does not have its usual epic form, οὐ μὴ + subjunctive is not an epic construction, and there is a hiatus between μὴ and ἀπόληται.⁷ Rather, it appears that for some reason Luke is reformulating a prosaic proverb into dactylic hexameter verse, perhaps as a nod to the Classical and Hellenistic Greek literary sources that he is drawing from throughout his version of the eschatological discourse.

Luke places a similar proverb in Paul’s mouth in Acts 27 in his account of Paul’s speech to his fellow passengers on their storm-tossed ship. There Paul encourages everyone to take some nourishment, since they have not

6. In all extant Greek epic verse up to the time period of Luke, θρίξ appears in this metrical position in two of its thirty-six occurrences (Homer, *Il.* 23.135; Oppian, *Halieutica* 1.54); κεφαλή appears in this metrical position in almost 60 percent of its several hundred occurrences; ἀπόλλυμι appears in this metrical position in twenty-one of its eighty-one occurrences.

7. The closest parallels in surviving epic verse are Homer, *Od.* 13.399 (ξανθὰς δ’ ἐκ κεφαλῆς ὀλέσω τρίχας [“I will destroy the yellow hair from your head”]) and 13.431 (ξανθὰς δ’ ἐκ κεφαλῆς ὄλεσε τρίχας [“she destroyed the yellow hair from his head”]), but the context is very different (of Athena disguising Odysseus as an old man).

eaten anything, he contends, for fourteen days. Paul assures them that οὐδενὸς γὰρ ὑμῶν θριξὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀπολεῖται (“the hair from the head of not one of you will be destroyed”) (Acts 27:34). The function of the conjunction γὰρ (“for”) is simply to connect the phrase in the second half of Acts 27:34 to the narrative context of the first half. If we delete the conjunction we can see that Luke has again presented us with a full dactylic hexameter verse.⁸

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οὐδενὸς ὑμῶν θριξὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀπολεῖται

Again, not only does the verse scan perfectly from the perspective of external metrics, including the regularly dactylic fifth foot, but it also observes many of the internal features of a proper dactylic hexameter verse form. The diction of the verse, too, and even the positions of the words and phrases in the verse, are characteristic of Greek dactylic hexameter poetry. But, again, I am not proposing that Luke is quoting an actual ancient epic verse here but is rather reformulating a prosaic proverb into dactylic hexameter verse in order to add an epic feature to an account of a sea-voyage across the Mediterranean and a shipwreck off the island of Malta (Acts 27) that he has already embellished, and will continue to embellish, with a certain level of epic resonance: a Cretan storm, a speech on a storm-tossed ship, prayer for dawn to arrive, failure to recognize a land, running a ship aground.⁹

Finally, we turn to the phrase in Luke 21:11 (λιμοὶ καὶ λοιμοὶ [“famines and pestilences”]) which constitutes the title of this article. According to the accounts of Mark and Matthew (Mark 13:3–8; Matt 24:3–8), which are virtually identical in this section of the eschatological discourse, the signs that Jesus claims will presage the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem include the arrival of false prophets, wars and rumors of wars, nation rising up against nation and kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes, and famines. Luke’s account follows Mark’s quite closely in 21:7–10 but takes its own tack in 21:11:

8. I believe the first person to comment on the dactylic hexameter shape of this proverb is Birt, “Αγνωστοὶ θεοί,” 380, who simply notes it in passing.

9. For a detailed analysis of the epic resonance of this entire scene, see Reece, *Formal Education*, 99–117.

σεισμοί τε μεγάλοι καὶ κατὰ τόπους λιμοὶ καὶ λοιμοὶ ἔσονται, φόβητρά τε καὶ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ σημεῖα μεγάλα ἔσται.

There will be great earthquakes and famines and pestilences throughout the lands, and there will be dreadful [portents] and great signs from heaven.

Most notably, Luke alone of the Synoptic Gospels offers here a type of wordplay, termed *paronomasia* and *parechesis* by the ancient Greek grammarians and rhetoricians, by pairing the near homophones λιμός and λοιμός. These two words would have been pronounced almost identically in the Greek of the Koine period as a result of itacism; that is to say, the pronunciation of the diphthong omicron-iota (οι), as in λοιμός, had become indistinguishable from the pronunciation of simple iota (ι), as in λιμός.¹⁰ Mark and Matthew lack this wordplay, as they mention λιμοί (“famines”) but not λοιμοί (“pestilences”).¹¹

The noun form λιμός is common in the New Testament, occurring a dozen times, so it is not surprising to find it here in all three Synoptic Gospels. The noun form λοιμός, on the other hand, occurs only here in the New Testament, so in addition to being remarkable for its uniqueness among the Synoptics in this eschatological discourse, it is remarkable as a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament as a whole. An adjectival form of λοιμός is used once in the New Testament, again by Luke, in the orator Tertullus’s description of Paul as a “pestilential” person (Acts 24:5).

While the pairing of λιμός and λοιμός occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor in the Septuagint, it is a commonplace in Classical and Hel-

10. The same itacism is responsible for the fact that λιμός and λοιμός appear not infrequently as textual variants of each other in a wide range of literature as, e.g., in some manuscripts of Hesiod, *Theog.* 227; Ezek 36:29 LXX; and Mark 13:8.

11. The parallel passages in Mark and Matthew include λοιμός in some manuscripts, but these appear to be concordance interpolations from Luke. The following manuscripts include λοιμός in addition to λιμός in Mark 13:8: Σ 042 (the sixth-century majuscule); 1342 and 2542 (the thirteenth-century minuscules); some early Armenian translations; Θ 038 (the ninth-century majuscule) has λοιμός instead of λιμός—probably simply a result of itacism. Many more manuscripts include λοιμός in addition to λιμός in Matt 24:7: five majuscules, a host of minuscules, and many translations; and it is the reading of the Byzantine text. All manuscripts of Luke 21:11 include both λιμός and λοιμός although the two words are sometimes transposed.

lenistic Greek literature. As the ancients remind us, famine, in reality, often led to pestilence.¹² Some ancient scholars even bind the pair of words together by proposing an etymological connection between them.¹³ It is unsurprising, then, that λιμός (“famine”) and λοιμός (“pestilence”), usually in that order, constitute a natural pair of words that is reiterated many times throughout Greek literature.

The earliest surviving instance of the pair is in the eighth to seventh century BCE epic poet Hesiod’s dactylic hexameter poem *Opera et Dies* (“Works and Days”), where, in a context evocative of Luke’s version of Jesus’ eschatological discourse, Hesiod predicts the various woes that will be suffered by those who practice evil, including λιμὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ λοιμὸν (“famine and pestilence together”) (*Op.* 243). We will return to this Hesiodic passage shortly and consider if Luke may have been echoing it specifically in his pairing of the words in Luke 21:11.

The fifth century BCE historian Herodotus (*Hist.* 7.171.2) relates a tradition from the mythic past that upon their return from the Trojan war the

12. The scholia to Hesiod (*Op.* 242–247) note that λοιμός (“pestilence”) follows naturally upon λιμός (“famine”) because of the weak state of those suffering from hunger and also because those suffering from hunger will eat unwholesome foods out of desperation. Herodotus (*Hist.* 8.115.2–3) and Appian (*Hist. rom.* 12.328; *Bell. civ.* 2.276), too, articulate a causal connection between λιμός and λοιμός.

13. The ninth-century CE *Etymologicum Genuinum* (s.v. λοιγόν, λοιμός, and λιμός) preserves much earlier etymological traditions when it reports that both words are related to λείπω (“leave”) and imply the lack of something: the lack of bodies (λοιμός) and the lack of food (λιμός). A number of twentieth-century Greek linguists have followed suit, proposing in their entries on λιμός and λοιμός (and λοιγός) that the pair are etymologically related, despite the semantic differences, and despite the difficulty of accounting for the formal alternation of -οι- and -ι- (see Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 582, 586–87; Hofmann, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 181–83; Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 641, 645–46). Pokorny (*Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 661–62) places both λιμός and λοιμός under the same PIE (Proto-Indo-European) root *lei- (“eingehehen, abnehmen, schwinden; mager, schlank”). This view has more recently been followed, and extended, by de Lamberterie, “Peste et famine à la fois.” But different Indo-European origins have been proposed for λοιμός, most recently by Milizia, “Greek λοιμός,” who proposes that Middle Persian *rēm* (“dirt, impurity”) and Greek λοιμός (“plague”) go back to a PIE root *loi-mó- (“polluted [or polluting] substance”).

people of Crete, along with their cattle, suffered “both famine and pestilence.” Later, in reference to more recent history, Herodotus (*Hist.* 8.115.2–3) describes the defeated Persian army, as it retreated from Greece, forced to eat grass, bark, and leaves on account of the “famine,” and that this resulted in the death of many by “pestilence.”

The fifth-century BCE historian Thucydides (*Hist.* 2.54.1–3) plays an etymological game with the pair of homophones in his account of the great pestilence that Athens suffered during the war with Sparta. In the midst of their suffering, the Athenians remembered the oracle that had declared that along with the war would come “pestilence” (dactylic hexameter):

ἤξει Δωριακὸς πόλεμος καὶ λοιμὸς ἅμ' αὐτῷ.

A Doric war will come and pestilence along with it.

Thucydides plays around with the homophony of λιμός and λοιμός by noting that some of the ancients had understood the oracle as predicting a λιμός (“famine”) rather than a λοιμός (“pestilence”). Given the current circumstances in Athens, however, the λοιμός interpretation prevailed. Thucydides then adds that if, in a future war with Sparta, Athens were to suffer a famine, the λιμός interpretation would prevail.

The pairing of λιμός and λοιμός continues to be used as a literary word-play by Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman-era orators, philosophers, historians, biographers, mythographers, satirists, astronomers, and astrologists, especially in their compositions of catalogues of the misfortunes that befall humankind.¹⁴ Even some Jewish writers of the Hellenistic and Roman periods embraced the phrase. In the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Test Jud 23.3 predicts the various punishments that the Israelites will suffer for their sins, including “famine and pestilence.” The first-century CE Jewish philosopher Philo (*Somn.* 2.125; cf. *Mos.* 1.110; 2.16) imagines all sorts of catastrophes occurring in Egypt—war, flood, fire, thunderbolt—including famine, pestilence, and earthquake. The first-century CE Jewish historian Josephus (*War* 1.377) places an inspiring speech in Herod’s mouth in which he encourages his troops not to consider pestilence, famine, and earthquakes to be omens of disaster on the battlefield. Josephus (*War* 4.361) also records

14. E.g., Demades, Fragment 84; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 10.53.8; Plutarch, *Cor.* 13.2; *Fort. Rom.* 322a; *Is. Os.* 370B; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 11.79; Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.212; Theon, *Prog.* 108.27; 118.18; 126.13; Appian, *Hist. rom.* prologue 44; 6.417; 12.328; *Bell. civ.* 2.276; Lucian, *Sat.* 18.20–21.

that the veteran soldier Niger utters imprecations on the Zealots as they murder him, calling down upon them famine and pestilence in addition to war. It is perhaps pertinent to our question about possible Hesiodic influence on Luke that many of the Sibylline Oracles that include the pairing “famine and pestilence” are ones that were influenced by Judaism and, later, by Christianity, and, moreover, that the context (divine blessings for the just and punishments for the unjust) and even some of the diction of these oracles are reminiscent of the passage in Hesiod’s *Opera et Dies*. This is not entirely surprising, as the Sibylline Oracles, like Hesiod’s *Opera et Dies*, are composed in the dactylic hexameter verse form, so their authors would have found in Hesiod’s poetry a rich reservoir of formulaic language that was already crafted to fit this demanding meter.¹⁵

We return now to the question posed above: is Luke’s pairing of the near homophones λιμοί and λοιμοί (“famines and pestilences”) in Luke 21:11, which is unique to Luke among the Synoptic Gospels, simply an adoption of a generic Greek literary wordplay, or is it an intentional echo of a specific passage of earlier Greek literature? Most commentators on Luke do not remark on the uniqueness among the Synoptic Gospels of Luke’s version here. Of those that do, most do not attempt to explain its uniqueness. Of the few that do, most attribute it to a literary wordplay that evolved generally in Greek literature because of the homonymy of the pair of words.¹⁶ No one, so far as I am aware, has attributed it to any specific literary work. I would like to entertain the possibility that Luke’s pairing is a deliberate nod to the earliest, most famous, and most often quoted usage of the phrase in Greek literature: that of Hesiod in his *Opera et Dies*. As we have already noted briefly, the context of the passage in Hesiod is similar to the context of Luke’s eschatological discourse. Luke’s account of Jesus’ prophecies of various signs and sufferings (Luke 21:5–36) is prefaced by Jesus’ condemnation of the scribes (γραμματεῖς), who flaunt their wealth, social status, and religiosity, but who ruthlessly exploit the property of widows; these, Jesus says, will receive severe punishment (Luke 20:45–47). In contrast is the

15. Jouanna (“Famine et pestilence,” 214–16) makes this observation in the case of the Jewish Sibylline Oracles and concludes that these oracles were deliberately drawing from Hesiod in order to increase the importance and respectability of the Jewish culture in the eyes of the Greeks.

16. Manson, “Sayings of Jesus,” 618; Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 1337; Jouanna, “Famine et pestilence,” 216; Bovon, *Gospel of Luke*, 106.

poor widow whom Jesus notices tossing two copper coins into the offering box of the temple, at the sight of which Jesus proclaims that the rich contribute from their surplus, but the widow has given her life's savings (Luke 21:1–4). The context of the passage in Hesiod's *Opera et Dies* is similar: Hesiod lays out the rewards for those who follow the way of “justice” (δίκη), in contrast to the punishments for those who follow the way of “violence” (ὑβρις). For the former their city and people flourish; they have peace rather than war; no “famine” (λιμός) or “ruin” (ἄτη) befalls them; rather, the earth produces food, sheep provide wool, and women bear children. For the latter, Zeus assigns severe retribution; their entire city suffers; great woe rains down upon them from heaven—“famine and pestilence together” (λιμὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ λοιμόν); their people perish; their women do not bear children; their households are diminished; their army is vanquished; the wall of their city is destroyed; their ships are lost at sea.

Here is Hesiod's warning about the divine punishments that will be wreaked upon an unjust city and its people (*Op.* 238–247):

οἷς δ' ὑβρις τε μέμηλε κακῆ καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα,
 τοῖς δὲ δίκην Κρονίδης τεκμαίρεται εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς.
 πολλαίκα καὶ ξύμπασα πόλις κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀπηύρα, (240)
 ὅστις ἀλιτραίνει καὶ ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάεται.
 τοῖσιν δ' οὐρανόθεν μέγ' ἐπήγαγε πῆμα Κρονίων,
 λιμὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ λοιμόν· ἀποφθινύθουσι δὲ λαοί·
 οὐδὲ γυναῖκες τίχτουσιν, μινύθουσι δὲ οἴκοι
 Ζηγὸς φραδμοσύνησιν Ὀλυμπίου· ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε (245)
 ἢ τῶν γε στρατὸν εὐρὺν ἀπώλεσεν ἢ ὅ γε τεῖχος
 ἢ νέας ἐν πόντῳ Κρονίδης ἀποτείνυται αὐτῶν.

For those who practice evil violence and wicked deeds,
 far-seeing Zeus, son of Kronos, assigns retribution.

Often even an entire city suffers for an evil man, (240)
 who sins and devises reckless deeds.

Upon these the son of Kronos brings great woe from heaven:
 famine and pestilence together, and people perish,
 and women do not bear children, and households are reduced,
 through the contriving of Olympian Zeus. And again, at another time,
 (245)

the son of Kronos either destroys their vast army, or their city-wall,
 or he spreads their ships out on the sea.

As modern scholars of the New Testament, we do not often consider Hesiod as a possible influence on the authors of the New Testament. We are far more familiar with the epics of Homer, and we have detected, or imagined, that we have found echoes of Homer in the Gospels of Mark and Luke and in the Acts of the Apostles. For example, as several New Testament scholars have observed, the entire narrative of the sea voyage from Crete to Malta in Acts 27:9–28:10, including the storm and shipwreck, resonates verbally and thematically with several accounts of sea voyages in Homer's *Odyssey*.¹⁷ If we remember Hesiod at all, we tend to think first of his *Theogony*, a pious and religious tract that traces the generations of the gods genealogically from the beginning of time. We tend to categorize his *Opera et Dies* as an ancient farmer's almanac of technical advice on how to run a farm and a home: agricultural practices, the seasonal calendar, weather patterns, and so forth. But in fact, the beginning portion of *Opera et Dies* (1–247) is replete with famous and enduring aphorisms: Zeus easily humbles the proud and exalts the lowly (6); the gods keep hidden from men the means of life (42); there is no way to escape the will of Zeus (105); he is a fool who tries to strive against the stronger (210). It is also replete with seminal myths: Prometheus's theft of fire from Zeus; the creation of the first woman Pandora; the curse of Pandora's urn; the five descending ages of humankind, from the golden to the iron. It is rich in material that can be productively compared to the Hebrew Bible and also, to some degree, to the New Testament.

As this beginning portion of *Opera et Dies* winds to a close, we encounter the passage under consideration, where Hesiod first lays out the rewards for the just (*Op.* 225–237) and then the punishments for the unjust (*Op.* 238–247). Both in its larger context and in its smaller details this Hesiodic passage offers several parallels to Jesus' eschatological discourse. Even some of Hesiod's specific diction appears in the eschatological discourse, and especially in those portions that are unique to Luke among the Synoptic Gospels. For example, Hesiod mentions the suffering of the city and the destruction of its army: "the entire city suffers because of an evil man" (*Op.* 240); "he destroys their vast army or their city-wall" (*Op.* 246). Of the Synoptic Gospels, only Luke mentions the city of Jerusalem being

17. Robbins, "By Land and By Sea"; Praeder, "Acts 27:1–28:16"; MacDonald, "Shipwrecks"; Cukrowski, "Paul as Odysseus"; Reece, *Formal Education*, 99–117.

destroyed by armies: “when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies” (Luke 21:20). Mark and Matthew mention the destruction of the temple and the peril to larger Judaea. Also, for Hesiod, *δίκη* (“justice/retribution”) is a large concern: “the son of Kronos assigns justice/retribution” (*Op.* 239). Luke uses a compound form of this word: “these are the days of justice/retribution (*ἐκδίκησις*)” (Luke 21:22). No form of *δίκη*, simplex or compound, occurs in Mark or Matthew. The phrase “days of justice/retribution” is admittedly Septuagintal (e.g., Hos 9:7), but the inclusion of the concept of justice/retribution in Luke falls in line also with the vision of divine judgment in Hesiod. And, of course, most notably, Hesiod uses the pair of terms “famine and pestilence,” and he includes them among the great woes that descend on the people from heaven: “upon these the son of Kronos brings great woe from heaven: famine and pestilence together” (*Op.* 242–243). Only Luke’s version of the eschatological discourse includes this pairing of the terms, and only Luke includes them among the fearful portents and great signs that descend from heaven: “there will be famines and pestilences, and there will be fearful [portents] and great signs from heaven.” We have a rather loose similarity here in the phrases *οὐρανόθεν μέγα . . . πῆμα* (“great woe from heaven”) (*Op.* 242) and *ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ σημεῖα μεγάλα* (“great signs from heaven”) (Luke 21:11). And we have a very close similarity here in the pairing of the words *λιμὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ λοιμὸν* (“famine and pestilence together”) (*Op.* 243) and *λιμοὶ καὶ λοιμοὶ ἔσσονται* (“there will be famines and pestilences”) (Luke 21:11).

Is it possible that Luke was familiar with this Hesiodic passage? This section of *Opera et Dies* was demonstrably well known, at least among the intellectual elite, throughout the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. The Attic orator Aeschines quotes several verses of the passage, including the verse that contains the phrase *λιμὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ λοιμὸν* (“famine and pestilence together”), in a speech against Ctesiphon in 330 BCE (*Ctes.* 135). According to the first-century CE biographer Plutarch (*Stoic. rep.* 1040C), the third-century BCE Stoic philosopher Chrysippus in his treatise “On Justice” (Fragment 1175) quotes some of the passage, including the verse that contains the phrase. Plutarch himself quotes some verses from the passage (Fragment 36–37), including the verse that contains the phrase, and then he makes a judgment that the two subsequent verses are not genuinely Hesiodic. In an apparent nod to Hesiod, the second-century CE historian Appian uses the exact phrase to describe Cleopatra’s Egypt (*Bell. civ.* 4.262) as well as the city of Rome (*Italica* Fragment 11). The Hesiodic

scholia, of course, quote the passage, as do the scholia on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Even the early Christian bishops Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 9.8.12) and Theodoretus (*Phil. hist.* 26.19.4) incorporate the Hesiodic phrase verbatim into their own narratives.

But Hesiod was demonstrably well known not just among the intellectual elite but also among the general reading public of the eastern Mediterranean during Luke's lifetime. Among the many hundreds of thousands of papyrus fragments discovered in Egypt from around the time of Luke (between 100 BCE and 200 CE) many contain passages of Classical and Hellenistic literary works. They provide a good indication of the literary interests of the general reading public in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. Homer is by far the most often cited (1,624 times), but Hesiod (130 times) vies with Euripides (141 times), Demosthenes (173 times), and Menander (125 times) for second place. Passages from Hesiod even appear on papyri that have been identified as school texts (3 times), and some elementary school texts include lists of proper names from Hesiod that appear to have been included to prepare the student for eventually reading Hesiod's works. This is confirmed in the several reading lists for students advocated by ancient rhetoricians and grammarians (e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Dio Chrysostom, Quintilian, and the later compilers of progymnastic exercises for schools), where Hesiod is always mentioned prominently. It is not surprising, then, that among Luke's contemporaries in the eastern Mediterranean, we often find Hesiod quoted and paraphrased. The philosopher and biographer Plutarch quotes or paraphrases Hesiod 207 times and was especially fond of *Opera et Dies* (177 times); as already noted, he even quotes the passage under consideration. Philo quotes Hesiod 11 times (5 times from *Opera et Dies*). Josephus mentions Hesiod twice, once in *Ap.* 1.16, where he observes that the mythographer Acusilaus corrected Hesiod on details of his genealogies, once in *Ant.* 1.108, where he cites Hesiod in support of his assertion that men of old, like Noah, lived an extraordinarily long life—presumably a reference to the “ages of humankind” section of Hesiod's *Opera et Dies* (109–201).¹⁸

18. For an analysis of this data from the literary papyri, from the reading lists of ancient rhetoricians and grammarians, and from quotations and paraphrases of writers contemporary with Luke, in an attempt to determine which Classical and Hellenistic Greek authors Luke may have known, including Hesiod, see Reece, *Formal Education*, 51–85.

My proposal that Luke is evoking a Hesiodic phrase in his pairing of the terms λιμός and λοιμός (“famine and pestilence”) requires that Luke too was familiar, directly or indirectly, with this passage of Hesiod’s *Opera et Dies*. Although this proposal may seem incredible to some, it does not seem to me to go beyond the pale. It is clear to anyone who studies Luke–Acts, especially in its original Greek form, that its author was a product of Hellenistic Greek and Roman culture. He is familiar with many facets of Greco-Roman religion: sacrificial customs, oracular procedures, magic, myth, and the imperial cult.¹⁹ He is familiar with at least some Greek philosophical traditions: Epicureanism and Stoicism (Acts 17:16–34). He is knowledgeable of the workings of Roman government: the names and proper titles of rulers and magistrates, the nature and functions of civic offices, the intricacies of judicial procedures, the requirements of citizenship.²⁰ The prologues to his Gospel (Luke 1:1–4) and, less so, to Acts (Acts 1:1–2) are characteristic of someone versed in the ancient historiographical tradition: his promise to provide for his readers an account that is superior to those of his predecessors, and his claim to be relying on sources that are ultimately “eyewitnesses.”²¹ His narrative includes dating mechanisms that attempt to synchronize the various secular and religious rulers of the time in a manner reminiscent of earlier Greek historians (e.g., Luke 3:1–2). He places speeches at critical points in the narrative, reflecting what the speaker ideally would have said, given the situation, rather than what the speaker actually said verbatim, in the manner of someone familiar with both ancient historiography and ancient rhetoric.

More specifically, Luke was quite at home amidst the briars and brambles of the literary Greek language of his time. Jerome (*Epist. ad Dam.* 20.4; *Comm. Isa.* 3.6.9) rightly claimed that among the evangelists Luke was the

19. Kauppi (*Foreign but Familiar Gods*) infers that Luke would have expected at least some of his audience to have sufficient knowledge of Greco-Roman religion, myth, and literature to comprehend these details of his narrative.

20. Sherwin-White (*Roman Society*) stresses that Luke accurately reflects the Roman legal and judicial procedures of the Julio-Claudian period.

21. For Cadbury’s classic statement that Luke’s prologues reveal him to be a historian in the Classical and Hellenistic tradition, see Foakes-Jackson and Lake, eds., *Acts*, 489–510. Alexander (*Preface to Luke’s Gospel*; “Preface to Acts”) has recently challenged Cadbury’s influential assertion and proposes instead that Luke’s prologues were modeled on those of ancient technical handbooks.

“most skilled” (*eruditissimus*) in Greek and that his language “smacked of secular eloquence” (*saecularem redolet eloquentiam*). Luke knew the Hebrew Bible through its Greek translation, the Septuagint, which he used extensively, even in subtle and sophisticated ways.²² But his proficiency in the Greek language went well beyond Septuagintal Greek. His vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and style are those of someone proficient in idiomatic, sometimes even literary, Hellenistic Greek.²³ He has a larger vocabulary than any other writer of the New Testament: there are about twice as many unique *lemmata* in his gospel as in the Gospel of John, for example. In those passages in which he draws from the Gospel of Mark he tends to make improvements to Mark’s common diction, paratactic syntax, and inelegant style.²⁴ He avoids many of Mark’s Semitisms.²⁵ In short, Luke possessed considerable literary skill, he was familiar with some earlier Greek literary works, and he even drew from them as inspiration in own work.

Where did Luke gain these skills? A recent monograph that has attempted to reconstruct the formal education of the author of Luke–Acts has identified him as a *πεπαιδευμένος* (“educated man”) who had completed at least the first two stages of the *ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία* (“curricular education”) regularly experienced by children of the upper social classes throughout the eastern Mediterranean during the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods.²⁶ And

22. See, e.g., Wifstrand, “Luke.”

23. Rydbeck (*Fachprosa*) compares the Greek of Luke–Acts to that of popular philosophical literature and of technical treatises of the period and concludes that Luke’s language and style is literate but not literary. Alexander (“Septuaginta”) examines Luke’s varied language and style, from Septuagintal to almost Classical, and concludes that it is a form of standard Hellenistic prose that appears also among the writers of technical treatises.

24. Still useful on this topic, from a Classical or “Atticizing” standpoint, are Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, 1:480–92; Cadbury, *Style*, 1–72.

25. The most obvious examples are those passages in which Luke omits—or translates into Greek—a Hebrew or Aramaic word left untranslated in Mark: “amen,” “hosanna,” “rabbi/rabbouni,” and “Golgotha.”

26. Reece, *Formal Education*, 29–85, who adopts, with some minor refinements, the tripartite system of education—primary, secondary, tertiary—canonized by Marrou (*Histoire*), Bonner (*Education in Ancient Rome*, esp. 35–75, 165–276), and Clarke (*Higher Education*), reconstructed largely on the evidence of the many references to education by ancient rhetoricians and grammarians such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Dio Chrysostom, and especially Quintilian.

we may presume a similar educational background for at least some of Luke's audience, beginning with the "most excellent Theophilus" to whom both works are addressed (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Luke—and at least some of his audience—would have become familiar with Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature simply by virtue of studying the Greek language. The advice of ancient rhetoricians and grammarians about what authors should be read in the educational curriculum, the evidence of actual school texts from Egypt, and the many ancient depictions on vase paintings of school children learning their letters by reading the ancient poets all combine to present a picture of an educational curriculum in the eastern Mediterranean during the Hellenistic and Roman imperial periods that revolved primarily around the ancient Greek poets but that also included a few Greek prose authors. After learning the very basic elements of reading and writing (alphabet, syllables, and then complete words), Luke would have been introduced to a carefully graded series of exercises called *progymnasmata* (προγυμνάσματα). Examples of *progymnasmata* from various periods have survived in remarkably homogeneous form in the treatises of Theon (first century CE?), "Hermogenes" (second century CE?), Aphthonius (fourth century CE), Nicolaus (fifth century CE), and "Libanius" (fourth to sixth century CE).²⁷ These exercises began with the reading (always aloud), writing, and studying of maxims, anecdotes, fables, and short stories about famous historical and mythical figures before proceeding with more sophisticated training in various grammatical and rhetorical skills. Students would also practice pronouncing, copying, and construing passages of very difficult poetic texts, even though they probably had little understanding of the meanings of these passages. The educational curriculum concentrated primarily on Homer, Euripides, and Menander, from among the ancient Greek poets, but also on some prose authors, including the Attic orators, especially Demosthenes and Isocrates, the historians Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and Theopompus, and the philosopher Plato.

Assuming that Luke had received only the primary and secondary level of education and had not proceeded to the third level of education in oratory and philosophy, we could still take it for granted that he was familiar with at least some of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, some of Aesop's animal fables,

27. For a translation, along with some commentary, of all the treatises except "Libanius," see Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*. For a translation and commentary on "Libanius," see Gibson, *Libanius's Progymnasmata*.

some of Euripides's tragedies, and some of Menander's comedies, along with some prose texts. But Luke demonstrably knew more. In fact we can detect in the narrative of Luke–Acts itself the author's familiarity with several specific ancient Greek works: Homer's *Odyssey*, Aesop's fables, Epimenides's *On Minos and Rhadamanthus*, Euripides's *Bacchae*, Plato's *Apology*, and Aratus's *Phaenomena*. I offer here a very brief synopsis of the evidence.²⁸ First, we can detect Homer's *Odyssey* resonating quite strongly in Luke's long account of Paul's sea voyage across the Mediterranean and his shipwreck on the island of Malta (Acts 27:1–28:16); some of this resonance is thematic (e.g., Cretan storms, a speech on a storm-tossed ship, failure to recognize a land, prayer for morning to arrive), and some is verbal (ἐπέκειλαν τὴν ναῦν ["they ran the ship aground"], Acts 27:41). Luke's familiarity with the fables of Aesop can be observed in two aphoristic expressions about John the Baptist attributed to Jesus: both κάλαμον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευόμενον ("a reed shaken by the wind") (Luke 7:24) and ἠύλησαμεν ὑμῖν καὶ οὐκ ὤρχήσασθε ("we played the aulos for you, and you did not dance") (Luke 7:32) appear to have been drawn from Aesop's fables; further, an expression attributed by Luke to Jesus on his way to Emmaus with two of his disciples—ὦ ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῆ καρδίᾳ ("Oh foolish ones, and slow in heart") (Luke 24:25)—appears to be an actual quotation of a verse from a poetic version of an early Aesopic fable. Paul's reference at the beginning of his speech on the Areopagus to an inscription reading Ἄγνωστω Θεῷ ("to the unknown god") that he claims to have observed earlier on an altar in Athens (Acts 17:23) appears to be an allusion to a well-known visit to Athens by the ancient Cretan prophet Epimenides. Paul's subsequent assertion in his speech that Ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν ("for in him [God] we live and move and are," Acts 17:28) appears to be a paraphrase of a verse from an epic poem by Epimenides titled *On Minos and Rhadamanthus*. There is much resonance of Euripides's *Bacchae* in Luke's accounts of the experiences of both Peter and Paul throughout Acts; some of this resonance is thematic (e.g., opposition to a new god in the form of *theomachia*, miraculous prison escapes, or a Greek response to a new cult from Asia), and some is verbal (σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν ["it is difficult for you to kick against the goads," Acts 26:14]). There is much thematic and verbal resonance of Plato's *Apology* in Luke's account of the ex-

28. For a full treatment, see Reece, *Formal Education*, 87–229.

periences of Paul in Athens as described in Acts 17, as Paul is depicted as a Socratic figure, engaging in dialogue with whomever he chances upon in the Athenian Agora, introducing new-fangled ideas and foreign divinities into Athens and being judged by the Athenians for doing so. Finally, as has been recognized for almost two millennia—since at least the time of Clement of Alexandria in the second century CE—Paul’s assertion to the Athenians that τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν (“we too are his [God’s] offspring,” Acts 17:28), a phrase that Paul himself attributes to τινες τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς ποιητῶν (“some of your [the Athenians’] poets”), is a quotation of the first half of a dactylic hexameter verse (– – / – ∪ ∪ / – ∪) from the astronomical poem *Phaenomena* (v. 5) by the third-century BCE Cilician poet Aratus.

My conclusion, then, is that Luke’s pairing of the terms λιμός and λοιμός (“famine and pestilence”) in his version of Jesus’ eschatological discourse (Luke 21:5–36) may not have been simply an adoption of a generic Greek literary wordplay, as some commentators have suggested, but that Luke may have been inspired by a specific Hesiodic passage (*Op.* 238–247), which, as we have seen, shares with Luke’s version of the eschatological discourse some features both of its context and its diction.

What was Luke’s purpose in evoking Hesiod in his account of Jesus’ eschatological discourse, and what was the effect on Luke’s audience? In order to attempt an answer to this question it is useful first to consider the participants and settings of the three versions of the discourse in the Synoptic Gospels. The participants are clearly identified in Mark and Matthew: Jesus is explicitly named as the speaker in both gospels (Mark 13:5; Matt 24:4); Jesus’ audience is explicitly named as Peter, James, John, and Andrew in Mark (13:3), and as Jesus’ “disciples” (μαθηταί) in Matthew (24:3); in both Gospels their conversation is said to be held “in private” (κατ’ ἰδίαν), and in both Gospels the setting is explicitly named as the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3; Matt 24:3). All of these features are absent in Luke: while the speaker is, of course, understood to be Jesus, he is addressed only anonymously as διδάσκαλε (“teacher”) (Luke 21:7); the audience is vaguely referred to as τινές (“some people”) (Luke 21:5), who, it appears, are generally receptive to Jesus’ teaching; Luke makes no mention of the conversation being held in private, and he does not explicitly identify the setting of the event, but it may be assumed that it is still occurring in the area of the temple, as in Luke 21:5–6 (and the verses preceding). In fact, Luke’s Gospel stresses that the teaching of Jesus in the temple since the beginning of ch. 20 has been di-

rected toward the *λαός* (“people”) (Luke 20:1, 6, 9, 19, 26, 45; 21:23, 38); Mark and Matthew do not use this term in their parallel passages.

The overall result is that, in Luke, we are presented with a discourse that is much more public and open than Mark and Matthew’s private, esoteric, and cryptic versions. Luke appears to be reformulating Mark’s version of Jesus’ eschatological discourse to make it more appealing to a wider gentile audience. This can be seen both by what Luke leaves out and by what he modifies and/or adds. What Luke leaves out are a number of cryptic allusions to the Old Testament. The Old Testament is full of eschatological visions, especially in Isaiah and Daniel, that share similar concepts and language with Jesus’ eschatological discourse. Indeed, both Mark and Matthew seem to be drawing from specific passages of the Old Testament in the version that they knew, the Septuagint: you will see the “abomination of desolation” (Mark 13:14; Matt 24:15; cf. Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; 1 Macc 1:54); there will be tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of creation until now—and never will occur (Mark 13:19; Matt 24:21; cf. Dan 12:1); there will arise false prophets who will show signs and wonders to lead you astray (Mark 13:22; Matt 24:24; cf. Deut 13:2–4); the sun will be darkened, the moon will fail to give light, and the stars will fall from the sky (Mark 13:24–25; Matt 24:29; cf. Isa 13:10; Joel 2:10; 3:15); the son of man will gather his people from the four winds, from the ends of earth to the ends of heaven (Mark 13:27; Matt 24:31; cf. Zech 2:10; Deut 30:4). Although Luke includes his share of Septuagintal language, none of these particular cryptic allusions to the Old Testament appears in his version of the discourse. What Luke modifies, as already observed, is the setting of the discourse, as well as its apparent participants: Luke’s gentile readers would have been able to relate more readily to a public speech to an undefined audience than to a private conversation with a small group of Jewish disciples. And what Luke adds, again as already observed, are some words, phrases, and expressions that would have been familiar to an audience that had had some exposure to Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature: “great necessity will be upon the earth and anger against this people” (ἔσται γὰρ ἀνάγκη μεγάλη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὀργὴ τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ); “in a state of lack of recourse” (ἐν ἀπορίᾳ); “roaring of the sea” (ἦχος θαλάσσης); “wave-surge” (σάλος); “fear and expectation” (φόβος καὶ προσδοκία); “in no way will a hair from your head be destroyed” (θριξ ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ ἀπόληται); “there will be famines and pestilences throughout the lands” (κατὰ τόπους λιμοὶ καὶ λοιμοὶ ἔσονται).

Finally, I wish to consider another possible, and more specific, motivation for Luke to have evoked Hesiod's *Opera et Dies* in his version of Jesus' eschatological discourse: Luke is accentuating a dimension of the apocalyptic vision of the end times that is largely missing in the other Synoptics, namely that of divine judgment on humankind. By echoing a passage from Hesiod's *Opera et Dies* that was a famous, seminal, mythic text about divine judgment—blessings for the just and punishments for the unjust—Luke is bringing this topic to the surface in his own narrative, albeit subtly and allusively. In Mark and Matthew's versions of Jesus' eschatological discourse there is presented an apocalyptic vision of the end times that is filled with woes and catastrophes, but these are experienced by all: there is no mention of a divine judgment that bestows blessings on the just and punishments on the unjust. However, where Luke's version of Jesus' eschatological discourse deviates from the other Synoptics, there are allusions to blessings upon the repentant Jews (presumably those who recognize Jesus as the Messiah) but judgments upon the unrepentant Jews (presumably those who do not). Luke thereby contributes another dimension to the eschatological vision. This is particularly the case in the deviations that appear to have been inspired by the language and context of Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature.

As far as blessings on the just are concerned, while all three Synoptic Gospels catalogue the persecutions that the followers of Jesus will suffer (Mark 13:9–13; Matt 24:9–14; Luke 21:12–19)—trials, imprisonment, betrayal, hatred, even death—at the end of this catalogue Luke uniquely appends an aphorism in dactylic hexameters θριξ̄ ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ ἀπόληται (“In no way will a hair from your head be destroyed”) (Luke 21:18). As we have observed, the aphorism seems out of place in the present context; one might even say that it contradicts what immediately precedes. But if Luke is viewing Jesus' eschatological discourse through the prism of a divine judgment, the aphorism makes sense as an example of a blessing bestowed on those who merit divine favor.

As far as punishments on the unjust are concerned, most notably only Luke's version of the eschatological discourse includes the pair of terms λιμός and λοιμός (“famine and pestilence”) among the fearful portents and great signs that descend from heaven (Luke 21:11): λιμοὶ καὶ λοιμοὶ ἔσονται, φόβητρά τε καὶ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ σημεῖα μεγάλα ἔσται (“there will be famines and pestilences, and there will be fearful [portents] and great signs from heaven”). This appears to be an echo of Hesiod, *Op.* 242–243: τοῖσιν δ'

οὐρανόθεν μέγ' ἐπήγαγε πῆμα Κρονίων, λιμὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ λοιμὸν (“upon these the son of Kronos brings great woe from heaven: famine and pestilence together”). Luke thereby plugs his version of the eschatological discourse into the well-known Hesiodic passage of divine judgment upon the just and the unjust. Also, Luke alone of the Synoptics uses the term ἐκδικήσις (“justice/retribution”) (Luke 21:22): *ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως αὐταὶ εἰσιν* (“these are the days of justice/retribution”). No form of δίκη, simplex or compound, occurs in Mark or Matthew. The phrase *ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως* (“days of justice/retribution”) is very likely drawn from the Septuagint (e.g., Hos 9:7), but the inclusion of the concept of δίκη also falls in line with the vision of divine judgment in Hesiod. Finally, Luke uniquely uses the Classical and Hellenistic Greek phrase *ἀνάγκη μεγάλη* (“great necessity”) in his warning (Luke 21:23): *ἔσται γὰρ ἀνάγκη μεγάλη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὀργὴ τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ* (“great necessity will be upon the earth and anger against this people”). By “this people,” Luke appears to mean the unrepentant Jews. Whereas Mark and Matthew include here the assurance that the Lord has shortened those days lest all perish (Mark 13:20; Matt 24:22), Luke uniquely adds a prediction of graver punishments (Luke 21:24): the Jews will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken captive by the gentiles, and, moreover, Jerusalem will be trodden down by the gentiles until the time of the gentiles is fulfilled.

In sum, here in his version of Jesus’ eschatological discourse, Luke subtly and artistically presents the destruction of Jerusalem as a punishment upon unrepentant Jews for rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. This is something that Luke has done more explicitly already in a passage leading up to this one that, again, is unique to Luke among the Synoptics (Luke 19:41–44). There Jesus weeps over Jerusalem and predicts its destruction, saying (19:43–44),

Your enemies will set up ramparts around you, and they will encircle you, and they will hem you in on every side, and they will dash you to the ground as well as your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another within you, since you did not recognize the time of the visitation upon you.

By “the visitation upon you” Luke apparently means Jesus’ arrival and his message of salvation, which most Jews rejected. Luke has also, more implicitly, prepared the way for this dimension of his eschatological discourse by including Jesus’ parable of the wicked tenants (Luke 20:9–19), which appears also in Mark 12:1–12, in the narrative leading up to this passage. A

man planted a vineyard, let it out to some tenants, and then went abroad for a long time. When the time of harvest arrived the owner of the vineyard sent a series of servants to the tenants to claim some of the produce. But the tenants treated them all shamefully and sent them away. Finally, the man sent his own beloved son, since, he thought, they would surely respect him. But the tenants cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Jesus then asks rhetorically what the owner of the vineyard will do to the tenants. He will come and destroy those tenants, Jesus answers, and give the vineyard to others. The parable is obviously an allegory for the mistreatment by the Jews of the ancient prophets, culminating in their rejection of the last of the prophets, the very son of God. The Jewish scribes and Pharisees in the audience do not miss the point, as they themselves acknowledge that Jesus has told this parable against them (Luke 9:19).

It is difficult to trace the origin of the idea that Jerusalem and its temple would be/had been destroyed by the Romans as a form of divine punishment against the unrepentant Jews for their rejection of Jesus. Some will attribute it to Jesus himself, some to Luke's sources, some to Luke, some to later Christian editors. Those who attribute it to Luke sometimes assert that he must have been writing after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE. Others point out that the destruction of Jerusalem may have simply appeared more imminent by the time Luke's gospel was being written. Indeed, the fate of Jerusalem would have been predictable to anyone living during the years leading up to the actual Roman siege of the city. In any case, in his version of Jesus' eschatological discourse Luke was viewing the destruction, or imminent destruction, of Jerusalem from a perspective somewhat different from the other Synoptic Gospels: as a form of divine punishment upon the unrepentant Jews for their rejection of Jesus as Messiah. This theme was to be taken up by many of the early Christian apologists—e.g., Origen (*Cels.* 4.22); Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.5); Lactantius (*Inst.* 4.21)—and, of course, it would be used to justify the mistreatment of Jewish people for the subsequent two millennia.

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