

**OVIDIUS UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY**

**SPECIFIC PARABLES FROM THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO LUKE**

PhD Thesis
Summary

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Introduction. The parable was the most commonly used form of the Savior to transmit His teaching to those who gathered around Him to listen. It is a form of the Jewish tradition. The Orientals, especially Jews, were centuries before the coming of the Redeemer used to talk in parables. Wise men as Solomon, prophets like Nathan or Isaiah, have made beautiful parables that we can find in the scriptural pages of the Old Testament (Eccl. 9, 14-16, II Sam. 12, 1-7, Is. 28, 23-29). However these evangelical parables can be considered as constituting a kind of speech specific to the Saviour, meaning that by their doctrinaire fund and by the formulation unsurpassed in beauty, are presented as perfect works, worthy of the height of their divine Creator.

Reading the parables narrated by the Savior and trying to find their true meaning, we realize that we are facing a trustworthy tradition, and through them, a relationship, a direct communication is formed with The One from which they rise in. However, the parables shows us the aspects of a knotty problem, trying to find their original meaning. The parables from the Holy Gospels are not meant to establish maxims with a general character, but each of them was reported in a real situation of His life, at different times, often unexpected. For example, it would be a great mistake to believe that the parable of the prodigal son contains the essence of the Gospel and that there is no doctrine of atonement that is essential to Christianity; or to assume that the practiced mercy toward our neighbors, from the good Samaritan parable is the essence and the purpose of the salvation.¹

The parables, in fact the whole teaching, aim to born new religious attitudes and practices. The teaching of our Saviour does not require force, He lets every one through the liberty they have to choose the way to follow their will. So the crowd and the disciples had the gift of freedom to follow or leave Him. In John chapter 6 it is said that some of the disciples after Jesus told them about the bread which comes down from heaven, felt shattered and abandoned Him.

The Gospel according to Luke incorporates in its text a series of parables with a special character, unprecedented in the human thinking and expression, elaborated in such a manner. The parables narrated by The Saviour Jesus Christ – especially in His journey to Jerusalem - emphasizes and nuances our purpose in this earthly life, the faithfulness and the steadfastness ministry that we have to bring to God, the values that a Christian has to promote in community and the communion with his peers, as well as the eschatological finality when we will be rewarded for our faithful passing through this ephemeral life².

¹ J. Simon Kistemaker, *The parables of Lord Jesus*, the Publishing House of the Romanian Bible Society, Bucharest, 2009, p. 26.

² Cf. Alfred Loisy, *L'Evangile selon Luc*, Du Cerf Publ. House, Paris, 1924, p. 65.

Forwards, I structured my thesis into three parts. In the first part I treated the importance of Luke's Gospel and its specific in the context of Christian revelation.

We know that the Gospel was written as a document for the custody of the pagans, about the messianity and the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth. By remembering the name of Theophilus, which is called "Kratiste Theophilus" in the prologue of the Gospel, and by the omission of some specific Jewish events, that were not helping to train future Christians who came from pagans, St. Luke suggests that this writing is addressed to the pagans interested in Christianity, regardless the Roman province they are. Thus, it is important to deduce the recipients of the third Gospel and less to find out the place where it was written³.

A careful study of the third Gospel tells us that its recipients were Christians who used to be pagans. St. Luke avoids specific Jewish topics or drops aside the specific details that could not be understood by his non-Jewish readers. Thus, Luke omits the section on the tradition of the elders (Mk. 7, 1-23), the reference about the return of Elijah (Mk. 9, 11-13) Matthew's antitheses (5, 21-22. 27-28. 33-37). Sometimes he rearranges for the same reason, the elements of a text or avoids some details (to compare Mt. 5, 38-48 with Lk. 6, 27-36; Mt. 7, 24-27 with Lk. 6, 47-49).⁴

The Gospel must be placed in 62-63, because it could not be written before the Gospel according to Mark, that St. Ev. Luke used it as one of his main sources. Not even the book of Acts, the second „word” of Luke's work, which was written in 63, because it stops the story at the time St. Paul was already for two years in Rome, awaiting his trial (Acts 28, 30). Many authors disagree with this chronology and claim that the Gospel was written later, even after 70. They think that the end of Acts is not an argument for dating this book in 63. Writing The Acts, St. Luke would have pursued a plan, to show the progress in preaching the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, capital of the empire (Acts 1, 8), he would have not proposed himself to come up with story events up to date. But we cannot imagine that St. Luke would have been interrupted in this way the account of the events of his „hero” and teacher, St. Paul. How would he have not told us anything about the end of the Roman captivity of the Apostle, if it would have happened already?⁵.

St. Luke's literary work is distinguished by outstanding qualities of substance and form.

³ Ibid, p.59

⁴ Ibid, p. 42.

⁵ Rev. PhD Ilie Melniciuc, the course support material for the New Testament, year I, semester II..

Like its synoptic precursors – the holy Gospels according to Matthew and Mark – the third Gospel exposes in detail the messianic work of the embodied Son of God, developed mainly in Galilee, Perea, and Jerusalem, passions, death, resurrection, the post-resurrection visions and his ascension to heaven (the latter one being common with the second Gospel).

The author of the third Gospel records the events of the messianic accomplishments in its chronological order, proving in this direction more and more demanding care than its precursors, Matthew and Mark. What they have been broadly registered, the third Gospel is mostly satisfied to note only in passing, giving in exchange extension to those episodes that the first two synoptics missed or told them briefly⁶.

The rich content of this holy book is complemented by the documentary value of its accounts. In the prologue, the author informs his readers that he is aware of the existence –and therefore of the content of the previous Gospels. However, he was not confined to use them in a servile manner, but he conducted hard personal research, consulting witnesses who interfered with Saviour's life and activity, as some written material (for ex. the genealogy, chapter 3, which differs significantly from the one in chapter 1 of the first Gospel).

Knowing the reason of Lukanic's scriptural composition, we also know the object in view by them. Factual, the purpose was reached with the Gospel: its reading led the noble Theophilus to embrace Christianity. Formally, it could be completed by filling in the knowledge of the Christian church history acquired by Theophilus from the first book manuscript – what St. Luke has not lingered to do, writing the Acts of the Apostles.

The recorded events surrounding the birth of St. John the Baptist, Luke revolve around choosing the baby's name, while in the story about Jesus' birth he focuses on the circumstances of birth and the events that accompanied the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. The evangelist outlines three things:

- a) describes the political situation, to justify why Jesus was born in Bethlehem. In this way he introduces Christ's birth event in history, anticipating its universal significance;
- b) makes a connection between the city of Bethlehem and David the prophet, arguing that Jesus is the Messiah;
- c) presents the humble beginning of Jesus, identifying Him with the poor and the oppressed of this world, in order to convince that He is removed by aspiration and ministry from the vanity of this world.

⁶ Alois Stoger, , *L'évangile selon Saint Luc*, Desclee Publ. House, Paris, 1968, p. 34..

Luke makes a parallel between the stories about the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, showing the superiority of our Lord before the Forerunner.

The circumcision of Christ (Dc. 2, 21) is mentioned very briefly, choosing to emphasize the name of Jesus, as Mary was proclaimed by the angel (Luke 1, 31), secondary to show that the Teacher belongs to the Jewish people, fulfilling the provisions of the law given by God to Moses.

Further the entire Gospel of Luke is characterized by a rich description in expression of the facts of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

In the second part of the work I have treated only strictly specific parables of Luke and their exegesis.

The parables narrated only by Luke the Evangelist are eighteen. In each of them we will find dogmatic teaching, eschatological and, especially, moral teaching, because St. Ev. Luke, compared to the other synoptic evangelists, showed a certain penchant for the social aspect of the Saviour's teaching.

1. The parable of the two debtors (Lk. 7, 40-48). This parable is a part of a pericopa which relates the anointing of our Saviour in the house of Simon the Pharisee (7, 36-50). The anointing scene takes place in a town in Galilee, in the first or the second year of the Savior's public activity. The parable has a dogmatic and moral character, showing the divine mercy for the sinners who repent, indicating the role of the love of God in the acquisition of the redemption⁷.

The teaching that emerges from this parable is forgiveness seen as a modality that reconnects the love and the communion between God and the human being, especially between humans. God, in His infinite love for the people, decided from the beginning to forgive all the people and restore their relationship with Him.

2. The parable of the Good Samaritan (10, 29-37). The Good Samaritan parable was narrated close to Jericho, on the Jerusalem road, after the return of the seventy from the test mission. It is the response of the Saviour to the question of the coroner desiring to save his soul, that wished to know who was his neighbor (10, 25-28).

⁷ Deac. Prof. Nicolae Nicolaescu, (*The actuality of the parables narrated in the Gospel according to Saint Luke*), in „Studii Teologice” (“Theological Studies”), No. 5-6/1952, p. 274.

The parable starts from the conviction of the contempt and the hatred of the Jewish towards the mixed population from Samaria and shows that our neighbor is any man in need or distress, irrespective of race, nation, social conditions, religion or something similar⁸.

This parable is actually a response given by the Saviour to the teacher of the law who asked Him: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Lk. 10,25), the "teacher of law" it proves that he was a specialist in religious teachings, with some authority over others in interpreting the Scripture. He had the right to decide in the theological and moral issues. He comes to the Saviour with the idea of temptation. He knew very well what to do, but wanted to hear it from Jesus, and thereby to have the opportunity to accuse him of not knowing the five books of Moses⁹.

The Good Samaritan parable has a special importance for understanding the social phenomenon in Christianity. When they feel threatened by any danger, when they are victims of the injustice, when they face troubles, when they suffer any physical or moral problem, all of them react in the same way: they try first to remove the danger, indignantly condemn injustice, then try to avoid, and to relieve the suffering dwindling, combat the causes of the evil, defend their life, work, dignity and happiness, continually strive to overcome troubles and finally, if they realize they can not save themselves, require help from their peers.

3. The parable of the inappropiate friend (11, 5-8) It is designed to underline the need for persistence in prayer and to illustrate the effectiveness of the persistent prayer of the faithful. Through this parable the Saviour commands us not to get discouraged due to the first refusal, on the contrary, we have to pray until we will be heard by God. After the Saviour taught his disciples how to pray, saying the Lord's Prayer, Our Father, He taught them through this parable the benefits and the fruits of the prayer diligent made, urging them not to fall into despair.

Through this parable the Savior wants to show that, as the neighbor fulfills the request of his friend at the door, God will listen and fulfill people's prayers if the prayers are made with perseverance¹⁰.

4. The parable of the rich fool (12, 13-21). The parable was narrated by the Saviour when he was in Perea, preaching His Gospel. For a better understanding of the meaning of

⁸ Deac. Prof. Nicolae Nicolaescu, *The actuality of the parables narrated in the Gospel according to Saint Luke*, in „Studii Teologice” (“Theological Studies”), No. 5-6/1952, p. 276.

⁹ Rev. Lect. Dr. Ilie Melniciuc, course support material for the New Testament, year I, semester II, Iassy..

¹⁰ Rev. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, *Dictionary of Orthodox theology*, II-nd Edition, Publ. House of the Biblical and Mission Institute, Bucharest, 1994, p. 91.

this parable it is needed to stop first at the causes that led the Savior to tell it. A man in the crowd comes to the Lord Jesus and complains that his brother does not want to share the legacy with him . The two brothers had taken each of them a part of the inheritance, since the time their parents were still alive, and now, after they died, he wanted that his brother to give him a part of the inheritance¹¹. He does not go to a judge because he believes that it is likely to lose, and therefore he turns to the Savior, knowing that He dispenses justice to everyone, and, by the authority and prestige that he had among people, He would succeed to persuade his brother to share his wealth with him.

The main lesson that emerges from this parable is the appreciation of the spiritual values that save the soul, using the material goods, as gifts given by God in order to maintain life¹². Taking care in the first place of the spiritual life to enhance the faith, God will look after each of us providing the necessary things, as the Saviour Himself says: “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well” (Mt. 6, 33).

5. The parable of the servants who are waiting for their master from the marriage feast (12, 35-38). The parable has an eschatological character, being the conclusion of the advice given by the Saviour to the crowd in order to gather treasure in heavens by committing acts of charity. The parable it is a call for a permanent vigilance, so everyone has to be ready at any time for the call that will be made during the Parousia. For the orthodox christianity this parable it is significant because it expresses the relationship between Lord and servant (servant, menial, follower) that continues after death.

6. The parable of the servant who knew and who did not know his master's will (12, 47-48). As the last parable, this one it has the same eschatological character being its conclusion. It was determined by the question of the Saint Apostle Peter addressed to the Saviour: “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all” (Lk. 12, 41). Analysing the first parable we could see that it was addressed to every christian who has the duty to await the second coming of the Lord to be rewarded with eternal happiness, but: “the servant who knew his masters's will, but did not make ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating. But he who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, shall receive a light beating. Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more” (Lk. 12, 47-48).

¹¹ E. Raymond, Fitzmyer, A. Joseph, Murphy, E. Roland Brown, *Introduction and comment to the Holy Bible*, translation by Grosan, P. Dumitru, Vol. I, Galaxia Gutenberg Publ. House, 2005, p. 77.

¹² *Ibid.*

The parable has the following message: the faithful and the wise steward will be paying attention to the obligation that his master gave him for a while, knowing that in the end he will be rewarded. Compared to the parable in Matthew (24, 45-51), that emphasizes the eschatological character of the imminent Parousia of the Lord, the parable from the Gospel according to Luke expresses the warning that we are the stewards in the name of God, and His will has to be fulfilled in our lives.

7. The parable of the fig barren tree (13, 6-9). The simplicity of the parable that refers to the state of continuous repentance, expectation and the fulfillment of the Master's mercy, is exposed only by St. Luke along the path of knowledge, to Jerusalem. Using the image of a vineyard, where we can find a fig tree, the Saviour expresses a veiled judgement for those in Israel that does not bear the fruits wanted by the Master. This parable illustrates the need for repentance regarding the next life. It highlights the close punishment to come for sinners, showing also that on the judgement day will be punished not only those who have done deeds worthy of condemnation, but also those who did not do good deeds¹³.

8. The parable of the chief seats (14, 7-13). The Saviour tells this parable, fighting the pharisaic spirit shown by these in taking places at the tables (Lc. 14, 7-11). The Saviour observed that the pharisees were striving to occupy the most important places, that usually were reserved in advance for those closest to the host. But they, with their minds full of pride, considered themselves to be the chief guests and sought at all costs to occupy the first places.

To rebuke this vain behaviour, the Saviour tells the next parable as a result of these bad habits of the people. From this parable we first learn that the pride leads a man to fall from virtue, and humility is the way to acquire honor, exalting the man in front of everyone. The Savior wants to emphasize that it is more useful for a man to be humble, "to take the lowest place" because his humility will be appreciated and he will be called to a place of honor.

9. The parable of the great banquet (14, 15-24) This parable can be placed in the category, advice at the table, by which the Saviour addresses first of all to those who were invited (Lk. 14, 7) then to the host (Lk 14, 12) and finally to one of the guests (Lk 14, 15). More specifically, it was determined by the statement that a pharisee who stood at the table with the Savior, made, saying in the sight of all: "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" (Lk. 14,15). Telling this parable, the Redeemer refers to the

¹³ Ion Panazan, Maria Daniela Buzăși, *The biblical parables*, Reîntregirea Publ. House, Alba Iulia, 2010, p. 83.

messianic banquet, where will be invited only those who accepted and attended the dinner on Earth, referring to those who have faith in the Savior as the Son of God and the Messiah. The host in the parable presented above, stated that none of those who came to dinner will not taste it, it goes without saying that refusing the invitation, they will not get it¹⁴. The main lesson to be withdrawn from this parable is the positive response that every man must give it to God's call, participating in the soul saving teachings, left here by the Saviour and preached by the apostles and their successors, over time. Shedding us from the pleasures of this world and seeking the food good for the soul we will obtain the communion with Christ and the kingdom of heaven for eternity¹⁵.

10. The parable of the tower builder and the king going to make war (14, 28-33).

This parable we can only find it in the Gospel of Luke, followed by the parable of the king going to make war (Lc. 14, 31-32), we can consider the two parables as twins. They are inserted into the narrative journey to Jerusalem from the Gospel of Luke (9, 51-19, 27). The purpose of these examples is to teach those who dare to become disciples of Jesus, the Savior, not to disregard the difficulty of the mission that awaits them. We may appreciate that both parables are considering the spiritual state of those who decide to meet the three evangelical counsels: unconditional obedience, voluntary poverty and chastity¹⁶.

As it is read and internalized the parable provides a challenge for the lukewarm or reluctant people, who are already following Christ. The parable is not presented in the Gospel according to Luke in order to discourage people, on the contrary to make them appreciate themselves. The listener or the reader engaged in the service of Christ has already started to build the tower. It is also necessary to continue and complete what was started.

11. The parable of the lost coin (15, 8-10). The parable is presented as a question addressed in particular to pharisees and scribes. Thus, he says: „... or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she has found it she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, for I found the coin which I had lost. Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Lc. 15, 8-10).

¹⁴ Serafim Papacosta, *The parables of our Lord*, Reîntregirea Publ. House, Alba Iulia, 2005, p. 121.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 164.

¹⁶ Rev. Conf. Dr. Petre Semen, *The parable discourse in the books of the Holy Writ*, in „T.V.”, No. 11-12/1992, p. 30.

The parable ends with a statement pronounced by the Saviour that remained memorable: “Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Lc. 15, 10). So to express this state of joy, the Lord Jesus uses the degree of comparison – “more joy” - wants to show that for the righteous the joy of the Father was permanent, but for a man who lost the right path and then returned that joy was lost, and now the retrieval produced a state of great joy. In conclusion, the correction of any sinner is a win for the kingdom of God¹⁷.

12. The parable of the prodigal son (15, 11-32). The parable is a part of a triad of parables that have as unique theme the joy of the Father to find the man who was lost because of the sin¹⁸. In this parable the Savior depicts in a colorful way the divine love for every sinner who repents and turns to God.

From this parable we must remember that in order to return from the path of sin it represents mostly the contribution of the believer to his own salvation. But the Grace of God does not leave him, but it helps him in different ways, especially when it is most needed, when he believes that everybody else abandoned him. God acts so that the sin no longer produces pleasure, but pain to awake in his mind the consciousness of failure; makes him to remember about the lost goods and encourages him to move forward¹⁹.

13. The parable of the unjust steward (16, 1-3). The parable is narrated by the Saviour in front of His disciples, having as main teachings, first of all the proper use of the goods to help the poor ones, and secondly, what is more obvious, the strong determination and prudence with which every man must follow in life to do everything is possible to save his soul.

This parable aims to show the way that courage and boldness to overcome a difficult situation, consciously and for the benefit of others, are better seen than the pusillanimous behavior or of the hatred desire of those who obey the law. In the end of this parable the Savior says: “for the sons of this world are wiser in their own generation than the sons of light” (v.8). About that, the Archbishop Teofil Herineanu says: “It is a fair observation, but an observation that refers only to the earthly life of the people, of this life that many who

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 178.

¹⁸ Giovanni Lonardi, *Il figlio perduto e ritrovato* în <http://digilander.libero.it/longi48/Luca%2015,11-32.pdf>

¹⁹ Deac. N. I. Nicolaescu, *The actuality of the parables narated in the Gospel according to Saint Luke*, in the review „Studii Teologice” (“Theological Studies”) , no. 5-6, 1952, p. 286.

believe only in it, consider that it is unique, therefore they do not intend to arrange it according to their interests”²⁰.

To receive the proper message that the Savior wished to be heard through this parable, we should not see the bad facts of the steward which by the way is to blame, because this is not what Jesus wants, but to follow his desire to do everything in our power to begin a new life in Christ and to commit good deeds all the time in order to please God²¹.

14. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16,19-31). Jesus Christ is in the middle of an intense preaching period. After He narrated the parable of the unjust steward, the pharisees mocked Him²². With this parable of the rich man and Lazarus, St. Ev. Luke concludes his reflection on wealth, theme that made its debut in Lk 16, 1²³.

Through the fate of the rich man the Savior shows us that the lack of good deeds is equal to committing evil deeds. In his earthly life the rich man was not represented as being violent or oppressor, but this lack of sins did not make him better, so he went to the place where all sinners use to go. He is like the barren fig tree or as the servant who buried his talent in the ground.

Through His parables, the Savior teaches us that no one can be saved without good deeds, that the collection of material for oneself is a serious deviation from the divine law, creating a rift between man and God, that the entrance into the kingdom of Heaven it is possible only if the life here on earth it is lived in holiness, that the bond of communion with God and with himself is maintained only by keeping in communion with others, and man has the duty that by his power, to be able to participate in the establishment of the kingdom of God, starting with this earthly life²⁴.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 706.

²¹ Deac. N. I. Nicolaescu, *The actuality of the parables narated in the Gospel according to Saint Luke*, in the review „Studii Teologice” (“Theological Studies”), no. 5-6, 1952, p. 287.

²² *Ibid*, *The actuality of the parables narated in the Gospel according to Saint Luke*, in the review „Studii Teologice” (“Theological Studies”), no. 5-6, 1952, p. 287.

²³ *La parabola del povero Lazzaro (Lc. 16,19-31)* în *La Scala* 64/5, 2010, p. 337-342, în <http://nuovozenith.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/la-parabola-del-povero-lazzaro7.pdf>

²⁴ Prof. N. Chițescu, *Sermon on the 22-nd Sunday after Whit Sunday* , in the review “Mitropolia Olteniei” (“The Metropolitan Church of Oltenia”), year XXVI, no. 11-12, 1974, p. 988, (Cf. Giovanni Papini, *The History of Chris*), trans. from French, 1926, p. 190).

15. The parable of the unprofitable servants (17, 7-10). The shortness of this parable does not specify the meaning of the obligations arising from the report servant-master, although its purpose is to highlight the value of the absolute ministry. St. Luke reduce the parable to one servant, who must fulfill his ministry. The requirements of God's kingdom became obligations for us, as permanent servants and always active in keeping the commandments of God. The parable borrows specific places and ministries from the time Christ lived on earth. After a man has fulfilled his daily duty, his wife due to the reciprocity of the ministry can prepare food and waiting for him to return. But a servant - like that one from the sheepfold, where there are no women - has to fulfill himself this ministry.

16. The parable of the importunate widow. (18, 1-8). Illustrates, as that one of the inappropriate friend (11, 5-8), the efficacy of the persistent prayer. That is why it begins with the statement of St. Luke: "And He told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart", and concludes with: "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily".

And in this parable too, it is obvious the connection between prayer and God's kingdom. As in Lk 11 5-8 where we could see the power of the prayer of the midnight friend, a touching prayer, we have the demand of the widow who shows us that the God's justice will be achieved even starting from this life.

17. The parable of the publican and the pharisee (18, 9-14). The parable appears immediately after the parable of the importunate widow (18, 2-8), represents a counsel for those who want to follow Jesus Christ, and who pray from the bottom of their hearts (18,1). This parable refers to prayer from the start to the end. But does not speak of prayer itself but of the way we bow before the Lord²⁵.

The fact that the parable is marked by many semitisms and reflects the habits of that age, adds some extra originality and superiority to the common judgment. This is, without doubt, a parable that came directly from Jesus Christ²⁶. The parable suffers a change in the manner and in the content of the common and personal prayer. The prayer, in its moments of exaltation in front of God, leads to reconciliation, but the parable offers us

²⁵ Phd Prof. Iustin Moisescu, *The originality of our Saviour's parables*), Unirea Publ. House, Râmnicu-Valcea, 1945, p. 122.

²⁶Deac. Prof. Nicolae Nicolaescu, *The actuality of the parables narated in the Gospel according to Saint Luke*), in "Theological Studies" no. 5-6/1952, p. 289.

the teaching about salvation or straightening. The term is often used in church, the correction by faith, it is initially seen as an act of accession to the values proposed by God to His new apprentice, remaining the subject of the religious debates²⁷.

The teaching of this parable is a simple one. Jesus says that anyone who believes in the the mercy of God is in a close relationship with God.

18.The parable of the pounds (19,11-27). It is the last parable presented by the St. Ev. Luke, in the section on the journey to Jerusalem (Lc. 9, 51-19, 28), it is similar to the parable of the talents from the Gospel according to Matthew, being significantly different from that one. The parable of the pounds has a different end from that of the talents, because the king required to bring his "enemies" and those who have not wanted him on the throne and of those who have not served him, to be killed right there.

In the third part of this paper I found a deeper dimension of Luke's parables, emphasizing the dogmatic and moral theology, that emerges from these examples.

First of all we have issues related to salvation. How could be the non jewish people included as people of God to be equal with the jews, problem that extends to the issues such as the participation at the communion table and eliminating the necessity of circumcision?

In the second place, it was the apparent paradox of the claim that the plan of God was carried on, while the jews who were the first recipients of the Gospel, were responding negatively, most of them. How could the sons and the messengers of God, especially Paul, to face so much hostility?

In the third place it was the problem of explaining how the person and the teaching presents Jesus as an innocent condemned who trusts in God (Lk 23, 26-56, Ps. 22, 8-9, 19, 69, 22, 31, 6).

In the center of Luke's concern to comfort Teofilos there is the detailed discussion about God's plan. Luke emphasizes and enunciates this theme more than any of the Synoptic evangelists.

The theme of God's plan is sustained by the promise note and of the fulfillment that crosses the entire Gospel and the Acts, reported predominantly to Scriptures. The reference to the Old Testament focuses on three areas: Christology, the rejection of Israel, the inclusion of the non jewish people and the final justice. The last two themes are more proeminent in the Acts as the "Way" (Acts 24, 14) it is presented and defended due to various

²⁷*Ibid*, p. 163.

complaints, especially as it is represented by the efforts of St. Paul among the non jewish people. However, the non jewish theme which respond to the Gospel while Israel stumbles, it is present in many texts (Lc. 2, 34; 3, 4-6; 4, 25-27; 7, 1-10; 10, 25-37; 11, 49-51; 13, 7-9, 23-30, 31-35; 14, 16-24; 17, 12-19; 19, 41-44).

In the center of the redemption plan there is Christ and the salvation brought by Him. Who is Jesus? What does He bring? How do we know that He is The One? Christologically speaking these questions are very important to Luke.

The Evangelist Luke develops carefully the portrayal of Jesus, although this feature is not universally recognized. Some say that Luke's christology is more a mixture than a whole unit; it is a collection of various traditions, "the most diverse in the New Testament"²⁸.

In one of his parables, the king goes to "receive kingly power" (Lc. 19, 14-15). While he is heard by the council of the jewish elders, Luke states clearly from that moment Jesus shall be seated at the right of the power of God (Lk. 22,69). Finally the reference to psalm 110 describes the presence of the royal authority, governing at the right hand of God²⁹.

Therefore, the kingdom is earthly, meaning that Jesus will rule as a davidic descendant on Earth and he will bring total liberation, exercising His sovereignty over all things. This hope is the most highly expressed in the narration and in the hymns in Luke I, 32-33, 46-55, 69-75. The eschatological speeches and the remarks in Acts 1, 11 and in Acts 3, 18-21, shows that the future hope was not absorbed into present inauguration theme, but remains alive, connected to its roots in the Old Testament. God is faithful and He fulfills all His promises.

The most important events of God's salvation are the resurrection and the ascension. Among evangelists only Luke mentions and details the ascension of Lord, event which, in his opinion, provides the link between Luke 24 and Acts 1 (its meaning being explained further in Acts 2, 23-24, 30-36, 3, 14-15, 21, 4, 10-12, 5:30, 17, 31). A resurrected Savior is one that can rule and can complete his promise. He is the One who can forgive and proclaim the forgiveness, pouring His blessings over all (Acts 2, 21; 4, 12; 10, 43). More the permanent reality of Christ's authority is demonstrated by activity of those who serve "in His name"

²⁸ Leon Xavier Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Editura Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1988, p. 49.

²⁹ A. Vacant Mangelot, E. Amann, E., *Dictionnaire de theologie catholique*, Vol. 1, Librairie Letouzey et Ane, Publ House, Paris, 1926, p. 92.

(Acts 2, 38; 3, 6, 16; 4, 6, 10; 8, 11-12; 9, 27-28; 10, 48; 19, 5). His ascension proves that He is the Lord.³⁰

Christ brings promise and salvation. Salvation implies sharing hope, the experimentation of the kingdom, tasting forgiveness and participating to the Holy Spirit's work that empowers. In the same way as the Person of Jesus reveals the character and the dedication of the One that brings blessing, His teaching and his work explains and proclaims the desired results. Jesus was a teacher and a thaumaturge (Lc. 4, 14-15, 31-32, 44; 6, 17-19; 7, 22). As we could see, His teaching focuses on the goods of the kingdom. This opportunity it is described as being the release and the healing specific to Jubilee (Lk. 4, 16-21; cf. Lev. 25, 10; Is. 61, 1-2), but also includes an invitation to a moral honor that reflects the experience of the blessing (Lk. 6, 20-49)³¹.

The parables demonstrate the same double concern. Some of the parable refer to God's plan (Lk. 13, 6-9, 23-30; 14, 16-24; 20, 9-18), and in some of them it is involved a meal or a banquet scene. The feast portrays not only the joy of salvation, but the communion occasioned by dining together in the future, a reality to whom the community can now participate without racial discrimination (Acts 10-11;15). Within the people of God must be unity³².

Although the Cross is less proeminent in Luke than in Paul, its significance goes beyond an ethical or a historical function and it occupies an important theological position in the teaching of Luke. As we noticed across the study on Luke 22-23, Jesus is the Righteous Sentenced. But the meaning of His death it is highlighted by two texts. Lk 22, 20 states that the death of Jesus Christ inaugurates the New Covenant with God, while Acts 20, 28 arguments that the Church was, using the words of Paul, "won" with the blood of Christ. The death of Christ has inaugurated the Covenant and a soteriological transaction. This idea is reinforced by two more images. The substitution of Barabbas with Jesus means that Jesus took the place of a sinner, , trade emphasized stronger when Luke observed that the people rallied „with one voice” to this unfair option (Lk. 23, 18-25). The offer that Jesus made to

³⁰ A. Joseph Fitzmyer, *The gospel according to Luke* , Vol. 1-9, The Anchor Bible Doubleday Publ House, New York, 1993, p. 83.

³¹ M. Viller Cavallera, F. J. Guibert, , *Dictionnaire de spiritualite*, Volume 9, Beauchesne Publ. House, Paris, 1976, p. 261.

³² Phd. Prof. Univ. Vasile Gheorghiu, *The literary relation between the first three Gospels or the synoptic problem*), in „Candela” (“The votive light”), 1923-1924, p. 48.

the thief while they were passing away together (Lk. 23, 43) shows that despite of His death, Jesus can offer life.³³

Luke's description of Jesus Christ fundamentally aimed his authority and then the promise that He brings. The saving work of Jesus inaugurates the kingdom, save the sinner, forgive the sinner, provides the Holy Spirit, calls for a dedicated and pious life lived in the context of hope and makes everyone responsible before God's plan. In fact, all the promises of the Covenant of God are unveiled by Christ. Luke signifies the abrahamic promise of blessing all the people on the earth as it is fulfilled in Jesus (Acts 3, 22-26) the davidic hope (Lk. 1, 31-33, 69; 22, 69; Acts 2, 25-36) and the hope associated with the coming of the New Covenant (Lk. 22, 20; Acts 2, 14-21). Theophilus should be encouraged that Jesus can and really redeems according to these promises. But who forms the new community and what should it be? How does the christology appertain to the content and to the mission of the new community in the conception of Luke? The moral teachings covered by the specific parable of Luke, are essential for the salvation of the christians Christian and emphasize the virtues that Savior gave us according to the Sermon on the Mountain.

Therefore, from the parable of the good samaritan (10, 29-37) and from the parable of the rich fool and Lazarus (16, 19-37) the believer learns to have mercy and to hasten in order to help his "neighbor".

The parable of the prodigal son is a gem of great significance and a priceless treasure of the Gospel because it shows us beautifully the great mercy of God that welcomes the sinners who repent. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus it is a very important one, because it shows us clearly the happy state of the godly and righteous men in heaven, but it shows us the misery and the suffering of the sinners. The same purpose is aimed by both parables. But through the parable of the prodigal son he wants to attract the sinner to repentance and salvation; while through the parable of the rich man and Lazarus he wants to awake the sinner from the sleep of sin and death. In fact, he is sunken into a hard sleep in a terrible lethargy, the christian who does not wake up when he finds himself in these two parables.³⁴

The love of God and neighbor is highlighted by parables such as the parable of the servants who are waiting for their master from the marriage feast (12, 35-38), the parable of

³³ Michel Gourgues, *The parables of Luke from upstream to downstream*, translation from French by Marius Bitiușcă, Sapienția Publ. House, Iassy, 2006, p. 88.

³⁴ Prof. Constantin Pavel, *The two moral portraits from the parable of the prodigal son*, in "Theological Studies", No. 9-10/1975, p. 701.

the servant who knew and who did not know his master's will (12, 47-48), the parable of the great banquet (14, 15-24), the parable of the tower builder and of the king going to make war (14, 28-33).

For the love of Christ should be placed above any other love for any person or thing in this world. The Lord says it clearly: „He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he who loves son or daughter or wife more than me is not worthy of me” (Mt 10, 37; Lk. 14, 26). The love to Christ should be the measure, the standard of our love to any other loved person. Only if a person loves Jesus will manage to love his wife too, and the other members of his family in a bearer way of salvation³⁵.

The parable of the publican and the pharisee (18, 9-14) reminds to the christians, more strongly, their duty to repent and to pray humbly. It is so concise as it is full of meanings and teachings, it is the profound description of two psychological characters, diametrically opposed, characters as those that we can meet at any time: the character of a proud man, on one hand, and the character of a humble man, on the other hand.³⁶

This parable it is not uttered only for the pharisees and publicans from that age when the Savior was on earth. We can find characters like these ones along the ages. There is no man in this world who does not need to examine himself, if it was not formed in his soul a hypocritical character.

In few words, the Lord portrays the character of the humble man, in the person of the publican who prayed humbly, he showed a very important state of his soul: that was the repentance who helped the publican to save his soul. The repentance of the publican for his sins, the prayer of the publican, his desire to find God's mercy, it is the opposite of the pharisee and the confidence in his justice, states that the pharisee is not interested to achieve God's mercy.³⁷

Based on the same reason, the Lord presented a third parable as an extension and a crowning of the two parables before. If in the previous parables the Lord showed what feelings filled the heart of God for sinners that repent, in this one He will present the inner drama of the repentance and the forgiveness of the sinner. This third parable it is called „the parable of the prodigal son”, being a priceless treasure and a light of the parables. In the whole literature of the humankind, in all human wisdom, you cannot find such a priceless

³⁵ Simeon Mehedinți, *Parables and teachings from the Gospel*, Sophia Publ. House, Bucharest, 2002, p. 49.

³⁶ Gerhard-Paul Muller, *Lukas-Evangelium*, Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, Stuttgart, 1977, p. 98.

³⁷ J. Simon Kistemaker, *The parables of Lord Jesus*, the Publ. House of the Bible Society of Romania, Bucharest, 2009, p. 74.

treasure full of wisdom, mercy, love, tenderness, that is deposited in the few lines of the parable about the prodigal son.³⁸

The justice, the perseverance and the fairness are outlined by the parables of the unjust steward (16, 1-3) and the parable of the importunate widow (18, 1-8). Therefore, Christ teaches us not only that we should not be discouraged, when we ask from God, through prayer, all the things we need for the soul and body, without receiving them, but on the contrary, we must have patience and faith.

In conclusion we may say that the parables - by their parenetic character – to exhort and to expose wisely, in a popular style accessible for everyone - were first presented by St. Luke for educational purposes that the holy author pursued through his Gospel: to make all the readers and the listeners to embark on the pathway that leads to the kingdom of heaven, reason to appeal even to a proverb that he fits to his message : all the christians who plow and look back are not worthy of the kingdom of heaven! Then he realized - more than the other evangelists - that this message can be transmitted more easily and more deeply, through parables; and this in an intuitive way: there is no time to lose for those who want to be counted among the sons of the kingdom of God!

³⁸ Phd Prof. Iustin Moisesescu, *The originality of our Saviour`s parables*, Unirea Publ. House, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 1945, p. 92.

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