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4. The Importance of Being Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke

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Abstract

While reference to Samaritans is notable in Matthew, and significant in John and the Acts of the Apostles, it is the Gospel of Luke that makes the most of Samaritan identity. The episode of Samaritan inhospitality in Luke 9 occasions an important example of Jesus' nonviolence and sets up the reader for the impact of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10), the responsive Samaritan leper (Luke 17), and the sweeping success of the Samaritan mission in Acts 8. Samaritan identity based on "turf" and the right place to worship God illuminates the three narratives in the Third Gospel and the Christian mission in Acts.

Keywords: Samaritans, Luke, identity, temple, Jesus, narrative theology

Introduction

Let me start with an anecdote, because this memory catches most of the identity issues that surface in this study. Twenty-five years ago, during the first day of a Klutznick Symposium on “Jewish Sects, Religious Movements, and Political Parties,” held at the Omaha Jewish Community Center and Creighton University, October of 1990, a Samaritan scholar of his own tradition, Benjamin Zedakah, was speaking to an audience composed mainly of members of the Omaha Jewish community. At the beginning of his presentation, he said this (my paraphrase gets the essence of what he said):

We Samaritans and you Jews are both exponents of the Israelite tradition. But on the question of the right place to worship God, we have it right, and you Jews, who worship down south in Jerusalem, have it wrong. The Torah says nothing about worshipping in Jerusalem. But Deuteronomy does say, “You will worship the Lord in the place where he will cause his name to dwell.” We know where that is – Mount Gerizim, the first place in the Promised Land where Israelites offered sacrifice to God. We Samaritans are right and you Jews are the heretics.

This was all received quite calmly. As a student of Scripture, I remembered that this debate is 27 centuries old. Everyone in the room was settled in their sense of identity. But I realize that the essential elements that had led to hostile relationships between Samaritans and Jews were present in that statement.

This study examines the importance of the identity of the Samaritans in the Gospel of Luke, for it is Luke, among the authors of the four canonical Gospels, who makes the most of that identity. But it will be helpful to first survey briefly how Samaritans are treated in the other Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles.

A Brief Survey of Samaritans in Matthew, John, and Acts

Samaritans in Matthew

Mark does not mention Samaritans. Matthew refers to Samaritans only once – in his account of the commission of the twelve apostles, where he reports Jesus as saying, “Do not go into pagan territory [*eis hodon ethnōn*] or enter a Samaritan town. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (10:5-6). From this Matthean redaction, we learn that Matthew understands Samaritans as a group to be distinguished from both the pagans (*ethnoi*) and the Jews. Whether “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” refers to Israel as a whole or only to a subgroup, Matthew still considers Samaritans something else, a third group. This single reference to Samaritans by Matthew supports the view that this author understands Jesus’ pre-Easter ministry, and that of his disciples, as addressed to fellow Jews alone; the mandate to evangelize *everyone*, then, commences with the Great Commission delivered by the risen Jesus after Easter (Matthew 28:18-20).¹

¹ This comports with another Matthean redaction, 15:24, where Matthew has Jesus say with reference to the woman Mark calls “a Syro-Phoenician woman, a Greek”: “I was sent,” says Jesus to the disciples, “only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” And Matthew highlights this woman’s “otherness” by referring to her by the name of the ancient enemies of Israel, a “Canaanite”! (*gynē kananaia*, v. 22).

Samaritans in John

The treatment of the Samaritans in the Gospel of John deserves a separate study on its own. In passing, let me simply note here that the Fourth Evangelist concentrates his understanding of the Christian mission to the Samaritans in a single passage, the dialogue between the Samaritan woman and Jesus at the well of Sychar – together with its aftermath, her mission to fellow Samaritans, all of this in John 4. In the present study of Samaritans in the Gospel of Luke, it is sufficient to note that the conversation in John 4 is understood as a dialogue between two exponents of the Israelite tradition, sharing a common Scripture (the Torah) and the expectation of a Messiah. The conversation reveals salvation as coming “from the Jews” in the person of Jesus, who is eventually received by the woman and her fellow Samaritans as “the savior of the world” (4:42). The issue that had separated the two subgroups – the proper place to worship God – is addressed in Jesus’ revelation that the “place” to worship God is neither Gerizim nor Jerusalem but wherever a community worships God “in Spirit and Truth” – which the Fourth Gospel as a whole understands to be the Christian community. The Samaritans’ reception of Jesus as savior dissolves for Christians the distinctions between in-group and outgroup in Israel, except with regard to those who resist his Lordship.²

Samaritans in Acts

As powerfully as the author of the Fourth Gospel integrates the Christian mission to Samaria into his narrative, Luke has his own artistic way of treating the identity of Samaritans in his two-volume work, the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles

² A quick review of John’s approach to Samaritans in John 4 will facilitate our study of Luke. The alienation between Samaritan and Jew is asserted right at the start of the conversation. When Jesus asks the woman for a drink from the well, she responds, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” – and the author comments, “Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans,” are we to understand this enmity as an *intergroup* hostility or as a quarrel between fellow Israelites? We get a clue later in the dialogue. The Samaritan woman raises the perennial hot-button issue between Jews and Samaritans: “Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you [plural] say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” Given that this question has to do with the proper interpretation of Deuteronomy’s mandate to worship “in the place where the Lord will cause his name to dwell” [e.g., 12:3-14; 14:23] indicates that this is a dispute among people who hold the Pentateuch (the Torah) in common as Scripture. In that sense it is a dispute between those who can speak of others within their tradition as a separate subgroup, and yet both groups are insiders with respect to still others who do not share the same scriptural tradition. Jesus’ response denies that the question of the proper geographical place of worship is valid any longer: “Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem” (John 4:21). That the dispute is an intra-group reality is further confirmed when the Samaritan woman asserts, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Anointed: when he comes, he will tell us everything” (25). That she expects a Messiah surely places the Samaritans within the Israelite tradition, even though she addresses a Jew as other. Jesus responds that indeed he is the Messiah (26). The woman’s acceptance and her evangelization of her own people leads to *their* response to Jesus, accepting him as “the savior of the world” (42). In the larger sweep of the Fourth Gospel, the reader of John learns that the risen Lord becomes the “place” that replaces the Jerusalem temple. See Schneiders, who makes a plausible case for understanding the Samaritan woman not as an historical person but as a symbolic figure representing the Jewish Christian ministry to the Samaritan people as a whole.

(hereafter, Luke-Acts). Like John, Luke understands the evangelization of Samaritans as an important *phase* of the Christian mission moving out from Jerusalem to the whole world. Indeed, early in Acts, Samaria is named third in a statement that has been recognized as a kind of table of contents for Acts: at 1:8 the risen Lord says to the apostles, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

And that is how it works out; Acts 1-7 tells the story of the formation of the early Jewish church in Jerusalem, climaxing with the execution of Stephen. This triggers a severe persecution in Jerusalem “and all were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles” (8:1). Then we hear of Philip’s evangelization of a city in Samaria, including a magician named Simon. The apostles in Jerusalem learn that “Samaria has accepted the word of God,” and they send Peter and John to lay hands on those baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus to receive the Holy Spirit. After an uproar around Simon’s request to purchase that power (Simony!), they (presumably Philip, Peter, and John) proceed to “preach the good news to *many* Samaritan villages” (8:25). Philip’s conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch marks the stretch of the mission beyond the Samaritans to another marginal sharer in the Israelite tradition (8:26-40). The remaining two references to Samaria in Acts are, like the first one in 1:8, schematic in nature: 9:31-32 (after Saul’s conversion and initial preaching in Damascus) summarizes: “The church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up, walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers”; and finally at 15:3 Luke mentions the journey of Paul and Barnabas to the Jerusalem council, passing “through Phoenicia and Samaria telling of the conversion of the Gentiles,” and bringing “great joy to all the brothers.”

How was early Jewish Christianity received by Samaritans? Luke does not choose to spell out this development, but one can surmise: As Israelites, Samaritans, too, honored the Pentateuch – *their* version of course – as Scripture. And they were looking for a Prophet like Moses, a Messiah. They must surely have recognized in the mission of Philip and others that worship in the Jerusalem temple was not a problem for Christians, especially after the Roman destruction of it in the year 70. They knew that Christians understood the *community of believers* to be the temple of the messianic age (implicitly in Mark and Matthew, explicitly in Paul and John).

Enough comparative background. Now let us turn to the book where Luke works with the issue of Samaritan identity most creatively, the three Samaritan moments in his Gospel.

The Importance of Being Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke

Luke’s treatment of the identity of the Samaritans vis-à-vis Jews in his Gospel is much more subtle and significant than the schematic references in Acts. Samaritans appear in three episodes in the Gospel of Luke – the inhospitable Samaritans in chapter 9, the “Good Samaritan” in the parable that Jesus tells in chapter 10, and the so-called grateful Samaritan leper who appears in chapter 17. I will take them up in their narrative sequence.

The Inhospitable Samaritan Village (Luke 9:51-55)

Luke here departs from Mark's story line by expanding Mark's single-chapter journey to Jerusalem into *his* central section, a nine-chapter journey to Jerusalem into which our author integrates material, especially parables, unique to this Gospel. Luke introduces the journey in this way, "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem." His choice of the word *analēmpsis* (literally, "taking up") is wonderfully ambiguous. The word can mean crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, and Luke surely recognizes that all those meanings apply here (like the Fourth Gospel's "lifted up" – John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32). And the deliberateness of Jesus' *setting his face towards Jerusalem* is in line with the fact that he has already predicted his betrayal, suffering, and death twice in this chapter (9:22, 44).

All this lends weight to what happens next. Jesus sends messengers ahead to prepare lodging. When they enter a Samaritan village to do that, the Samaritans refuse to provide hospitality. The reason: "because his face was set toward Jerusalem." The rejection is enough to arouse James and John to ask the amazingly presumptuous question, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" At this point, some manuscripts add "like Elijah." Those Christian copyists recognize the likely allusion to 2 Kings 1:10, 12. The allusion is ironic. While Jesus could compare himself to Elijah as a prophet who healed beyond the borders of Israel (Luke 4:24-26), here he rejects Elijah's vengeance, rebukes these disciples, and moves along. And we readers, having read the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20-49), with its mandate to love enemies and to respond nonviolently to hostility, understand Jesus' response here. But another question remains unanswered: what is it about Jesus' destination that angers the Samaritans. Luke presumes his audience can fill this gap. It is precisely the implied destination and purpose of the journey of these Galilean Jews that prompts the Samaritans to reject Jesus and company from Samaritan "turf." These men are going to *Jerusalem* to celebrate the Passover. These Galilean Jews are acting out the "heresy" that Jerusalem, and not Mount Gerizim, is the proper place to worship God. And so they deserve to be rejected as unworthy of hospitality.

The Parable of the Righteous Samaritan (10:25-37)

The second passage in the Gospel of Luke dealing with Samaritan identity is the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan. While the "Good Samaritan" has taken on proverbial status in contemporary language as an icon of a person who stops to help a stranger in distress, it is another thing to ask, "What exactly is the importance of the ethnic or religious *identity* of the Samaritan in the parable of Jesus as presented in Luke 10:29-37?"³

Luke's setting for Jesus' telling of this parable is the following. Luke takes a question that he knows from Mark 10:17 – "[Good] Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life" –

³ Even people who have never read the Gospel of Luke know something about the good Samaritan. For most literate adults in Western culture, the phrase "good Samaritan" evokes the story of a man who stops to help a wounded person on the roadside. We have hospitals called Good Samaritan, evoking the image of compassionate care, and we include a "Good Samaritan clause" in some laws to protect those who stop to help accident victims from being liable to legal suits that might be brought to address further injury incurred in the act of volunteering medical aid to persons in distress.

which Luke himself also includes elsewhere in his Gospel, at 18:18. But there Jesus answers the questioner by reciting five of the Ten Commandments to refresh the questioner's memory; here in Luke 10, Jesus asks the lawyer what *he* reads in the Law, and the lawyer replies with Jesus' own combination of a verse from the Shema prayer, Deuteronomy 6:5 (on love of God) and Leviticus 19:18b (on love of neighbor). Embarrassed at having been exposed as knowing the answer to his own question, the lawyer asks for a *definition* of "neighbor" – not simply "neighbor" in general but "who is *my* neighbor?" It is a reasonable question, as most people would spontaneously interpret "neighbor" geographically: the folks in one's neighborhood or people in one's ethnic group. But that very chapter in Leviticus stretches the concept of neighbor beyond what one might consider the spontaneous understanding of "my neighbor." Even the limited context of the *complete* verse 18 of Leviticus 19 holds a surprise, for whole verse reads, "Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against your *fellow countrymen*. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord." "Fellow countrymen" is more inclusive than some would spontaneously ascribe to the concept of neighbor. But Leviticus 19 stretches even further. Verse 34 of the same chapter reads, "You shall treat the *alien who resides with you* no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself, for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt." Surprisingly inclusive as is the book of Leviticus, Jesus takes the mandate a further step still. He refuses to give the lawyer a definition of neighbor. Instead he tells a story. And the Samaritan identity of the rescuer carries a punch that is stronger than most contemporary readers or hearers catch. Let us follow Luke's cues.

"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho . . ." This is the only parable of Jesus that contains a specific geographical reference *within* the story. So Luke must think that this detail is important to the story. In fact, this location was, and still is, the scariest road in ancient Palestine. Although archeologists tell us that the first-century path from Jerusalem to Jericho was a bit to the north of the contemporary route, the ancient path was equally rocky, winding and lonely, because largely uninhabited; thanks to the twists and turns, a traveler could neither see far ahead nor far behind. In other words, if you were traveling alone, it was a good place to get mugged. The man falls into the hands of bandits, who strip him, beat him, and go away, leaving him half dead. Naked and mute ("half-dead" surely means that he is unconscious), this person is stripped of identity cues that might be communicated by clothing, which might suggest economic status, ethnicity, and even profession; as unconscious, he cannot produce speech, which would also suggest origin, economic class, education, and ethnicity. Only gender is available to the observer. It is not even clear whether he is alive or dead. He is simply a generic human being of the male sex.

By chance, a temple priest comes along, sees the victim, but passes by on the other side. Then a Levite, which was a kind of temple deacon, having perhaps observed the behavior of the priest walking ahead, also passes by. Whether or not it is plausible that their motive for passing by was to avoid contact with an apparent corpse and render themselves ritually unclean is a dispute that does not affect the point of the story and need not detain us here (see Levine: 123). All this is a set-up leading to the arrival of traveler number three, a *Samaritan*. Jesus' auditors and Luke's readers would immediately recognize that this is a person who is on someone else's turf. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is obviously in Judea. So the Samaritan is clearly not in Samaria. He can expect the same inhospitality from

Judeans as traveling Jews could expect passing through Samaritan turf, as illustrated in Luke's previous chapter (9:51-54). And yet his response to the sight of the inert and naked body is not fear, or curiosity, or revulsion, or even a sense of obligation; rather it is compassion. Of the three passers-by, the Samaritan had the best reasons to move along and not get involved. If he were found near the victim's body, the locals might think *he* did it. Counter to cultural expectations, the Samaritan not only administers the first aid of that time – the disinfectant of wine, the soothing of oil, and a protective bandage. What is more, he dares to put the victim on his own draft animal and bring him to an inn to place him in the care of innkeeper – trusting that the man will cooperate and trust the Samaritan to stop by later and pay for the cost of lodging beyond the initial payment of two day's wages. (My treatment of the cultural nuances of the parable draws heavily on Bailey: 33-56.)

So Jesus has presented a scenario that presumes a sense of identity tied to turf based on a clash of interpretations regarding the right place to worship the God of Israel – Jerusalem vs. Mount Gerizim. The surprising behavior of the Samaritan demonstrates a social mindset that transcends that part of his identity and recognizes a human bond beyond borders. Accordingly, Jesus poses a question that “re-writes” the lawyer's request for a definition of *neighbor*.” Jesus says, “Which of these three, do you think, *was neighbor to* the one who fell among bandits?” (my translation). The lawyer's answer uses language that implies the imitation of God, “The one who showed him mercy [*poiēsas to eleos met'autou*]” (see 1:78, where Zachariah's Benedictus uses the same phrase to describe God's action). Another way of stating Jesus' (and Luke's) point is that the crucial thing about the command to love your neighbor is not the identity of the “neighbor” but one's own identity. Jesus' point: You *be* the kind of person who helps any human being in need whom you are in a position to help.

The Samaritan Leper (Luke 17:11-19)

Luke's narrative about the healing of the ten lepers is his most subtle and complex treatment of Samaritan identity. As in the episodes of the inhospitable Samaritans and the parable of the Good Samaritan, geography again plays a significant role, as demonstrated by the puzzling opening verse: “On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee.” There is of course no “region” between Galilee and Samaria; that is the invention of the NRSV translators in their effort to make sense of the phrase which, rendered literally, is “between Samaria and Galilee.” The careful reader knows that Jesus and some of his disciples have been on the road to Jerusalem for eight chapters! From our study of Jesus' encounter with Samaritan inhospitality, we are aware that they had crossed that border at the end of chapter nine. Subsequent chapters had furthered the journey to Jerusalem punctuated sporadically with reference to progress toward the capital city. So we should be surprised that this episode begins with another reference to crossing from Galilee to Samaria. However much that local reference may distract a quest for the itinerary of the historical journey to Jerusalem, the author is certainly interested in locating this episode back up north on the border crossing into Samaritan territory. Exactly why, soon becomes evident. As Jesus enters a Samaritan village, ten men, at this point simply identified as lepers, present themselves, but at a distance – as prescribed for lepers in Leviticus 13:45-46 – and call out, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” (10:13).

“When he saw them, he said to them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’” In itself, this is a startling command since, as lepers, they are ritually unclean and not allowed in the temple precincts. On the other hand, the imperative implies imminent healing, as the Levitical law regarding leprosy mandates that a healed leper must present him or herself to a temple priest to be certified as healed (cleansed from ritual impurity) and also to present animals for sacrifice (Leviticus 14:1-32). Carrying out this command calls for a walk of some forty miles to the south. As they begin the trek, they discover that they are cleansed.

Then one of them, when he “saw that he was healed,” turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him [*eucharistōn*]. And he was a Samaritan. Why does Luke, at this point, identify this man as a Samaritan? With that identification, the reader, who has already been reminded of the implications of Samaritan identity in the two previous Samaritan episodes, realizes that a Samaritan hearing the command “Show yourselves to the priests” would have a question: The priests? Which priests? The Jewish priests in Jerusalem? Or my Samaritan priests around Mount Gerizim? Having already been alerted by the surprising geographical reference that this group is headed toward Jerusalem from the Galilean border, we know that, either way, the direction is southward and he has some 20 miles of walking further into Samaria to ponder his question. At some point it occurs to him: *Neither* Jerusalem nor Gerizim! Master Jesus himself is the “place” to give thanks to God; indeed, Jesus is the *priest* who has mediated God’s healing presence. And so he acts on that insight. He returns to Jesus, giving glory to God in a loud voice, and finally prostrating himself at Jesus’ feet and thanking him. Luke’s word for thanking here, *eucharisteō*, is used in the Septuagint only of human beings giving thanks to God. The implication that Jesus is treated as God (or at least the place to meet God), of course, would be exceptional in the Synoptic tradition. But this passage implies that Jesus is being approached as God, and it continues in Jesus’ response. “Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner [*allogenēs*]?” Again, if this language is to be read as Jesus’ self-description as God, it would be unique among the synoptic Gospels, even in the Third Gospel, where Jesus is called Lord (*Kyrios*, or *Kyrie*; e.g., 1:43 [by Elizabeth: “mother of my Lord”]; 2:11 [by the angel: Christ the Lord]; 7:13, 19), but where the name *God* (*ho theos*) is reserved for the Father. Is it possible that we are meant to hear this sentence to mean that Jesus is the “place” for giving thanks to God – that is, as a new temple? Or as “something greater than the temple” (to borrow a phrase from Matthew 12:6)? The notion of temple has already been raised by the Samaritan’s dilemma. And Luke has provided a further clue in that direction: the word translated “foreigner” here is *allogenēs*, not the more usual *prosēlytos* (as in Leviticus 19:10, 33, 34). *Allogenēs* is the very word used in the Greek and Hebrew tablets on the balustrade in the temple precincts warning those other than Jews that they are not permitted to enter the court of Israel on pain of death. Any frequenter of the temple would be familiar with this word and its implication in the context of the temple talk. The meaning of this passage may have less to do with gratitude than with a surprisingly “high” Christology embedded in Luke’s carefully written narrative. It is another example of Luke’s Christology approaching that of the Fourth Gospel. A further near-Johannine possibility: Jesus had instructed the ten lepers to show themselves to the *priests*.” It is the Samaritan who identifies Jesus as the appropriate priest to approach with thanksgiving to God. If one perceives this as

a farfetched idea within the Christology of Luke, see Jesus' final gesture in this Gospel, where Luke describes the risen Jesus employing the actions of a temple priest: "He lifted up his hands and blessed them" (24:51) (for a more extended exegesis of this passage, see Hamm 1994).

Conclusions

Something very deliberate is going on in Luke's treatment of Samaritan identity in his account of the life of Jesus and the early church in the Third Gospel.

Absent entirely in the Gospel of Mark, mentioned only once in Matthew (as explicitly excluded from the focus of Jesus' and his disciples during his earthly ministry), Samaritans are given special attention in the Gospels of Luke and John, where they are treated in distinct and subtle ways – in John by way of the dialogue between Jesus and the woman at the well and its evangelical aftermath, and in Luke's second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, as a stage of the mission of the church.

But it is in his Gospel that Luke uses the identity of being Samaritan most creatively. All three episodes where Luke focuses on Samaritan identity in his Gospel entail details of location which point to the traditional Samaritan preoccupation with the proper *place* to worship God. All three episodes point to the teaching and person of Jesus. The passage about Jesus' response to the hostility of the Samaritans focuses on the nonviolent response of Jesus to that hostility and illustrates the teaching of the Sermon on the Plain and the first word from the cross in Luke's Passion Narrative. The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates Jesus' teaching on how love of enemy supports love of neighbor, and stretches the question of neighbor-love from a way of seeing to a way of being. The third episode takes a further step to use the particularity of Samaritan identity in pointing to Jesus as Lord of all and even the "place" to worship God in a way that approaches the Christology of the Fourth Gospel – Jesus as new temple and priest.

This special Lucan focus on Samaritan presence calls attention to the place of the Jerusalem temple in the Third Gospel. Indeed, that place of worship has a special function in this Gospel. The stories about the conception, infancy and childhood of Jesus begin and end in the temple. Jesus' entry and action in the temple at the beginning of Passion Week have a different character for Luke; his presence in the temple is not so much a "cleansing" as an *occupation*. In fact it is a kind of homecoming. Jesus arrives there and continues to teach the people for several days. He even gives in the *temple precincts* the end-time speech that Mark locates on the Mount of Olives. Further, what the temple priest Zechariah is unable to perform in the beginning of the book, namely to bless the people to complete the temple ritual of the afternoon Tamid sacrifice, Jesus performs for the disciples at the end: "Lifting up his hands, he blessed them" 24:50 – not a mere conventional good-bye, but a priestly act (see Sirach 51:19-21). After what sacrifice? His own self-offering on the cross. For in the Gospel of Luke, the tearing of the temple veil that accompanies his final trusting word to the Father and his final breath has a different meaning. Given the meaning of the temple in the context of this Gospel, the tearing of the veil at this hour of the afternoon sacrifice is not a portent of the future destruction of the temple but rather a removal of all separation between the people and divine presence. . . The case can be made that, for Luke, the tearing of the temple veil at 23:45 – the divine response to the apparent victory of the "power of

darkness” at the death of Jesus – represents something other than the destruction of the temple. It may signal that in Luke-Acts, the temple becomes the place from which the mission to the Gentiles commences. The temple’s boundaries of sacred/profane, clean/unclean, insider/outsider, and Israelite/stranger have been neutralized. Now the mission has moved out from the temple to all people. The Markan implosion has become a Lukan explosion. In Luke’s hands, the particularity of Samaritan identity becomes a vehicle for preaching a gospel that extends beyond ethnic identity entirely (for a fuller discussion of Luke’s allusions to the Tamid temple ritual, see Hamm 2003).

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