

The assaulted (man) on the Jerusalem – Jericho road: Luke’s creative interpretation of 2 Chronicles 28:15

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The article takes as a point of departure that the parable of the Good Samaritan was inspired by Luke’s reading of 2 Chronicles 28:15. After introducing the concept of Lucan creative interpretation by referring to other examples in the gospel, it will be argued that a comparison between the texts in question provides a relief for an even better understanding of the parable. Some hermeneutical conclusions will be drawn regarding the concept of ‘creative interpretation’ for the authority of the Bible and its use, the theodicy problem, and the ultimate purpose of the gospel’s emphasis on the marginalised, taking Old Testament motif(s) of beauty into account.

Introduction

The parable of the Good Samaritan may be well known to most of us, but to many the text of 2 Chronicles 28:15 may be rather obscure. I quote the Revised Standard Version (with own adaptations) (Box 1).

Not only about all the major commentaries on Luke’s Gospel when commenting on Luke 10:30–36 refer to 2 Chronicles 28:15 (not so Wiefel 1988:206–2011), but commentators on the Chronicles text also refer to the Good Samaritan parable (e.g. Rudolph 1955; not so Curtis & Madsen 1910:458–459). Since the similarities are there for all to see, Coggins (2003:307) in his Chronicles commentary concludes that the Lucan parable ‘is surely based’ on 2 Chronicles 28:15. This may of course imply that the parable is denied to the historical Jesus, which may be a reason why New Testament scholars are more cautious. Klein (2006), for instance in his voluminous *Meyers Kritische Kommentar* (which took 114 years to appear after that of Weiss [1892]) concluded after some discussion that it should first be demonstrated that Luke knew the Chronicler so precisely that he could interact so independently with it, whereas Wolter (2008:395) sees no connection. Or if the parable is still ascribed to the historical Jesus (as Crossan [1994:49] for instance does) a great deal of creativity and erudition on a literary level (which is not usually the case) is assumed regarding the historical Jesus.

It would not be my prime aim in what follows to prove beyond doubt that Luke indeed used the Chronicler. I will rather presuppose as a point of departure that he did, and trace the creative process involved in such a case. Firstly, I will discuss briefly two other examples of *creative interpretation* in Luke’s Gospel (and only refer to some others) to show what is meant by this concept and to indicate that Luke indeed used the text in this creative way. Secondly, a closer (synoptic) look at the Chronicles text will follow compared to the Deuteronomistic text of 2 Kings 16. Thereafter the text of 2 Chronicles 28:15 will briefly be compared with the Lucan parable, noting the similarities and differences. To complete the picture of reinterpretation, I will indicate how Luke made the parable to function in the gospel at large. Some conclusions will be drawn and some hermeneutical remarks made.

Creative reinterpretation in Luke’s Gospel

Our first example of creative interpretation will be a case where Luke made use of his basic source, namely Mark’s Gospel, in order to show clearly that he indeed used his sources creatively. The second example will be a case when he used *both* Mark and the Old Testament (Is 61:1–3), after which various other instances of creative interpretation will only be indicated, the investigation of which could only provide an increasingly profound insight in Luke’s method and thought.

The (sinful woman) anointing Jesus (‘feet’): Luke’s version of Mark 14:3–9

Luke’s version of the anointing woman (Box 2) is so different from that of his source Mark (he extended 7 verses to 14) that some scholars are of the opinion that it forms part of his peculiar material (*Sondergut*) which either is Luke’s own creations or a separate source (L) from which he

borrowed. However, it is beyond doubt that he meant it to be an interpretation of Mark 14:3–9, since the passage is omitted in the Marcan sequence which he (like Matthew) usually follows (Box 3).

Central to Luke's reinterpretation is the significance of the anointment. According to Mark (and followed by Matthew and John) it is interpreted as a prelude to Jesus' burial. For Luke the focus is on the forgiveness or release (social acceptance, liberation) which the 'sinful' woman (Simon the Pharisee hints that she was a prostitute) receives.

It is interesting to note that by transposing the passage to Jesus' Galilean ministry, with no (post-Easter) interpretation regarding Jesus' crucifixion and burial, or the ultimate spread of the gospel, Luke actually situates the occurrence squarely within the earthly life of Jesus, and his version is thereby most probably the historically more correct one. There are more differences that are significant and which could be interpreted within the framework of Luke's theology, for example:

- the use of the parable (of the creditor and two debtors) in Luke's version
- Mary (Magdalene?) in John 12 and Luke 8:1–3
- the anointment on the *head* (Mk and Mt) versus the *feet* (with erotic connotations) in Luke and John
- the absence of the statement 'you will have the poor always with you' in Luke.

Constraints of space do not allow elaboration here but these variations are indicated to illustrate the creativity of the Lucan version (which a detailed analysis is bound to show even further, see commentaries on Luke).

Jesus' programmatic preaching in Nazareth: Luke's creative reinterpretation of Mark 6:1–6 and Isaiah 61:1–3

Again Luke has more than double the verses of his source (15 vs. Mk's 6) (Box 4). Again he transposes the passage from the Marcan sequence: it should have been situated between the passage about Jairus's daughter and the woman with haemorrhage (Lk 8:40–46; Mk 5:21–43) and the commissioning of the twelve (Lk 9:1–6; Mk 6:7–13).

Luke transposes it at the beginning of his report on Jesus' Galilean ministry, as a programmatic introduction to the gospel as a whole.¹ All the main Marcan motifs are retained in the dramatic Lucan expansion, for example, the (1) Sabbath preaching, the (2) amazement of the addressees, (3) the absence of healings in Jesus' home town, (4) the adage of the prophet not honoured in his own hometown, and (5) the offence taken at Jesus.

However, in his version Luke typifies what the content of Jesus' ministry entails and implies by quoting from Trito-Isaiah (61:1–4) the verse which traditionally functions almost just as prominently in liberation theology (see Scheffler 1991a) as the exodus tradition (Table 1).

1. For a more detailed discussion of the passage see Scheffler (1991a, 1991b, 1993); Albertz (1983); Busse (1978).

BOX 1: Text and translation of 2 Chronicles 28:15.

וַיִּקְמוּ הַנְּאֻשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־נִקְבוּ בְשֵׁמוֹת	(15a) Then those who were specified by name stood up
וַיִּתְּנוּ בָשָׂרָהּ	(b) and took the captives,
וְגַלְמֵי־מַעֲרִיטָהֶם הִלְבִּישׁוּ מִרְהַשְׁלָה	(c) and with the booty clothed all that were naked;
וַיִּלְבְּשׁוּם וַיַּנְעִלֵם	(d) they clothed them, gave them sandals,
וַיִּזְכְּלוּם וַיִּשְׁקֶם וַיִּסְכְּוֵם	(e) provided them with food and drink, and anointed them;
וַיִּנְהֲלוּם בְּחַמְרֵים לְכָל־כּוֹשֵׁל	(f) and carrying all the stumbling among them on donkeys,
וַיְבִיאוּם יְרֵחוֹ עִיר־הַתְּמָרִים	(g) they brought them to Jericho, the city of palms,
אֶצֶל אֲחֵיהֶם	(h) to their brothers.
וַיָּשׁוּבוּ שְׁמָרוֹן:	(i) Then they returned to Samaria.

BOX 2: The anointing woman.

Mark 14:3–9:

³ While he was at Bethany in the house of *Simon the leper*, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an *alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard*, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head.

⁴ But some were there who said to one another in anger, 'Why was the ointment wasted in this way?

⁵ For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.' And they scolded her.

⁶ But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me.

⁷ For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me.

⁸ She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial.

⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.'

Luke 7:36–50:

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table.

³⁷ And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an *alabaster jar of ointment*.

³⁸ She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment.

³⁹ Now when the *Pharisee* who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this who is touching him – that she is a sinner.'

⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.'

'Teacher', he replied, 'Speak'.

⁴¹ 'A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?'

⁴³ Simon answered, 'I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.' And Jesus said to him, 'You have judged rightly.'

⁴⁴ Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.

⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet.

⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.'

⁴⁸ Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.'

⁴⁹ But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?'

⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

John 12:1–8:

¹ Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him.

³ Mary took a *pound of costly perfume made of pure nard*, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

⁴ But *Judas Iscariot*, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said,

⁵ 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?'

⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)

⁷ Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial.

⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

Interestingly, the Lucan text refers, as can be deduced from the rest of the passage, for example, the references to the widow of Zarephthah and Naaman the Syrian (Lk 4:26–27), to far more than political liberation, whereas the Isaiah

BOX 3: The anointing woman: Luke's (non-)use of Mark.

Jesus' death is premeditated	Mark 14:1–2	Luke 22:1–2	Matthew 26:1–5
The anointing of Jesus by a woman	Mark 14:3–9	<i>Luke moves the passage to Luke 7:36–50</i>	Matthew 26:6–13
The betrayal by Judas	Mark 14:11–12	Luke 22:3–6 <i>Luke resumes the Marcan sequence</i>	Matthew 26:14–16

BOX 4: Synopsis of Luke 4:16–30, Mark 6:1–6a and Isaiah 61:1–4 (Jesus in Nazareth).

<p>Mark 6:1–6a: ¹And he went out from there, and he came into his home town; and his disciples followed him. ²And when the Sabbath had come, he began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, 'Where did this man get these things, and what is <i>this</i> wisdom given to him, and such miracles as these performed by his hands?' ³'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offense at him. ⁴And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his home town and among his <i>own</i> relatives and in his <i>own</i> household.' ⁵And he could do no miracle there except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them. ⁶And he wondered at their unbelief.</p> <p>Luke 4:16–30: ¹⁶And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as was his custom, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. ¹⁷And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, be he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, ¹⁹to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.' ²⁰And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him. ²¹And he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' ²²And all were speaking well of him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from his lips; and they were saying, 'Is this not Joseph's son?' ²³And he said to them, 'No doubt you will quote this proverb to me, "Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your home town as well." ²⁴And he said, 'Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his home town.' ²⁵'But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; ²⁶and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.' ²⁷'And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.' ²⁸And all in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; ²⁹and they rose up and cast him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw him down the cliff. ³⁰But passing through their midst, he went his way.</p> <p>Isaiah 61:1–4: ¹The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; ²to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, ³to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. ⁴Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise up the former devastations, and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.</p>
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text functions more in a political context.² However, I have never come across any liberation theologian appropriating the Isaian text for their cause. To my mind one can ascribe this oddity only to the lack amongst liberation theologians of reading texts in their proper contexts (shown here to be the case regarding the omission of Isaiah as well as the appropriation of Luke).³

That Luke through his creative interpretation typifies Jesus' ministry as release or liberation for the poor, the blind and the demon-possessed (as his word 'captives' should be translated in view of Ac 10:38) is significant. For the Lucan Jesus the world is not a place where the beauty of creation guarantees the happiness of people. It is a place where people (yearning for happiness, 'the year of the Lord's favour') suffer. Jesus' ministry consists of good news, not because it primarily proclaims a release from this world into a heavenly one, but because it confronts the suffering in the present world head-on.

To ensure that the gospel is thus understood, Luke creatively reworked his Marcan source and used the LXX (Septuagint) of Isaiah 61:1–2 to serve his purpose. Below I will hopefully illustrate that he went about in a similar fashion in his narration of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Moreover, I hope to illustrate that his narration of the parable is but one of the many expressions of the stance towards suffering people in the Nazareth episode.

The following are further examples of (possible) creative interpretations in Luke's Gospel, namely, (1) the Magnificat (Lk 1:46–56) and the song of Hannah (1 Sm 2:1–10); (2) the widow of Nain (Lk 7:11–17) and Elisha's raising of the widow's son in 2 Kings 4; (3) the parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:16–21) and Proverbs 27:1; (4) the parable of the barren fig tree (Lk 13:6–9) and the cursing of the fig tree (Mk 11:12–14); (5) on choosing places at table (Lk 14:7–11) and Proverbs 25:6; (6) the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11–31) and the two sons (Mt 21:28–32); (7) the ten lepers (Lk 17:11–19) and the healing of the leper (Mk 1:40–45); and (8) the importunate widow (Lk 18:1–8) and Sirach 35:14–15.

2. For an apt discussion of the Isaian text in the postexilic context of the poor, see Hanson (1979:46–76).

3. Whilst in liberation theology the Old Testament functions prominently as far as the Exodus narrative is concerned (also the prophets Amos, Micah and Jeremiah) the text of Isaiah 61:1–2 is hardly referred to.

TABLE 1: Synopsis of Isaiah 61:1–2 and Luke 4:18–19.

Isaiah 61:1–4 (MT)	Isaiah 61:1–2 (LXX)	Isaiah 61:1–2(LXX)	Luke 4:18–19
<p>רִיחַ אֲדֹנָי הִתְהַלַּךְ לְבַשׂר אֲנִי לְבַשׂר עֲנִינִים שְׁלַחֲנִי לְהַבְשִׁיל לְנַשְׁבְּרֵי לֵב לְקָרְא לְאֲבֵינֵי דְרוּר וְלְאֲסֻרִים פְּקַח־קֶחֶת:</p>	<p>¹The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;</p>	<p>¹ πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ' ἐμέ οὗ εἵνεκεν ἔχρισέν με εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς ἀπέσταλκέν με ἰάσασθαι τοὺς συντετριμμένους τῇ καρδίᾳ κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν</p>	<p>¹⁸ Πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ' ἐμέ οὗ εἵνεκεν ἔχρισέν με εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς, ἀπέσταλκέν με, κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν, ἀποστείλαι θεραπευμένους ἐν ἄφεσει,</p>
<p>לְקָרְא שְׁנַת־רִצּוֹן לִיהוָה וְיוֹם נְקָם לְאֲבֵינֵי דְנַחֲם קְל־אֲבֵלִים:</p>	<p>² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;</p>	<p>² καλέσει ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτὸν καὶ ἡμέραν ἀνταποδοσεως παρακαλέσει πάντας τοὺς πενθοῦντας</p>	<p>¹⁹ κηρύξαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτὸν.</p>

MT, Masoretic Text; LXX, Septuagint.

2 Chronicles 28:5–15 and 2 Kings 16 compared

Most scholars would agree that the Chronicler (who wrote his work about 300–250 BCE) used the text of the book of Kings (amongst others) for narrating Israel's history from creation up to the exile. A synoptic comparison between 2 Chronicles 28 and 2 Kings 16 is therefore called for (cf. also Is 7).

Both chapters relate the reign of king Ahaz (742–727 BCE; Miller & Hayes 2006) within the context of the Syro-Ephraimitic war in which king Pekah of the Northern kingdom went into alliance with Rezon of Syria to oppose the Assyrian domination during the reign of Tiglat-Pileser. Ahaz of Judah (probably on the advice of the prophet of Isaiah) refused to take part in the alliance, paying tribute to Assyria instead. Ahaz was consequently attacked by the Syro-Ephraimitic alliance with the aim of forcing Judah into cooperation (see Scheffler 2001:107, 120–121; Miller & Hayes 2006:378–380). Ahaz (contrary to Isaiah's advice to be passive and trust in the Lord), resorted to Assyria for help and became a vassal state of the latter. Tiglat-Pileser responded by dethroning Rezon of Syria. Ahaz, though he saved Judah for another 130 years, was accused by both historiographers for introducing Baal practices into Judah.

The difference between the accounts is that Chronicles reports (as a fairly large interpolation of 10 verses) that the Israelite forces from Samaria had initial success in the war against Judah. In one day 120 000 Judeans were killed, including palace personnel, and 200 000 women and children were taken as captives to function as slaves (2 Chr 28:6–8) (Box 5).

The prophet Oded protested against the violence involved ('a rage that reached up to heaven'), the 'brother' conflict, and urged the army to release the Judean captives. The narrative obtains an authentic ring when four army officers are all mentioned by name: Azariah, Berechiah, Jehizkiah and Amasa. These officers responded positively to Oded's prophecy by repeating the prophet's message to the warriors, who eventually released the captives.

But the four officers are reported to have gone even further than what the prophet had demanded. The captives were not left to their own fate, but – voluntarily – with concrete acts of compassion they were clothed, fed, medically treated and led on donkeys (at the expense of the Samaritans) to their 'brothers' (= kindred, family, compatriots) in Jericho (on the border between the Northern and the Southern kingdoms).

If one takes the Chronicler's perspective into account that actually only Judah represented the legitimate continuation of Israel, these 'Samaritan' acts become even more remarkable. And even more so if one takes into account that during the writing of the Chronicles text there already existed intense conflict between the Samaritans (who were regarded as racially impure and not being true believers) and the Jews. This brings us back to the familiar parable which we know so well.

2 Chronicles 28:15 and Luke 10:30–35: A comparison

It is noteworthy that if the parable of the Good Samaritan is compared with the LXX text of 2 Chronicles 28:15 there are virtually no similarities in the use of *language* (Table 2). The reference to Jericho is actually the only term occurring in both passages. The fact that we know that Luke knew and used the LXX (as was illustrated in his use of Is 61:1–2 in Lk 4:18–19), has the implication that Luke (Box 6) created the parable with the Chronicles text vaguely in his mind, or that he got it from another source, leaving us with the possibility that the text could indeed go back to the historical Jesus, as is actually asserted by many historical Jesus scholars (e.g. Crossan 1991). In such a case part of the creativity in the reinterpretation of 2 Chronicles 28:15 should then be attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. One can also imagine that Jesus, on occasion to appease Jewish hatred for the Samaritans (as is the impression created by the travel narrative as a whole, recalled the incident described in 2 Chronicles 28, and that people recalled the fact that he did that and it thus became part of the oral tradition. Luke then, whom we know from his artistic abilities, created a parable out of it, and put it into Jesus' mouth to drive the same message home. Although a probability, however, this cannot be proven.

Similarities between 2 Chronicles 28:15 and Luke 10:30–37

In the absence of terms, the most significant similarities between the Chronicles text and the parable are thus limited to *motifs* regarding content which for the moment are merely mentioned. In the discussion below of the differences

BOX 5: The text of 2 Chronicles 28:5–15.

2 Chronicles 28:5–15 (not in 2 Ki 16):

⁵Therefore the LORD his God gave him into the hand of the king of Aram, who defeated him and took captive a great number of his people and brought them to Damascus. He was also given into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with great slaughter.

⁶Pekah son of Remaliah killed one hundred twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all of them valiant warriors, because they had abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

⁷And Zichri, a mighty warrior of Ephraim, killed the king's son Maaseiah, Azrikam the commander of the palace, and Elkanah the next in authority to the king.

⁸The people of Israel took captive two hundred thousand of their kin, women, sons, and daughters; they also took much booty from them and brought the booty to Samaria.

⁹But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded; he went out to meet the army that came to Samaria, and said to them, 'Because the LORD, the God of your ancestors, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand, but you have killed them in a rage that has reached up to heaven.

¹⁰Now you intend to subjugate the people of Judah and Jerusalem, male and female, as your slaves. But what have you except sins against the LORD your God?

¹¹Now hear me, and send back the captives whom you have taken from your kindred, for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you.'

¹²Moreover, certain chiefs of the Ephraimites, Azariah son of Johanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai, stood up against those who were coming from the war,

¹³and said to them, 'You shall not bring the captives in here, for you propose to bring on us guilt against the LORD in addition to our present sins and guilt. For our guilt is already great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel.'

¹⁴So the warriors left the captives and the booty before the officials and all the assembly.

¹⁵Then those who were mentioned by name got up and took the captives, and with the booty they clothed all that were naked among them; they clothed them, gave them sandals, provided them with food and drink, and anointed them; and carrying all the feeble among them on donkeys, they brought them to their kindred at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

TABLE 2: Synopsis 2 Chronicles 28:15.

Masoretic Text (MT)	Septuagint (LXX)	New Revised Standard Version
וַיִּקְמוּ הַשְּׂמָרִיטִים	¹⁵ και ἀνέστησαν ἄνδρες	^(15a) Then those who were
וַיִּשְׂרְפוּ בְּשִׁבְרֵי בְּשָׂמָיִם	οἱ ἐπεκλήθησαν ἐν ὀνόματι	specified by name stood up
וַיִּקְחוּ בְּשַׁבְיָהּ	καὶ ἀντελάβοντο τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας	^(b) and took the captives,
וַיִּלְבְּשׁוּ מִן־הַבֹּטְיָהּ	καὶ πάντα τοὺς γυμνοὺς	^(c) and with the booty clothed all the
וַיִּלְבְּשׁוּ	περιέβαλον ἀπὸ τῶν σκύλων	were naked;
וַיַּעֲבִדוּ	καὶ ἐνέδυσαν αὐτούς	^(d) they clothed them,
וַיִּשְׂבְּלוּ	καὶ ὑπέδισαν αὐτούς	gave them sandals,
וַיִּשְׂבְּלוּ	καὶ ἔδωκαν φαγεῖν	^(e) gave them food and drink,
וַיִּשְׂבְּלוּ	καὶ ἀλείψασθαι	and anointed them;
וַיִּשְׂבְּלוּ	καὶ ἀντελάβοντο ἐν ὑποστυγίσι παντός	^(f) and carrying all the stumbling among
וַיִּשְׂבְּלוּ	ἀσθενοῦντος	them on donkeys,
וַיִּבְרִיחוּ	καὶ κατέστησαν αὐτούς εἰς Ἱερριχὸν πόλιν	^(g) they brought them to Jericho,
וַיִּבְרִיחוּ	φοινικῶν	the city of palms,
וַיִּבְרִיחוּ	πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτῶν	^(h) to their brothers.
וַיִּבְרִיחוּ	καὶ ἐπέστρεψαν εἰς Σαμάρειαν	⁽ⁱ⁾ Then they returned to Samaria.

BOX 6: Synopsis Luke 10:30–37.

³⁰ ὁπολαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Ἄνθρωπός τις κατέβαινεν ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ εἰς Ἱερριχὸν καὶ λησταὶς περιέπεσεν, οἱ καὶ ἐκδύσαντες αὐτὸν καὶ πληγὰς ἐπιθέντες ἀπήλθον ἀφέντες ἡμίθανῃ.	³⁰ Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead .
³¹ κατὰ συγκυρίαν δὲ ἱερεὺς τις κατέβαινεν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἐκείνῃ καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ἀντιπαρήλθεν.	³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.
³² ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Λευίτης [γενόμενος] κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν ἀντιπαρήλθεν.	³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.
³³ Σαμαριτὴς δὲ τις ὁδεύων ἦλθεν κατ' αὐτὸν καὶ ἰδὼν ἐπλαγχνίσθη.	³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity .
³⁴ καὶ προσελθὼν κατέδησεν τὰ τραύματα αὐτοῦ ἐπιγέων ἔλαιον καὶ οἶνον, ἐπιβίβασας δὲ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον κτήνος ἤγαγεν αὐτὸν εἰς πανδοχεῖον καὶ ἐπεμελήθη αὐτοῦ.	³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them . Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.
³⁵ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν αὔριον ἐκβαλὼν ἔδωκεν δύο δηνάρια τῷ πανδοχεῖ καὶ εἶπεν, Ἐπεμελήθητι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅ τι ἂν προσδαπανήσῃς ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ ἐπανερχεσθαί με ἀποδώσω σοι.	³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend. "
³⁶ τίς τούτων τῶν τριῶν πλησίον δοκεῖ σοι γεγονέναι τοῦ ἐμπεσόντος εἰς τοὺς ληστὰς;	³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?'
³⁷ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν, Ὁ ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος μετ' αὐτοῦ. εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Πορεύου καὶ σὺ ποιεὶ ὁμοίως.	³⁷ He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

between the text further comments are due to be made regarding these similarities:

- Firstly, there is an act of *benevolence* performed to people (or a person) in need.
- Secondly, the victims were assaulted, in war or otherwise.
- Thirdly, the protagonist is an enemy: Samaritans/a Samaritan care(s) for (a) Jew(s).

- Fourthly, the victims were (mostly) naked.
- Fifthly, part of the care consists in the treatment of wounds.
- Sixthly, the victims were brought to a safe place.
- Seventhly, animal transport is provided by the Samaritans/the Samaritan
- Eighthly, Jericho (the city of palms) is mentioned both texts (as destination)
- Ninthly, ultimately the Samaritans/Samaritan leave the victim.

These nine similarities which touch on all aspects of the narrative provide to my mind enough evidence that one can conclude that the parable was inspired by the Chronicles text, whether the original author was Jesus, or author of the gospel himself. The similarities need not to be explained in terms of *textual* dependence, but could have occurred through *oral* and *cultural* memory which the historical Jesus (as a poor peasant who in all probability was analphabetic) had to rely upon.

In order to prove independence there should be enough similarities between two texts, but to prove that one is a creative reinterpretation of the other, there should be enough *differences*. It is precisely on those points where the author (or composer of the parable) alters the tradition, where his or her creativity is (amongst others) to be found.

Differences between 2 Chronicles 28:15 and Luke 10:30–37

Differences on the points of similarities

If one considers the motifs where there exist similarities between the two texts, differences can also be noted on almost every point, due to the creative interpretative process:

1. The acts of benevolence are presented in both texts differently. The parable does not explicitly mention the clothing and feeding of the victim, although it is implied in the use of the term *ἐπεμελήθη* (take care, 2 times) in verses 34–35.
2. In the Chronicles text the assaulted people were wounded soldiers, whereas in the parable the assaulted man was attacked by robbers and left half dead (ἡμίθανῃ).
3. Although *enemies* are involved in both texts, the narrated world of the texts are about seven centuries apart, which is less so if the Chronicles text is interpreted against the backdrop of the time of its writing (3rd century BCE, when one can already speak of Samaritans and enmity between the latter and Jews in view of the Samaritan schism).
4. In the parable it is stated that the assaulted man was stripped (ἐκδύσαντες) by robbers, whereas in the Chronicles text their being naked was probably the result of booting.
5. The treatment of the wounds is more elaborately reported in the parable (the Samaritan bandaged the wounds having poured oil and wine on them), whereas in the Chronicles text only the term 'anoint' is used.

6. In the parable the victim is brought to an inn to be cared for on the way to Jericho, whereas in 2 Chronicles 28:15 the wounded soldiers are brought to Jericho, to their kindred ('brothers'), which can also imply safety and care.
7. In the Chronicles text donkeys are mentioned whereas κτήνος, which could mean any domesticated animal (e.g. a donkey or a camel) is referred to in Luke 10:34. Interestingly readers of the parable usually imagine a donkey, as in Van Gogh's famous painting (see Figure 1). Could it be that the Chronicles text still plays a role in the collective subconscious memory when the parable is interpreted?
8. The Samaritans returned to Samaria, whereas the Samaritan also left but promised to come back.
9. In the Chronicles text Jericho functions as the home of the Judeans, whereas in the parable it functions as the destination of the victim's journey which he in the parable never reaches.

These differences relating to the similar motifs of the two texts testify to the creativity involved in the composition of the parable. But there are also other significant differences.

Difference of genre: History versus parable

The text of 2 Chronicles 28:5–15 purports to be history, whether the event described actually happened or not. Its omission in 2 Kings 16 may suggest that it is legendary. The parable, however, is complete fiction and the fact that it is created on the basis of this event testifies to the significance of



Source: Van Gogh's, V., 1849, 'Good Samaritan', in *Art and Bible*, viewed n.d, from <http://www.artbible.info/art/large/595.html>

FIGURE 1: Vincent Van Gogh's famous painting, the Good Samaritan, interpreting the transporting animal to be a donkey, more in accordance with 2 Chronicles 28:15 than with Luke 10:34.

the message of the described event in terms of caring for the enemy. This parable actually communicates that a historical event does not need to be literally true to have a message – something that ancient readers seem to have realised better than some present-day fundamentalists. In Luke's Gospel, as part of the teaching of Jesus, it encourages the hearer of the parable and the gospel not to think in terms of own nationalistic tribal loyalties but to be involved in caring deeds of compassion to sufferers whoever they are (cf. Scheffler 2006:77–106).

A war situation versus individual assault

In the text of Chronicles a war situation is described and the caring deeds are done by the victors for the prisoners of war. The value of this subtle criticism of war situations cannot be denied and correlates with similar antiwar sentiments of the Chronicler, such as his criticism of David who was denied the building of the temple because he had spilt so much blood (1 Chr 22:8).⁴ However, in the parable in Luke's Gospel an individual is the focus of attention. This corresponds to other deeds of compassion described in Luke's Gospel (whether in parables or healings by Jesus) where the focus is usually on an individual (e.g. the sinful woman in Lk 7; the bent woman in Lk 13 and the prodigal son in Lk 15). The focus on the individual is significant, since it portrays a Jesus who cares for *every* human being and not only humanity or creation at large, poignantly expressed in the parable of the lost sheep.

The non-action of the clergy in the parable

Nothing is mentioned of the involvement of *Priests or Levites* in 2 Chronicles 28:5–15. As far as religious leaders are concerned only the prophet Oded (who called for the benevolent action) is mentioned. One can say he has his counterpart in Jesus who in the gospel also prophetically calls Jews and Samaritans to brotherhood and benevolent action. But the difference regarding the institutional clergy contributes significantly to the meaning of the parable. It has often been observed that the Priest and Levite side-stepped the assaulted men not because they did not have any empathy, but because purity laws forbade them to touch a possible corpse. The Lucan (and probably historical) Jesus who told the parable thereby communicates that the motif of compassion overrides every religious law, which brings us to the last important point of difference.

The use of the term ἐσπλαγγίσθη [moved with pity]

By explicitly mentioning that the Samaritan was *moved with pity* before he acted, Jesus communicates that acts of caring follow from compassion that comes from the inside of the individual person and not because of casuistic laws. In Luke's sermon on the plain (Lk 6:17–49)⁵, Jesus encourages his followers to be *compassionate* (οἰκτίρμονες) as the heavenly

4.1 Chronicles 22:8: 'But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood in my sight on the earth.'" The criticism of David on this point is even more significant in view of the fact that he omits David's adultery and murder (cf. 1 Chr 20 with 2 Sm 11–12), usually interpreted to save his image.

5. Not on a mount as in Matthew. Mountains are for the Lucan Jesus places of withdrawal in pursuit of inner renewal, (cf. Conzelmann 1964)

father, and not *perfect* (τέλειοι) as Matthew's version has it, the latter being more positive inclined towards the law than Luke (cf Lk 6:36 & Mt 5:48).

The parable of the Good Samaritan in Lukan context

Thus far we traced detail differences between the two texts which gave a profound insight into Luke's creative interpretative activity. However, the way in which he embedded the parable in the gospel also forms part of this creative process.

In Luke's Gospel the parable forms part of what Ellis (1974) calls a Socratic interrogation with two question and answer pairs which comprises of Luke 10:25–31. It is therefore narrowly linked to the double love commandment, which is also transposed from the context of controversies (where it functions in Mk 12:28–34) to the travel narrative. In the narrated world of the travel narrative Jesus seems to pass through Samaria on his way to Jerusalem. In the travel narrative (Lk 9:50–19:27) there are also two other 'Samaritan friendly' passages. In the first Jesus advocates no retaliation when the Samaritans do not receive (Lk 9:51–55) him and in the second it is only a Samaritan that thanks him after being healed (Lk 17:11–19).

By creatively combining the double love commandment⁶ with the parable, Luke communicates at least four aspects of Jesus' message:

1. Love of God and the neighbour should be universal, it should include the enemy.
2. Love for the fellow human being consists primarily not in the keeping of certain laws, but is defined as intense feeling of compassion (literally affecting a person's intestines, cf. use of the term ἐσπλαγχνίσθη).
3. Love should be expressed in concrete acts of caring, which demands one's time and money.
4. Religious leaders – the traditional keepers of the law – who do not act in this way are criticised.

Some final considerations

Creative interpretation as a legitimate use of the Bible

A strict concept of biblical authority does not allow for creative interpretation of the biblical text. Its demand to merely repeat what is said in the Bible and to interpret most things literally, has the result that the deeper message of the text does not communicate in a specific context that is life-related. The message is locked up in its functioning in the religious cult. Ancient readers of the Bible present themselves to us as pre-fundamentalistic: they took freedom in making new creations where artistic elements were by no means absent. As far as Luke's Gospel is concerned, human compassion to alleviate suffering was the basic driving force in these creative interpretative process.

⁶In the Lukan version it is Jesus who asks the question regarding the commandment as a counter question to the lawyer who asked him about eternal life.

Luke's response to the theodice problem

If God is love and created everything to be beautiful and good, why is there so much (innocent) suffering in the world? Although God's creation and the beauty of nature is not denied by Luke's Gospel, and indeed plays a significant role in the life of Jesus, it does not function in the sense that it distracts Jesus from the severity of human suffering (non-beauty). To the contrary: Jesus' withdrawal into nature seems to have motivated his compassion for a suffering humanity. In the gospel there is no philosophical reflection on why God allows all the suffering, although Luke 13:1–5 seems to suggest that the Lukan Jesus was aware of such questions. The response of the Lukan Jesus is to confront suffering head-on with acts of compassion, instead of allowing oneself to become despondent about it.

The compassionate Lukan Jesus as celebrator of the good life

The Lukan Jesus is not to be interpreted as promoting an ascetic life style because he deals so much with human suffering and its alleviation. In Luke 7:31–35 it is clearly communicated that Jesus was an eater and a drinker and – contrary to John the Baptist – a player of the flute. Friends should be made by means of the unjust mammon (Lk 16:1–18). In the gospel cases of non-beauty like the assaulted man on the Jerusalem-Jericho road (cf. also the bent woman, Lk 13:10–17) elicit compassion, not because ugliness is idealised, but because beauty and health are the ideal. There is compassion for the poor because they should take part in the feasts (Lk 14) and the return of the prodigal son is celebrated with a great feast (Lk 15). The purpose of Luke's stance should be viewed as an attempt to restore the beauty and goodness of creation of which all should be able to enjoy.

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