CONTEXT

Festskrift til Peder Johan Borgen
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RHETORICAL ARGUMENT ABOUT LAMPS AND LIGHT IN EARLY CHRISTIAN GOSPELS

It is a pleasure to present this paper in honor of Peder Borgen. A close association with him began during 1983-84 when I was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Trondheim under his sponsorship. In a research colloquy during that year we discussed Paul's argumentative strategies in 1 Cor 10-11.[1] Now I would like to analyze rhetorical argumentation in seven gospel units containing language about lamps and light as a way of thanking him for that marvelous year and celebrating his achievements and influence on international scholarship. Peder Borgen has given us an excellent analysis of the Jewish background, "building material," and techniques of exposition in John 5:35 and 12:44-50.[2] It is the purpose of this paper to explore both explicit and implicit rhetorical strategies in these two units and Matthew 5:14-16; Mark 4:21-23; Luke 8:16-18; 11:33-36; and Gospel of Thomas 33. The explorations especially display strategies

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[1] See Peder Borgen, "The Use of Tradition in John 12:44-50," New Testament Studies 26 (1979) 18-23.

[2] Borgen, "The Use of Tradition," pp. 23-35.

with counterargument, argument from the contrary, and negative techniques that extend discourse.

Peder Borgen emphasizes that early Christians made many of their appeals within a "scriptural culture."[3] Moreover, he posits, the scriptures served as legal witness.[4] This suggests a special role for authoritative testimony from the past and emphasizes judicial rhetoric in early Christian communication. Interpreters of parables and sayings attributed to Jesus know that early Christians also appealed to everyday reasoning from analogy, but few have explored relationships among deliberative, epideictic, and judicial rhetoric in sayings and parables.[5] The challenge for this study is to analyze the role of everyday reasoning and reasoning from scripture in the setting of deliberative, judicial, and epideictic rhetoric in early Christian sayings about lamps and light.

The analysis in this study is guided by a method called social-rhetorical criticism.[6] Instead of approaching the units from a perspective of source, tradition, and redaction,[7] the method guides the interpreter to persistent features, varying types of argumentation, and common or special social dimensions among the multiple versions of the saying. Recent analysis of the

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[3] Peder Borgen, "The Place of the Old Testament in the Formation of New Testament Theology. Response," New Testament Studies 23 (1976) 67-75.

[4] Borgen, "The Place of the Old Testament," p. 70.

[5] See George A. Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) for definitions and uses of deliberative, epideictic, and judicial rhetoric.

[6] See Vernon K. Robbins, Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); "Picking Up the Fragments," Foundations & Facets Forum 1.2 (1985) 31-64; "Pragmatic Relations as a Criterion for Authentic Sayings," Foundations & Facets Forum 1.3 (1985) 35-63; "The Woman who Touched Jesus' Garment: Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of the Synoptic Accounts," New Testament Studies 33 (1987) forthcoming; "The Crucifixion and the Speech of Jesus," Foundations & Facets Forum 3 (1987) forthcoming.

[7] For excellent analyses from this perspective, consult the following studies: Gerhard Schneider, "Das Bildwort von der Lampe. Zur Traditionsgeschichte eines Jesus-Wortes," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 61 (1970) 183-209; Jacques Dupont, "La Transmission des Paroles de Jésus sur la Lampe et la Mesure dans Marc 4,21- 25 et dans la Tradition Q," Logia. Les Paroles de Jésus--The Sayings of Jesus. Mémorial Joseph Coppens, edited by Joël DeLobel (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 59; Leuven: University Press, 1982) 201-236; Ferdinand Hahn, "Die Worte vom Licht Lk 11,33-36," Orientierung an Jesus, edited by P. Hoffmann (Freiburg: Herder, 1973) 107-138.

rhetorical chreia aids the interpretation.[8] Each version is perceived to be a performance of the saying in an environment that interacts with alternative performances of the same or similar sayings that are available through sight, sound, or memory. Whether the performer is speaking or writing the saying, the process is rhetorical as the saying emerges with as much or as little verbatim repetition of alternative versions as the performer wishes to perpetuate.

The Common Tradition: Jesus Responds with a Counterargument.

The analysis begins with an exhibition of items common to the five extant performances of the saying about a lamp and a lampstand in early Christian tradition:

no ... lamp

〈to be put〉 under 〈something, but〉 on a lampstand.[9]

All five performances of the saying begin with a negative assertion about putting a lamp under something and contain, immediately after the initial clause, a positive assertion about putting a lamp on a lampstand. The tenacity of the linguistic structure points to an underlying oral structure[10] with two dimensions that may reflect a statement from Jesus' earthly ministry. On the one hand, the basic knowledge or wisdom expressed in the persistent features is a commonplace observation that a lamp should be put in a prominent location. This observation also is present in a unit in Midrash Hallel on Psalm 113:

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[8] See Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil, The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric. Volume I. The Progymnasmata, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986; Vernon K. Robbins, "Pronouncement Stories and Jesus' Blessing of the Children: A Rhetorical Approach," Semeia 29 (1983) 43-74; "The Chreia and the New Testament," Graeco-Roman Literature and the New Testament, edited by D. E. Aune (Atlanta: Scholars Press, forthcoming); Burton L. Mack, "Decoding the Scripture: Philo and the Rules of Rhetoric," Nourished with Peace. Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel, edited by F. E. Greenspahn, E. Hilgert, and B. L. Mack (University of Denver, 1984) 81-115; "Anecdotes and Arguments: The Chreia in Antiquity and Early Christianity," Occasional Papers of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity Bulletin 10 (1987) 1-48; James R. Butts, "The Chreia in the Synoptic Gospels," Biblical Theology Bulletin 16 (1986) 132-138; Burton L. Mack and Vernon K. Robbins, Rhetoric in the Gospels: Patterns of Narrative Elaboration (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1987).

[9] Greek: **ou/mē ... luchno(s/n) ... hupo ... epi luchnia(s/n)** (Matthew 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33); cf. Gospel of Thomas 33.

[10] John Dominic Crossan refers to this as **ipsissima structura:** In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983) 37-40.

<Emperor> Antoninus asked Rabbi <Judah the Prince>, "If a man has a dwelling which is ten cubits square, where does he set his lamp?" He answered, "In the middle of the dining room <the main room of the house>."[11]

As S. Lachs writes:

the lamp is to be set high up, visible to all and in a place where it would cast the most light.[12]

On the other hand, the negative argumentative figure at the beginning of the saying suggests some kind of sharp, interactive statement. The challenge is to uncover or envision the social parameters and dynamics of a situation in the ministry of Jesus in which a saying with these two dimensions would have functioned orally.

Some interpreters subordinate the negative feature in an attempt to find a positive referent for the lamp. R. Schnackenburg, for example, interprets the lamp as the gospel through which salvation is mediated.[13] This was a natural usage, he asserts, since Jewish tradition perceived the Torah to be the light of the world. This understanding of the lamp, he posits, allowed the saying to apply to the task of both Jesus and his disciples. In social-rhetorical terms, this interpretation suggests that the saying functioned in the realm of epideictic and deliberative rhetoric.[14] The saying confirms values already present in Jesus' action (epideictic rhetoric), which includes calling disciples to mission, and it directs the action of disciples in the future (deliberative rhetoric).[15] It is important to note that this interpretation emphasizes "the spreading of light," a

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11 A. Jellinek, **Bet Hamidrasch** (Jerusalem, 1938) 5:89; see Samuel Tobias Lachs, A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1987) 84.

12 Lachs, A Rabbinic Commentary, p. 84.

13 Rudolf Schnackenburg, "'Ihr Seid das Salz der Erde, das Licht der Welt'. Zu Matthäus 5,13-16," in Evangelienforschung, edited by J. B. Bauer (Graz: Styria, 1968) 144-45.

14 See Wilhelm Wuellner, "Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" Catholic Biblical Quarterly 49 (1987) 460.

15 Biblical interpreters since Martin Dibelius have used the term paranaesis for this function. See Martin Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel (New York: Scribners, 1934) 249-250; Dieter Lührmann, Die Redaktion der Logienquelle, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 33 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1969) 13-16; Dupont, "La Transmission des Paroles," pp. 227, 235-236; Hahn, "Die Worte vom Licht," 107-138. The problem is that the term paranaesis is rhetorically imprecise. Paranaesis can function in judicial, deliberative, or epideictic rhetoric, and interpreters have not pursued the differences.

feature that only some of the versions emphasize, rather than the particular statement about the lamp and the lampstand. This interpretation brings dimensions to the ministry of Jesus from various elaborations of the saying in the gospels rather than attempting to uncover or envision a social situation in the ministry of Jesus in which the persistent features in the tradition would have functioned orally. The saying can mean the things Schnackenburg and others say it can mean, because it came to mean these things. But a social-rhetorical approach can take us closer to the base of the tradition.

J. Jónsson has seen an important aspect of the saying when he emphasizes its wittiness:

> Everybody would smile at a person who is so naive or foolish as to think that the candle is lighted in order to be covered under the bushel or in any other secret place.[16]

This interpretation suggests that Jesus' saying combines wit and a figure (lamp) in an epideictic manner. In other words, Jesus uses a clever remark to reconfirm values he and others hold. This is an astute beginning, but Jónsson's interpretation of the saying as Jesus' rough and humorous explanation that he has not gathered disciples who will hide themselves[17] is unsatisfactory, because there is no motivation for such a saying. Jónsson's approach would seem to require, rather, that Jesus was responding to someone who said that his disciples should stop bothering people. But Jónsson does not suggest such a circumstance nor do we find evidence in the tradition that recommends it. If the subject were the disciples, an alternative could be to suggest that a potential follower asked Jesus if it were necessary for him to adopt an itinerant life. In this instance, the saying would have a function similar to: "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). If this were the situation, the saying would be deliberative, guiding the action of this and every disciple in the future. But the setting in Luke results from later reflection on discipleship in early Christian tradition rather than actual circumstances in the ministry of Jesus,[18] and such an interpretation of the lamp saying also presup-

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[16] Jakob Jónsson, Humour and Irony in the New Testament (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985) 96; cf. A. Dupont-Sommer, "Note Archéologique sur le Proverbe Évangélique: Mettre la Lampe sou le Boisseau," Melanges Syriens offerts a Monsieur René Dussaud 2; Bibliotheque Archéologique et Historique 30 (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1939) 792.

[17] See Jónsson, Humour and Irony, p. 96.

[18] See Robbins' chapter "Foxes, Birds, Burials, and Furrows" in Mack and Robbins, Rhetoric in the Gospels.

poses a later Christian setting. It is doubtful that these alternatives take us to the base of the tradition, but the observation about the wit and humor in the analogy is important for understanding its oral function.

C. H. Dodd asserted that the saying refers to "the conduct of the religious leaders of His <Jesus'> time, who, as He said, shut the Kingdom of Heaven in men's faces (Mt 23:13; Lk 11:52), or in other words, hid from them the light of God's revelation."[19] From a social-rhetorical perspective, this interprets the figure in a "judicial" manner that accuses contemporary religious leaders in the manner of an accusation that begins a trial. It presupposes that witnesses could present evidence that would serve as a basis for a decision to acquit or convict the leaders of the charge.

The strength of Dodd's interpretation is his observation that the saying is "against" something. The mistake is to think that the saying launched an attack. Dodd's interpretation is not satisfactory for at least two reasons:

(1) The interpretation is influenced by the Matthean and Lukan parallels to Mark 4:22, which refer to that which is secret and hidden "being made known." The saying about the hidden being revealed presents a different argument than the saying about the lamp, as we will see below. It is not appropriate to impose on the saying about the lamp an interest that may have had little or nothing to do with Jesus' utterance of the saying.

(2) There is nothing in the common tradition or in any of the extant versions that suggests that religious leaders were "under attack" by the saying. William Lane thinks Dodd was suggesting that "the lamp is a figure for the Law, whose light had been hid from the people by the religious leaders."[20] If Dodd was influenced by the equation "lamp equals Law," and his citation of Matthew 23:13 and Luke 11:52 indicates that this might be the case, then he was imposing a Christian image of Pharisees after the destruction of the Temple upon the ministry of Jesus ca. 30 A.D. In short, there is little evidence to commend the position that Jesus uttered this saying with nuances of judicial rhetoric. But the negative feature at the beginning does indicate some special kind of interaction.

Jeremias appropriately saw that "We do not know what meaning Jesus gave

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[19] C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom (London: Collins, 1961) 108.

[20] William L. Lane, The Gospel according to Mark, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 165, n. 52.

to the **simile of the Lamp whose Place is on the Lampstand.**"[21] Desiring to give a positive interpretation of the saying, however, he suggested that Jesus may have uttered this saying in response to a warning of danger and plea that he protect himself (cf. Luke 13:31). Jesus' response meant that he must continue to give light and not remove it by seeking refuge from danger. From a social-rhetorical perspective, this is to perceive the saying as a counterargument in a deliberative setting where someone has given Jesus "personal" advice, that is, advice for his own well being. Jesus' counterargument explains why he must not stop his public activity, that is, it provides a rationale from the arena of daily life. Jeremias' interpretation has attracted criticism for importing the concept of lighting and extinguishing the lamp into the saying.[22] There is no reference to lighting the lamp in the common tradition, and there is debate whether there is reference to extinguishing it in any of the versions.[23] It is safe to conclude that the lamp is burning, and the emphasis is that it should be placed where it can be seen. A stream of tradition refers to lighting the lamp (cf. Matthew 5:15; Luke 8:16; 11:33), but this is not present in all the versions. But Jeremias' observation that the saying was a counterargument is surely the key to our difficulty in locating a social situation in Jesus' ministry in which it was uttered. Since the saying was a counterargument to a topic someone else introduced, and Jesus responded with an analogy, we have no sure way of identifying the topic and the situation.

There is yet another possibility, which we have not found in the interpretative tradition. The saying could have been a response to an assertion that John the Baptist should have withdrawn so he would not have been captured and imprisoned by Herod's men. The identification of the Baptist with the lamp in John 5:35 raises this possibility:

He ⟨John the Baptist⟩ was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

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[21] Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963) 120.

[22] Cf. Schneider, "Das Bildwort von der Lampe," pp. 191-193; Lachs, A Rabbinic Commentary, p. 86, n. 21.

[23] J. Duncan M. Derrett, "The Lamp Which Must Not Be Hidden (Mk iv.21)," Law In The New Testament (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970) 191-194; see Dupont-Sommer, "Note Archéologique sur le Proverbe Évangélique," pp. 790-792; Kurt Galling, "Die Beleuchtungsgeräte im israelitischjüdischen Kulturgebiet," Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins 46 (1923) 35: "... man des Kranken wegen die Lampe auslöscht **oder unter einen Scheffel setzt, um das Licht abzublenden**" (my italics).

As we will see below, both the disciples and Jesus are identified with "light" in Christian tradition, but only the Baptist is identified with "the lamp." Since there was nothing in the saying itself that demanded this understanding, however, early Christians transmitted the saying in association with other topics.

What, then, can be said about the varied interpretations of the meaning of the saying about the lamp in the ministry of Jesus? The common dimension among the versions reveal a witty retort against some remark, question, or implication. Schnackenburg presents a domesticated interpretation of the saying, a function that de-emphasizes the negative dimension and gives the saying a positive meaning in later Christian tradition. Jónsson sees that the saying was witty, but he imports the significance of Jesus' gathering of his disciples. Dodd saw that the saying was against something, but he envisioned a judicial use of the saying that reflects invective that became prominent in Christian storytelling after the destruction of the Temple when Pharisees were given a place of authority by Roman leaders. Jeremias saw that the saying was a counterargument, but he imported a distinction between lighting and extinguishing the lamp that is not in the common tradition. From these investigations, it seems likely that the saying was not uttered to present a proposition or thesis but to remove an alternative that someone asserted. We could recover the situation if it were implied by the internal contents of the saying itself. But this is not the case, since the counterargument was made by analogy. Since John the Baptist is referred to as "the lamp" in the tradition, perhaps Jesus was responding to an assertion that the Baptist should have withdrawn from areas where he could be captured by Herod's men. This witty, epideictic function for the saying presents the fewest difficulties among the alternatives. A second possibility would be to follow Jeremias' suggestion that the saying was a response to someone who was trying to convince Jesus to remove himself from danger rather than to continue his public activity. But reliable clues to the context of the saying in Jesus' ministry have been lost to us, and we should admit it.[24] The greatest likelihood is that we do not have a stable rhetorical context in the tradition, because the saying was a counterargument, a "second speech" rather than a "first speech." Given these parameters, we should not impose a judicial or deliberative rhetorical situation on the saying. We are only justified in perceiving it as a witty, epideictic response to someone's statement. In its oral context, it opposed someone else's assertion, and we have no reliable way to recover the situation. But probably we have a saying actually

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24 Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition (New York: Harper & Row, 1963) 98.

uttered by Jesus in response to someone, and it is very informative to see how the saying was employed in early Christian tradition.

Mark and Luke: Arguments from the Contrary.

If a counterargument using an analogy is removed from its social context and placed alongside other sayings, it functions as an argument from the contrary rather than a counterargument. An argument from the contrary is not simply a counterargument; it clarifies and advances a proposition through a contrary formulation.[25] Thus in Hermogenes' Progymnasmata the chreia "Isocrates said that the root of education is bitter but its fruit is sweet" is advanced by the following argument from the contrary:

For ordinary affairs do not need toil, and they have an outcome that is entirely without pleasure, but serious affairs have the opposite outcome.[26] In this instance the proposition in the chreia already contains an analogy (root, fruit), and the argument from the contrary concerns itself with distinguishing "ordinary affairs" from "serious affairs." The argument is that since education is a serious affair, it is not the case that it does not require toil and it is the case that it gives pleasure. This principle is explored, however, through the contrary formulation: "ordinary affairs **do not** need toil, and they have an outcome that does **not** give pleasure." In other words, the proposition about education is tested, clarified, and advanced by a contrary formulation about "ordinary affairs."

In the Ad Herennium 4.43.57, the argument from the contrary contains an analogy. The proposition is that "The wise man will, on the republic's behalf, shun no peril." The portion of the argument from the contrary that is based on analogy is as follows:

> For it is extremely unjust to give back to nature, when she compels, the life you have received from nature, and not to give to your country, when she calls for it, the life you have preserved thanks to your country.[27]

This argument causes a smile much like putting a lamp under a bushel. There is no choice but "to give back to nature, when she compels, the life we have received from nature." For the purpose of the argument from the contrary,

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[25] Mack, "Decoding the Scripture," pp. 95-96, 105; "Anecdotes and Arguments," p. 24; Mack and Robbins, Rhetoric in the Gospels.

[26] Hock and O'Neil, The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric, p. 177.

[27] (Cicero), Rhetorica ad Herennium, translated by Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981) 373.

however, the narrator calls it "unjust" if one does not "give to your country, when she calls for it, the life you have preserved thanks to your country." Another way to put the argument would be: "No one who gives his life back to nature, when she compels, should refuse to give his life for his country." Instead, the statement is couched in terms of that which is just. One can see that the analogy of dying a natural death is extremely powerful as a basis for "not shunning any peril on the republic's behalf," since it is ridiculous to think that a person can do anything other than give his or her life back to nature. Early Christians could use the argument about the lamp and the lampstand with similar force, because "everyone knows that a lamp should be put in a prominent place." Let us look at the manner in which early Christians did use the saying about the lamp.

The literary context for the lamp saying in Mark 4:21 is established by the proposition Jesus introduces after the parable of the sower:

> To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in analogies; so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand; lest they should turn again, and be forgiven.[28]

After Jesus reformulates the parable of the sower on the basis of "hearing but not understanding" (Mark 4:13-20), the saying about the lamp and the lampstand presents an argument from the contrary:

(a) And he said to them, "The lamp does not come to be placed under the bushel or under the bed, does it? Isn't it to be placed on the lampstand?

(b) For there is nothing hid except to be made visible, nor is anything secret except to come into visibility.

(c) If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.

The saying about the lamp and the lampstand is couched in the form of a negative rhetorical question followed by a positive rhetorical question. This formulation presents an **interrogatio**, which is the strongest possible way to assert the truth of something.[29] In the context, the saying means that the mystery of the kingdom of God, like the lamp, does not come in order to be a mystery but to be visible. The saying about the lamp being put under the bushel or the bed is especially good since the previous analogy has been the planting of seed which causes the seed no longer to be seen, and involves the use of the

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[28] See Mack's chapter on Mark 4 in Mack and Robbins, Rhetoric in the Gospels, for this translation.

[29] William J. Brandt, The Rhetoric of Argumentation (Indianapolis: Bobb-Merrill, 1970) 131-132.

bushel. The haunting dimension of the discussion is that no one, even the reader, can be sure what "the mystery of the kingdom of God is." Is it Jesus who "came from Nazareth of Galilee" (Mark 1:9)? Is it Jesus' preaching (Mark 1:14-15)? Is it Jesus' teaching with authority that casts out unclean spirits (Mark 1:21-28)? Is it the ability to become fishers of men (Mark 1:17)? Is it God and his activity, expressed as "the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:15)? Is the mystery about "the fulfillment of time" (Mark 1:15)? Or is it a mystery that will be seen "when the bridegroom is taken away" (Mark 2:20)? Whatever the mystery of the kingdom of God is, the rhetorical questions about the lamp argue that it is meant to be seen, and the assertion is made through the contrary: the lamp does not come to be put under the bushel or the bed, but on the lampstand.

The next part of the argument from the contrary is a different argument: nothing is hidden except to be made visible; nor does anything become hidden, except to come into visibility. This is an interesting argument, because it is not self-evident. Is it not the case that some things are hidden so they remain out of sight, and some things are put into hiding so they remain secret? The key would appear to be in the passive voice "to be made manifest." This surely is a circumlocution for God's action and means "nothing is hidden except to be revealed by God."[30] In other words, the saying means that God, in due time, reveals all mysteries through his activity in the world. This insight, therefore, is not common wisdom, like the saying about the lamp, but wisdom within "biblical culture." In other words, the unit in Mark uses an argument from everyday knowledge about a lamp to introduce a presupposition that derives from a biblical understanding of God: God reveals his mysteries to people as time unfolds. The saying about the lamp, because it is so self-evident, creates an inclination to accept the following proposition. In fact, the conjunction "for" (**gar**) makes the following proposition look like a logical premise for the initial assertion. But the following proposition is a presupposition about God's action that has no direct logical connection with the everyday wisdom about the lamp. What emerges, then, are two arguments from the contrary which appear to be related, and the self-evident nature of the assertion about the lamp encourages the reader to accept the cultural presupposition in the saying about hidden or secret things. Throughout all of this, there is no attempt to say what the mystery of the kingdom of God is, but the sayings make a statement about one thing it is **not** — it is not to remain hidden or secret, put under a bushel or bed. This argument from the contrary is designed to move the hearer to accept the presupposition

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[30] Cf. Dupont, "La Transmission des Paroles," p. 206.

that hidden and mysterious things will, in due time, become visible. This presupposition can be an incentive to risk bringing one's life, thought, and action into a public arena where others see it. But positive directives are not here. The unit motivates by asserting the way things are **not** done. The cleverness of the unit is to get the hearer to align himself or herself with the position that things are not done except in this way. The analogy of the lamp tips the balance. The lamp, which was made for the purpose of producing light, encourages the hearer to affirm the presupposition that "nothing is hid except to be made visible, nor is anything secret except to come into visibility." The goal of the unit, therefore, is to create a predisposition for social visibility within the hearer.[31]

While the Markan version focusses attention on the lamp itself, Luke 8:16-18 contains alternative wording that creates a universal, personal example:

(a) No **one after lighting** a lamp **covers** it with **a vessel,** or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, **that those who enter may see the light.**

(b) For nothing is hid that shall not be made visible, nor anything secret that shall not **be known** and come into visibility.

(c) Take heed **then how** you hear; for to him who has will more be given, and from him who has not, even what **he thinks** he has will be taken away.

The phrasing that differs from the Markan phrasing has been underlined. First, a universal person rather than "the lamp" is the subject of the Lukan argument from the contrary. The initial saying creates a personal example, and the reformulation causes all the verbs to be active. In the unit the person **lights** the lamp, then does **not cover** it or **place it under,** but **places it on** a lampstand, "in order that those who come in may see the light." In turn, a hidden or secret thing not only becomes visible but **becomes known.** The issue, then, becomes **how** a person hears. If a person hears well, he or she will receive more, and if a person has no ability to hear well, even what he **thinks he** has will be taken away.

In this expanded form, the unit establishes implicit divisions that con-clude with an explicit division between "he who has" and "he who has not": No one ... (everyone), nothing ... (everything), he who has ... he who has not .... The Markan version discussed above presents the issue on the basis of the lamp "in and of itself," and it asks the hearer to heed the truth of the argument. In

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31 Cf. Josef B. Souček, "Salz der Erde und Licht der Welt. Zur Exegese von Matth. 5,13-16," Theologische Zeitschrift 19 (1963) 172; Jan Lambrecht, S.J., Once More Astonished: The Parables of Jesus (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 95-96.

contrast, the Lukan version personalizes the issue from the beginning, establishing a universally negative example (no one) that elicits a universally positive example (everyone) in the hearer's mind. Then the unit creates an explicit division with an additional line of reasoning: if a person receives the logic of the unit, that person will be given more; but if the person does not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away. This is epideictic argumentation, designed to speak well of those who do good actions and to censure those who do not.

Luke uses the personalized form of the saying about the lamp in yet another context: the conclusion to the Beelzebul controversy (Luke 11:33- 36):

(a) No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a hidden place (nor under the bushel) but on the lampstand, in order that those who come in may see the light.

(b) The lamp of the body is your eye.

(c) Whenever your eye is sound, even your whole body is lightened; and whenever it is evil, also your body is darkened.

(d) Therefore, be careful lest the light in you be darkness.

(e) If, then, your whole body is lightened, having no part darkened, it will be wholly lightened as when the lamp with its rays gives you light.

In this instance, Luke elaborates the saying with an analogy between the lamp and the eye. Again the goal is epideictic, namely to praise that which is good and censure that which is evil. If Derrett is correct that the key to the analogy is the wick of the lamp, which if trimmed properly burns clear but if not produces dark smoke, then if the eye is sound, like a well-trimmed wick, it will be clear in vision and will see clearly the significance of Jesus' casting out of demons by the spirit of God.[32] But if the eye is evil, it will persist in the smoky illusion that Jesus is possessed by Beelzebul.[33]

Matthew, Thomas, and John: Elaborations of the Lamp and the Light.

Matthew alone among the gospels frames the saying about the lamp with a proposition before it and a conclusion after it. This means that the unit is an

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[32] Derrett, "The Lamp Which Must Not Be Hidden," pp. 204-206; cf. Hahn, "Die Worte vom Licht," 127-134.

[33] See Robbins' chapter on the Beelzebul controversy in Mack and Robbins, Rhetoric in the Gospels.

abridged form of an elaboration like we see in Hermogenes.[34] The elaboration has three parts:

(a) You (pl.) are the light of the world.

(b) A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

(c) Let your light so shine before people, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

The initial component in this unit is the proposition "You are the light of the world." This saying does not occur in any other New Testament gospel or the Gospel of Thomas. It emerges from an explicit association of the light from the lamp with the disciples. It is important to notice that the saying in Mark never refers to "light" but only "the lamp," and when the sayings in Luke and Thomas refer to the light, they refer to "seeing the light." Only the version in Matthew refers to "giving light" (Matthew 5:15).[35] In other words, the Matthean unit changes the perspective from "people who see the light of the lamp," to "people who give light to others." This is a major shift in the use of the saying. Interestingly enough, the version in GThom 33 is an intermediate form:

(a) Jesus said, "Preach from your housetops that which you will hear in your ear <(and) in the other ear>.

(b) For no one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel, nor does he put it in a hidden place, but rather he sets it on a lampstand so that everyone who enters and leaves will see its light.

The saying about the lamp is preceded by a saying that refers to "people who preach from the housetops" like a lamp on a lampstand shines forth. Nevertheless, the lamp saying retains the wording of "seeing the light of the lamp" rather than "giving light."[36] In contrast, the Matthean version of the saying, in the context of "You are the light of the world," has a revised version of the lamp saying that ends with "it gives light to all in the house." A

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[34] See Mack, "Anecdotes and Arguments," 32-38.

[35] Cf. Souček, "Salz der Erde und Licht der Welt," pp. 173-177. For a full discussion of the passage, see Ulrich Luz, Das Evangelium nach Markus, Evangelish - Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament I/1 (Zürich: Benziger, 1985) 219-227.

[36] For a full discussion of the passage, see Jacques-É Ménard, L'Évangile selon Thomas, Nag Hammadi Studies 5 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975) 130-132; cf. Bertil Gärtner, The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas (London: Collins, 1961) 40-41; R. McL. Wilson, Studies in the Gospel of Thomas (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1960) 75, 138-139, 147.

search for the cultural forces at work in both the unparalleled Matthean saying and the revised lamp saying is well rewarded. There is a long tradition in biblical culture that "You are the light to the nations."[37] In fact, Jesus' dwelling "in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali" is said in Matthew 4:13 to fulfill the statement by the prophet Isaiah:

> the people who sat in darkness
> have seen a great light,
> and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
> the light has dawned (Matt 4:16).

When, only twenty-three verses later, Jesus says, "You are the light of the world," it is obvious that "scriptural culture," as Peder Borgen has aptly called it, has nurtured the saying about the lamp into a saying about "giving light to all in the house" (Matthew 5:15) and brought forth a new saying, "You are the light of the world."

Then Matthew has created an exhortation as a conclusion, a procedure that fulfills the component Hermogenes calls the **paraklesis** at the end of the elaboration:[38]

> Let your light so shine before people, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Matt 5:16).

The concept of producing good works that people may see is directly in line with rabbinic tradition,[39] and the goal that people "give glory to your Father who is in heaven" is a fundamental hope and joy within Jewish tradition. Influence from scriptural culture has produced an emphasis on being a light, doing good works, and transferring praise from man to God.

There is no space to pursue early Christian tradition about the disciples as the light of the world. But it is important to see two developments in the Gospel of John: explicit reference for the lamp and the light. As mentioned

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[37] Elizabeth R. Achtemeier, "Jesus Christ, the Light of the World," Interpretation 17 (1963) 439-449.

[38] Hock and O'Neil, The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric, p. 177; Mack, "Decoding the Scripture," pp. 98, 107; "Anecdotes and Arguments," p. 27.

[39] Sachs, A Rabbinic Commentary, pp. 84-85.

above, a saying attributed to Jesus in John 5:35 identifies the Baptist as the lamp:[40]

He <John the Baptist> was the lighted and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

It is informative to observe the significant overlap in topics between Matthew 5:14-16 and John 5:35-44. No less than seven related topics emerge in common: lamp (luchnos), to light or burn (kaiō), light (phōs), works (ta erga), the Father (ho patēr), see (eidon/eōraken), and glory/glorify (doxa/ doxazein). When emphasis emerges on "the light" as an active force in Matthew and John, the topics of works, the Father, and glory are present. When light shines forth, it shows forth deeds, either the good deeds of people (Matthew 5:16) or the deeds of the Father (John 5:19-21). The deeds of the Father and the people are perceived to be related to one another. Of course, in the midst of these deeds come "the good deeds which I <Jesus> am doing" (John 5:36; cf. 5:19-21). The shared topic of the Father (Matthew 5:16; John 5:36-37) signifies the source of the light. Standing in the background of the light that comes from the Baptist, the disciples, and Jesus is the light which came forth from the Father when he said "Light" at the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:3).[41] The deeds and the Father raise the issue of glory and glorifying. The Gospel of John refers to "receiving glory from one another" and "seeking glory that comes from the only God" (John 5:44); the Gospel of Matthew refers to "giving glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Part of the cognitive network that emerges when early Christians talk about "light shining forth to others" is the giving and receiving of glory from God and from one another.

There is one more step in the Gospel of John: the explicit identification of Jesus with the light distinguishes him from the Baptist who was the lamp. Thus, in early Christian tradition, there is a fully positive saying in Matthew about the disciples, a fully positive saying in the Fourth Gospel about Jesus; and a saying that dissociates the Baptist from Jesus and the disciples:[42]

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40 See Peder Borgen, "Logos was the True Light," Novum Testamentum 14 (1972) 125-126; Fritz Neugebauer, "Miszelle zu Joh 5 35," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 52 (1961) 130, thinks the passage has been influenced by Psalm 132:16b-17 (LXX: 131:16b-17).

41 See Sverre Aalen, Die Begriffe 'Licht' und 'Finsternis' (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1951) 9-95.

42 For a discussion of association and dissociation, see Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971) 190-191, 411-459.

"He <the Baptist> **was** the lighted and shining lamp" (John 5:35);
"You **are** the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14);
"I **am** the light of the world" (John 8:12).

Whereas the Baptist is dissociated from Jesus and the disciples in the tradition, and negatives intensify that dissociation (**not** the Christ, Elijah, or the prophet, **but** the voice of one crying in the wilderness: John 1:20-23), arguments from the contrary strengthen the association of Jesus with his disciples. A characteristic feature of the arguments that advance the association of Jesus and his disciples is the use of "not ... but," as we see it in Matthew 5:15:

"Men do **not** light a lamp and put it under a bushel,
but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house."

In turn, the Fourth Gospel has:

"He who follows me will **not** walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

The use of contraries becomes a technique for elaboration in the Fourth Gospel, as Peder Borgen has observed.[43] In fact, every verse except two in John 12:44-50 employs some type of contrary to make its point:

He who believes in me,
    believes **not** in me but in him who sent me.
And he who sees me sees him who sent me.
I have come as light into the world,
    that whoever believes in me may **not** remain in darkness.
If anyone hears my sayings and does **not** keep them,
    I do **not** judge him;
    for I did **not** come to judge the world **but** to save the world.
He who rejects me and does **not** receive my sayings has a judge,
    the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day.

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[43] Peder Borgen, "Observations on the Midrashic Character of John 6," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, 54 (1963) 233-236; cf. "The Use of Tradition," pp. 23-32.

For I have **not** spoken on my own authority;
the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life.
What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me.

The use of contraries in this unit produces aggressive language. This aggressiveness also is observable in the Gospel of Mark,[44] and we have found it in every performance of the saying about the lamp and the lampstand in the tradition. Does this mean that this aggressiveness perpetuates an aspect of Jesus' speech itself?

A basic characteristic of the contraries in John 12:44-50 is to require agile movement of the mind. The speaker is continually challenging the hearers's presuppositions and thoughts. To begin with, one would think that "he who believes in Jesus" believes in Jesus. But no: that person believes in him who sent Jesus. In turn, this means that when a person sees Jesus, he or she really sees the one who sent Jesus, and this means that Jesus is the light of the world and whoever believes in him (where the unit started) will not remain in darkness.

The next unit begins with the issue of **keeping** Jesus' words, and we may think we know how the argument will go. But do we? Jesus says that he who hears his words and does **not** keep them, he does **not** judge. This surely is news, since in John 9:39 Jesus says, "For judgment I came into this world." But now (12:47) he says he does **not** come to judge the world **but** to save it. Then we discover that the person who rejects Jesus' sayings has a judge, namely the words themselves will be the judge on the last day (12:48). And why is this so? Because the words Jesus speaks really are **not** his words **but** words the Father gave him to speak (12:49). And from this we are to conclude that Jesus speaks "as the Father has bidden him" (12:50).[45]

The contrary formulations in John are a means of extending the thought to additional items. Only a few of the additional items, however, are truly additional. For the most part, we only see new dimensions of previously asserted arguments. But, new or old, the discourse uses "contraries" much like the saying

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44 Cf. the sayings in Mark: Robbins, Jesus the Teacher, pp. 112-113.

45 Cf. Ernst Haenchen, John 2, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 101.

about the lamp and the lampstand maintains a "contrary" figure throughout all the performances in the tradition. What can the significance of this be?

Conclusion.

Analysis of the sayings about lamps and light in early Christian tradition reveals that early Christians not only perpetuated and expanded sayings with considerable verbal and topical overlap, but also with common argumentative patterns. Every extant performance of the saying about a lamp and a lampstand retains a negative figure at the beginning. We think this emerged from Jesus' use of the saying as a counterargument. Early Christian writers perpetuated this negative feature, not as a counterargument, but as an argument from the contrary in literary settings where a positive topic had been established. In Matthew and John, positive sayings about the lamp and about light were formulated with reference to the disciples, the Baptist, and Jesus. The negative speech pattern that was common to the performances of the saying about the lamp, however, appears in the immediate context in which the positive sayings occur. In the Fourth Gospel the pattern emerges in a technique that pervades the elaboration in John 12:44-50.

Could it be that early Christians perceived themselves to be fully in touch with the meaning of Jesus' sayings when they transmitted attributed speech in patterns they considered to be "Jesus' patterns"? Were they convinced that transmission of his patterns of speech assured that they were transmitting his meaning for the saying? It is too early in our investigations to answer these questions with extensive data. But it is intriguing to see the perpetuation of certain speech patterns with certain in the tradition. We may wonder if distinctions arose in early Christian circles over people who spoke "like Jesus" and people who did not speak like Jesus. If a person, perhaps someone like Paul, did not "speak like Jesus," how could he or she be saying what Jesus said? In such an environment, some early Christians perpetuated sayings "in the manner in which Jesus spoke" as well as "containing the topics about which he spoke." The manner and the topics could perpetuate "the voice" and authority of Jesus after his earthly ministry had ended. During this time, the literary documents that were perceived to have "this kind of apostolicity" achieved a special place of authority in Christian tradition.