

# LITERARY ENCOUNTERS

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WITH THE

# REIGN OF GOD

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# The Sensory-Aesthetic Texture of the Compassionate Samaritan Parable in Luke 10

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It is a special honor and pleasure to write an essay that gives tribute to Robert C. Tannehill's contribution to New Testament interpretation. I first saw and heard him when he read a paper at a meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in the early 1970s on the rhetorical force of the repetitive patterns in "The Birds and the Lilies" passage in Matt 6:25-33//Luke 12:22-31.<sup>1</sup> This paper persuaded me that it was important to incorporate aesthetic literary and rhetorical interpretation into mainline biblical commentary. Since then, the question has been how to formulate a richer, fuller understanding of the emergence and effect of Christianity in the world by incorporating these dynamics in biblical commentary.

In the same mode, this essay interprets the parable traditionally called the Good Samaritan in its Lukan context.<sup>2</sup> The inclusion of all of the Lukan narration calls attention to the interplay between Jesus' description of the Samaritan as compassionate (*esplanchnisthē*,

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1. Robert C. Tannehill, "The Birds and the Lilies," later published in R. C. Tannehill, *The Sword of His Mouth* (Semeia Supplements 1; Philadelphia: Fortress; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1975), 60-67.

2. I am grateful to Robert von Thaden for his skillful bibliographical assistance for this essay. For an alternative title for the parable as "From Jerusalem to Jericho," see Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 189.

10:33) and the lawyer's description of him as merciful (*eleos*, 10:37).<sup>3</sup> Careful attention to Lukan discourse reveals that no adjective for "good" (*agathos* or *kalos*) occurs either in the parable or in the interchange between Jesus and the lawyer. Instead, the focus is on the response of all of one's body to the needs of others, no matter what the circumstances or who the people might be.

Tannehill started to bring his views on this Lukan passage into print already in 1974 when he responded to essays by Daniel Patte and John Dominic Crossan on the genre and narrative structure of the parable.<sup>4</sup> He complimented Patte for "tak[ing] account of the clear three-fold structure of the Good Samaritan (three potential helpers approach the injured man) and . . . relat[ing] this to the fact that the parable begins as the story of the injured man."<sup>5</sup> In turn, he complimented Crossan for "catch[ing] the proper emphasis when he says that Luke 10:30 is the 'initial situation' which establishes the traveler as wounded and so prepares for what follows. It provides the occasion for a story rather than being the basic story sequence."<sup>6</sup> In the context of these comments, Tannehill emphasized "the importance of rhetorical highlighting effects"<sup>7</sup> in *particular* stories as a key for interpretation of them. Calling attention to the presence of the three-fold pattern that is "so common in popular storytelling," he asserted, "Our attention is focused on the third traveler before he arrives, and this heightens the shock when we discover that he neither fits the pattern of cultural expectation nor the pattern of expectation created by the series priest, Levite."<sup>8</sup>

With these emphases, Tannehill was introducing an intricate and complex literary, rhetorical, and cultural mode of analysis and

3. German interpreters regularly capture this dimension of the parable with the adjective *barmherzig*; e.g., Gerhard Sellin, "Lukas als Gleichniserzähler: Die Erzählung vom barmherzigen Samariter (Lk 10:25–37)," *ZNW* 65 (1974): 166–89; 66 (1975): 2–59.

4. Robert C. Tannehill, "Comments on the Articles of Daniel Patte and John Dominic Crossan," *Semeia* 2 (1974): 113–16.

5. *Ibid.*, 114.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, 115.

8. *Ibid.* Later he explained that the logical sequence would be priest, Levite, lay Israelite: Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 183.

interpretation.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the mode of interpretation is implicitly social in its orientation.<sup>10</sup> These strategies were coming into the field of New Testament interpretation during the 1970s especially through the influence of Amos N. Wilder and William A. Beardslee.<sup>11</sup> In the present essay, my purpose is to build on the insights Tannehill has contributed in broad ways to our field of study and in special ways to the Gospel of Luke. The essay emphasizes the sensory-aesthetic texture<sup>12</sup> of the story of the Good Samaritan in its Lukan context to present a "full-bodied interpretation." In particular, I present analysis and interpretation of "body zones"<sup>13</sup> to enrich and expand the literary, rhetorical, social, and cultural mode of interpretation Tannehill has been nurturing for more than thirty years.

### The Topos of Love in Lukan Narration

In his commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Tannehill observes that Luke 10:25–37 focuses on "love of neighbor."<sup>14</sup> A sociorhetorical approach to this story focuses on "love" as a topos.<sup>15</sup> This portion of text reconfigures the topos of love for God in Jewish culture into the topos of enacting mercy for a wounded person. In Carolyn Miller's terms:

9. See his first full literary analysis of Luke: Robert C. Tannehill, *The Gospel According to Luke* (vol. 1 of *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

10. See the emphasis on social dimensions in Tannehill, *Luke*, 28–29.

11. Cf. Amos N. Wilder, "Scholars, Theologians, and Ancient Rhetoric," *JBL* 75 (1956): 1–11; *idem*, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964); William A. Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970); Richard A. Spencer, ed., *Orientation by Disorientation: Studies in Literary Criticism and Biblical Literary Criticism: Presented in Honor of William A. Beardslee* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1980).

12. Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1996), 29–36; *idem*, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 64–65, 89–91.

13. Bruce C. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 73–81; Robbins, *Exploring*, 30–36.

14. Tannehill, *Luke*, 181–85.

15. For basic insights into a sociorhetorical approach to topoi (plural of topos), see Vernon K. Robbins, "The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the Gospel of Mark," in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament* (ed. Duane F. Watson; SBLSymS 14; Atlanta: SBL, 2002), 11–15.

The *topos* is a conceptual space without fully specified or specifiable contents; it is a region of productive uncertainty. It is a “problem space,” but rather than circumscribing or delimiting the problem, rather than being a closed space or container *within* which one searches, it is a space, or a located perspective, *from* which one searches. I am thinking here of the linguistic notion of “semantic space.” . . . Such semantic networks may be conditioned both by the peculiarities of community history and by apparently logical relationships (like opposition and inclusion).<sup>16</sup>

Opening-middle-closing texture<sup>17</sup> is prominent in Luke 10:25–37, and the opening texture establishes the sociocultural topos of love through dialogue between Jesus and a lawyer who stands up to test Jesus (10:25). When the lawyer introduces the topos of “inheriting eternal life” (10:25), Jesus responds with the topos of “written Torah” (10:26), to which the lawyer responds with the topos of “love for God and for neighbor” (10:27). Once the topos of love (*agapān/agapē*) emerges, it does not occur again in the overall interchange between Jesus and the lawyer. Instead, the topos of love functions as a semantic space into which the discourse weaves multiple meanings. When the response of the lawyer moves to the topos of neighbor, the dialogue, through the strategy of a story within a story, reconfigures the topos of love into the topos of “mercy (*eleos*)” in the remark of the lawyer in the closing scene (10:37). Since the topos of mercy had widespread Mediterranean valence during the first century,<sup>18</sup> the persuasive force of its social rhetoric had a potential to reach beyond the confines of Jewish and eastern Mediterranean culture into the widest horizons of Mediterranean culture, and even into almost any culture in the world.

16. Carolyn R. Miller, “The Aristotelean *Topos*: Hunting for Novelty,” in *Rereading Aristotle's Rhetoric* (ed. Alan G. Gross and Arthur E. Walzer; Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 141.

17. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 50–53, 70–72; idem, *Exploring*, 19–21.

18. Rudolf Bultmann, “*eleos, eleeo, cleemon, eleemosune, aneleos, aneleemon*,” *TDNT* 2:477–87.

The semantic space for reconfiguring love of God into mercy for a wounded man emerges from written Torah, which Jewish people by the first century of the common era presupposed to be a conventional resource for inheriting eternal life (cf. Lev 18:5). The intertexture of the lawyer's recitation creates the semantic space. The lawyer does not introduce the topos of love “from the air.” Rather, when Jesus asks the lawyer what is written in the Torah, the lawyer exhibits the characteristics of a Jew who has learned not only the first verse of the Shema but also essential related passages. These passages include Deut 6:6–7 (NRSV): “Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.” This lawyer has kept the words of the Shema in his heart. When Jesus asks him to recite words “written in the Torah,” he is able not only to recite the portion of the Shema in Deut 6:5, which Jews were to recite twice daily (sunrise, sunset: Deut 6:7),<sup>19</sup> but also to recite Lev 19:18 about loving one's neighbor, which is linked to the Shema through the introductory command, “love” (LXX: *agapēseis*). The ability of the lawyer to link another Torah passage containing the word *love* to the Shema shows that this lawyer not only holds the Shema in his heart, but also readily knows other portions of the Torah.

Once the dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer has brought the topos of love of God into speech and linked it with the topos of neighbor, Jesus could have continued to the end of the scene with a monologue that elaborated these *topoi*. When there is such an approach in Lukan discourse, there is no closing scene that reintroduces the initial interlocutor with Jesus (cf. 11:1–13;<sup>20</sup>

19. Cf. m. Berakhoth 1:1–4; cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 28–28A; 2 vols.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981–85), 2:878.

20. See Vernon K. Robbins, “From Enthymeme to Theology in Luke 11:1–13,” in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson* (ed. R. P. Thompson and T. E. Phillips; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998), 191–214. Online: <http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/RELIGION/faculty/robbins/Theology/theology191.html>.

11:14–36;<sup>21</sup> 15:1–32). Luke 10:25–37, in contrast, presents an overall story with opening-middle-closing texture. The opening scene contains dialogue between Jesus and a lawyer that introduces the topos “love of neighbor” (10:25–28). In the middle scene (10:29–35), Jesus continues the dialogue with a story that contains its own opening-middle-closing texture (10:30, 31–34, 35). The closing scene reaches its conclusion in dialogue that reconfigures the topos of love of neighbor into the topos of mercy (10:36–37). The result is a story within a story: a story about a Samaritan helping a wounded man within a story about an encounter between Jesus and a lawyer.<sup>22</sup>

A special feature of the narrational texture<sup>23</sup> of Luke 10:25–37 is the presence of questions in each portion of the overall story. In the opening scene, the lawyer asks Jesus a question (10:25) and Jesus responds with two questions (10:26). The middle scene opens with a second question by the lawyer (10:29), and the closing scene opens with a question by Jesus. All of these questions truly seek information. In rhetorical terminology, they are inquiries, rather than simple questions that can be answered “yes” or “no,” or questions calling for an explanation.<sup>24</sup> None of the questions is simply rhetorical, and no response is simply a retort. All of the dialogue earnestly seeks answers to difficult issues. Indeed, a remarkable feature of the overall story is the absence of explicitly rhetorical constituents of argumentative discourse, such as rationales, contraries or opposites, analogies, conditional constructions, pronouncements of authoritative testimony, and conclusions (cf. Luke 11:1–13, 14–36; 15:1–32).

21. See Vernon K. Robbins, “Beelzebul Controversy in Mark and Luke: Rhetorical and Social Analysis,” *Forum* 7.3–4 (1991): 261–77; cf. idem, “Rhetorical Composition and the Beelzebul Controversy,” in *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (ed. B. L. Mack and V. K. Robbins; Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1989), 185–91.

22. Cf. the perceptive rhetorical interpretation of the unit as *exordium* (10:25–28), *definitio* or redefinition of the issue (10:29–35), *peroratio* including the final imperative (10:36–37): J. Ian H. McDonald, “Rhetorical Issue and Rhetorical Strategy in Luke 10:25–37 and Acts 10:1–11.18,” in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht; JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 66–67.

23. Robbins, *Exploring*, 15–19; idem, *Tapestry*, 53–58, 72–77.

24. See Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O’Neil, eds., *The Progymnasmata* (vol. 1 of *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*; Atlanta: Scholars, 1986), 84–87.

## Rhetography and Body Zones in the Overall Story

At this point it will be helpful to introduce two new words for interpretation. In rhetorical terms, argumentative discourse containing rationales, contraries or opposites, analogies, conditional constructions, authoritative written testimony, and conclusions can appropriately be called rhetology, expressible (*rhētos*)<sup>25</sup> reasoning (*logos*). In contrast, pictorial narration can appropriately be called rhetography, expressible graphic images.<sup>26</sup> Often, Lukan pictorial narration (rhetography) contains explicit rhetorical features. For example, even though Luke 15:1–32 is highly pictorial, featuring three rhetographical parables in a sequence, it contains explicitly argumentative constituents in the form of rhetorical questions (15:4, 8), rationales (15:6, 9, 24, 27, 32), analogies (15:7, 10), contraries (15:28–30), and a conclusion (15:32). In contrast, Luke 10:25–37 contains only two implicit conclusions in the form of commands: (1) “You have answered aright; [therefore] do this and you will live” (10:28); (2) [The Samaritan showed mercy, which makes him a true neighbor. Therefore] “go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37). In Luke 10:25–37, the vehicle of persuasion is dominantly pictorial narration (rhetography) rather than argumentative reasoning (rhetology).<sup>27</sup>

The focus on bodily enactment (“go and do”)<sup>28</sup> of statements in written Torah (10:27) and in actions in a story (10:33–35) calls for interpretive strategies guided by a taxonomy of body zones in Mediterranean antiquity. In 1979, Bruce J. Malina introduced a three-zone model for interpreting texts featuring dyadic personalities in Mediterranean antiquity,<sup>29</sup> and it has yielded important information

25. See the “*rhēt-*” words in Polybius, *Histories* 32.6.7 (to give a stated [*rhēten*] answer); Plato, *Theatetus* 205d, 205e (syllables are expressible [*rhētai*]); *Epistulae* 341c (subject matter that admits of verbal expression [*rhēton*]), 341d (things which can be stated [*rhēta*]).

26. Cf. the term “theography” in Jack Miles, *God: A Biography* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 12.

27. Cf. McDonald, “Rhetorical Issue,” 67: “Jesus’ own rhetoric appears to have allowed him to develop parabolic presentation to the point at which telling became showing and his hearers encountered the reality which his discourse conveyed.”

28. See the reference to “body-reality”: L. W. Mazamisa, *Beatific Comradeship: An Exegetical-Hermeneutical Study on Lk. 10:25–37* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1987), 102.

29. Bruce J. Malina, “The Individual and the Community—Personality in the Social World of Early Christianity,” *BTB* 9 (1979): 126–38; idem, *New Testament World*, 73–82.

when interpreters have applied it. John J. Pilch has summarized the approach as follows:<sup>30</sup>

Human beings consist of three mutually interpenetrating yet distinguishable symbolic zones for interacting with various environments: (1) the zone of emotion-fused thought (heart-eyes); (2) the zone of self-expressive speech (mouth-ears); and (3) the zone of purposeful action (hands-feet).

	<i>Bodily parts</i>	<i>Functions</i>
Zone 1:	heart/eyes	emotion-fused thought
Zone 2:	mouth/ears	self-expressive speech
Zone 3:	hands/feet	purposeful action

Malina has listed an extensive number of nouns, verbs, and adjectives to guide interpreters in commentary on body zones.<sup>31</sup> In the context of this taxonomy, the effect of the recitation of the Shema in Luke 10:27 appears to refer to the entire human body in its intersubjective relation to God and to other people. The verse lists heart and mind (*dianoia*), which are agents of emotion-fused thought.<sup>32</sup> Malina does not list “strength,” but this would appear to apply especially to people’s hands and feet, the agents of purposeful action. When the verse refers to soul (*psychē*), it appears to refer to the entire person in relation to God and to others. The words of Joseph Fitzmyer seem highly appropriate when he writes, with reference to the body parts mentioned in Luke 10:27: “As a group, they sum up the totality of personal life.”<sup>33</sup>

In the opening and closing of the overall story, then, the lawyer has articulated guidelines from the Torah concerning the response of a person’s entire body both to God and to the neighbor. But even more than this is present in the pictorial depiction of the dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer. The lawyer opens the episode by using

30. John J. Pilch, “Sickness and Healing in Luke-Acts,” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. J. H. Neyrey; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 204.  
31. Malina, *New Testament World*, 74–75.  
32. *Ibid.*, 74.  
33. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:880.

his feet to stand up (*anestē*, 10:25) and his mouth to speak. Thus, he begins by enacting both the body zone of purposeful action and the body zone of self-expressive speech. Jesus responds with his own self-expressive speech by asking the lawyer (*nomikos*), whom he perceives to be a scribe,<sup>34</sup> to activate his emotion-fused thought. Since the eyes take information into the heart, the primary location for emotion-fused thought, Jesus asks the lawyer to activate the mode of remembering what his eyes have brought into his heart from written Torah. The effect of Jesus’ response is to turn the lawyer’s testing of Jesus’ emotion-fused thought (10:25) into Jesus’ testing of the lawyer’s emotion-fused thought (10:26). The lawyer fulfills the test very well. He is able to produce the emotion-fused thought of the Shema plus Lev 19:18 in a manner that receives Jesus’ approval.

But then Jesus issues one more test for the lawyer. The lawyer must bring into purposive action the emotion-fused thought he has presented so well in self-expressive speech. He must do what he has said. Since Jesus’ statement is so close to statements in the Torah, such as “You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live: I am the LORD” (Lev 18:5 NRSV), the lawyer should have no difficulty understanding Jesus’ reasoning. Thus, a hearer might reasonably expect the dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer to end at this point. The lawyer certainly would not ask Jesus why he should do these things, because the presence of the statements in the Torah provides a comprehensive rationale. One does what is in the Torah, because the Torah is God’s self-expressive speech concerning God’s emotion-fused thought and purposive action. Humans receive benefits from God by understanding this “three body zone” revelation from God and doing what the revelation asks them to do.

The dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer does not end at this point: the lawyer continues the interaction by means of his self-expressive speech.<sup>35</sup> The meaning of the narrational comment that the

34. Cf. *ibid.*, 1:676: “The term *nomikos* is probably only a synonym for *grammateus*, ‘scribe.’”  
35. Perhaps one should understand the lawyer as a teacher of the law whose profession gives prominence to his self-expressive speech. See the reference to “teachers of the law” (*nomodidaskaloi*) in Luke 5:17: cf. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:581.

lawyer wanted “*dikaiōsai* (to justify)”<sup>36</sup> himself (10:29) is not clear. Perhaps it means that Jesus has won the respect of the lawyer, and the lawyer now wants guidelines about the meaning of “my neighbor,” so he can adopt practices that will keep him from being guilty of wrong action in the future.<sup>37</sup> Thus, it could mean he is “wanting to keep himself innocent from wrongdoing.” Perhaps it simply introduces a “combative ethos.”<sup>38</sup> Most interpreters assign negative motives to the lawyer, suggesting that he is trying to save face.<sup>39</sup> Tannehill perceives the wording to mean either that the lawyer has a “false concern with his own position”<sup>40</sup> or that he “is suspicious and unreceptive.”<sup>41</sup> Whatever the case, Jesus “took up”<sup>42</sup> the question and continued the dialogue by telling a story (10:30–35).

When the story is over, Jesus asks the lawyer to activate his emotion-fused thoughts once again, but this time in relation to the story rather than in relation to the Torah. The key is in the question “Which of these three . . . seems to you?” (*tis toutōn tōn triōn . . . dokei soi?* 10:36), rather than “What is written?” (*ti gegrap-tai?* 10:26). Jesus has presented a case to the lawyer and now asks him to function as a judge and announce a decision about the three men who saw the wounded man by the road. With this rhetorical move, Jesus is asking the lawyer to shift from his usual practice of making official decisions about different verses in the Torah, to a decision about different people in a realistic situation in the lives of people.

The decisive rhetorical effect of the dialogue is to change the focus from “Who is my neighbor?” (10:29) to “How does a person become

a neighbor?” (10:36). Thus, Jesus’ question is, “Which of these three, do you think, became (*gegonenai*)<sup>43</sup> a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” The lawyer readily responds with perceptive judgment: “The one who did mercy with him” (10:37). With this response, the lawyer shows that he has the ability to make judgments about haggadah (narrative) as well as halakah (legal scripture). When he moves to haggadah, he also moves beyond whatever limitations to the topos “neighbor” he may find in the Torah to “mercy,” which is an important topos in prophetic literature and Mediterranean culture at large.

There was debate among Jews concerning the precise meaning of the “neighbor” toward which one must show love “as yourself.” The Greek word for neighbor, *plēsiōn*, means “one who is near.”<sup>44</sup> It was conventional to consider the mandate to “love your neighbor” to refer first and foremost to fellow Israelites, with an extension to loving the sojourner in the land as yourself (Lev 19:34; cf. Deut 10:19).<sup>45</sup> Some Jews understood the Torah to require a person to show love to “all people.”<sup>46</sup> No matter exactly who one might understand the neighbor to be, people are being asked to love God and neighbor with their entire body. Hence, the Torah could be understood to require that if a Samaritan sojourning in Judea were attacked, robbed, and beaten, Israelites should enact love for the Samaritan as they would for themselves. In the story, of course, the reverse is the case. The sojourner in the land enacts love for the wounded Judean.

Wesley H. Wachob’s interpretation of “mercy” (*eleos*) in James 2:13 is highly pertinent to Luke 10:37, since James 2:8–13 also reconfigures the topos of “loving your neighbor as yourself” into

36. Variant *dikaion* (present active infinitive).

37. Kenneth E. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes: More Lukan Parables, Their Culture and Style* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980 [combined ed.: *Poet and Peasant*; and, *Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke*, 1983]), 39; cf. Luke 23:47; 7:29.

38. McDonald, “Rhetorical Issue,” 66.

39. The strongest case against a more positive reading is Luke 16:15; cf. 18:9, 14, 21. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:886: “‘desiring to vindicate himself,’ to show he was right in posing the question that he had originally proposed to Jesus, even though it found such a simple answer.” For a range of possible meanings, see Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2: 9:51–24:53 (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 1027–28.

40. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:179.

41. Tannehill, *Luke*, 181.

42. Cf. LXX: Job 2:4; 32:6; 40:1; Dan 3:28; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:886.

43. John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34* (WBC 35B; Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1993), 596.

44. Tannehill, *Luke*, 182.

45. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 880–81.

46. *Letter of Aristaeas* 228: “[The king’s] question was, ‘To whom must one show favor?’ The answer was, ‘To his parents, always, for God’s very commandment concerns the honor due to parents. Next (and closely connected) he reckons the honor due to friends, calling the friend an equal of one’s own self. You do well if you bring all men into friendship with yourself’” (OTP 2:28); cf. *Testament of Zebulun* 5:1: “Now, my children, I tell you to keep the Lord’s commands; show mercy to your neighbor, have compassion on all, not only human beings but to dumb animals” (OTP 1:806); Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 584.

“doing mercy.”<sup>47</sup> Wachob explains that “Aristotle defined the ‘emotion’ *eleos* as ‘a kind of pain [*lupē*] excited by the sight of evil [*kakō*], deadly or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it’” (*Rhetorica* 2.8.2).<sup>48</sup> In Jewish and Christian literature, mercy becomes “an attribute of God.... Specifically, it is an attribute of action, something that God does.”<sup>49</sup> In addition, “in the LXX *eleos* [or *eleēmosynē*] is demanded by God of those to whom God shows love” (LXX: Mic 6:8; Zech 7:9–10; Jer 9:23; Hos 12:7; cf. Dan 4:27; Sir 3:30; 40:17; and Tob 4:9–11).<sup>50</sup> As a result of the rhetography (graphic narration) of the story of the wounded man in Luke 10:30–35, the lawyer’s emotion-fused thought moves to the conclusion that even a despised person who “does mercy” toward someone in dire need has become “a neighbor,” and this provides a link for understanding the meaning of neighbor in Lev 19:18.

Thus, the lawyer is making a halakhic judgment that the one who “becomes a neighbor to someone in need” is fulfilling the Torah injunction to “love your neighbor as yourself.” When the lawyer makes this judgment, Jesus simply reconfigures the standard Torah injunction “Do this and you will live” (Lev 18:5) to “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37). The special question we must now ask is, “What socio-rhetorical features in Jesus’ story made it possible to imagine that an expert in Jewish halakah might be moved to such a perception of ‘loving your neighbor as yourself’ by this story?” This requires that we turn to the inner story about the Samaritan’s helping of the wounded man alongside the road.

### Rhetography and Body Zones in the Story within the Story

The presence of the story about the Samaritan within the story about the lawyer establishes two interacting rhetographies in this portion

47. Wesley H. Wachob, *The Voice of Jesus in the Social Rhetoric of James* (SNTSMS 106; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 104–13, 132–34, 179–80.

48. *Ibid.*, 179.

49. *Ibid.*, 133.

50. *Ibid.*, 134.

of Luke. The picture of the lawyer’s performance in relation to Jesus interacts with the picture of the Samaritan’s performance in relation to the priest and Levite. In the previous section, we have seen the effect of the story within the story on the lawyer. In this section, the goal is to discern how the story within the story could be perceived to have the particular effect the discourse assigns to it.

Repetitive texture<sup>51</sup> in the story within the story emphasizes a sequence of “seeing” and “passing by on the other side” (*idōn antiparēlthen*, 10:31, 32). Jesus’ story about the wounded man presupposes that if Lev 19:18 were present in the hearts of the priest and Levite in a mode of “remembrance of the Torah,” their hearts would move them toward merciful purposive action when their eyes brought the information to their hearts that a man was lying half-dead alongside the road. The narration in Luke 10:31–32, however, presents no movement within the emotion-fused thought of the priest and Levite, like hate, fear, disdain, disgust, or anger.<sup>52</sup> They fulfill the description of people in Isa 6:9 who “seeing do not see” (cf. Luke 8:10).

The verb describing the purposive action is intensified with the prefix *anti-*, indicating that each man did not simply pass “alongside” the man but alongside “on the opposite side” (*antiparēlthen*). The narration certainly does not imply that they passed by on the other side so they would not step on him and harm him more. It can mean, however, that they passed by at a distance that kept the information about the wounded man from becoming more fully present and vivid to their hearts through their eyes. Their feet purposefully took their eyes further away from the wounded man and his injuries.

After Jesus’ narration uses twenty Greek words to describe the event that leaves the man lying alongside the road (10:30), it describes the action of the priest in twelve (or fourteen) Greek words (10:31), and the action of the Levite in eleven (or twelve) Greek words (10:32). This means that the narrational length of the description of the setting

51. Robbins, *Exploring*, 8–9; *idem*, *Tapestry*, 46–50, 66–69.

52. E.g., there is no remark that the priest feared that he may become impure by touching a corpse, even if this is a possibility. See Scott, *Hear*, 195–97; cf. Richard Bauckham, “The Scrupulous Priest and the Good Samaritan: Jesus’ Parabolic Interpretation of the Law of Moses,” *NTS* 44 (1998): 475–89.



and the description of the two men who pass by is almost equivalent (20 to 23 [or 26]).<sup>53</sup> In contrast, the narration uses sixty Greek words to describe the actions of the Samaritan. This means that the detailed description of the actions of the Samaritan is three times longer than either the description of the initial setting or the actions of the priest and Levite.

Jesus' description of the response of the Samaritan to the wounded man is so lengthy because it presents a detailed progression of concrete compassionate moments<sup>54</sup> that show the response of the Samaritan "with his entire body."<sup>55</sup> The story starts by describing the Samaritan as "journeying" (*hodeuōn*), which suggests that he is engaged in purposive action toward a specific destination. Displaying progressive texture,<sup>56</sup> however, it asserts that "journeying he came to him and seeing him he was moved with compassion" (*idōn esplanchnisthē*, 10:33), rather than "seeing him he passed by on the other side" (*idōn antiparēlthen*, 10:31, 32).<sup>57</sup> In contrast to Isa 6:9, which the priest and Levite enact, the Samaritan "seeing does see and, moved with compassion, he understands what must be done." Just as moving along the road naturally brought him to the half-dead man, so seeing the man naturally produced a movement of compassion within his "innermost parts" (*esplanchnisthē*). M. J. J. Menken has discovered that "Luke puts *splanchnizesthai* and *splanchna* — whether it comes from his source or from his own pen — in various ways in the numerical centre of a passage, to give it the emphasis it apparently deserves from his point of view."<sup>58</sup> In the story of the Compassionate Samaritan, it marks the movement within the emotion-fused thought of the Samaritan that begins a sequence in which he shows love to the wounded man "with all his heart" (cf. 10:27).

53. Cf. the word count in Bock, *Luke*, 2:1032.

54. Bock, *Luke*, 2:1032, uses the phrase "concrete compassionate units" to describe the Samaritan's actions.

55. Cf. Tannehill, *Luke*, 184.

56. Robbins, *Exploring*, 9–14; idem, *Tapestry*, 46–50, 69–70.

57. Cf. Scott, *Hear*, 193.

58. M. J. J. Menken, "The Position of *Splanchnizesthai* and *Splanchna* in the Gospel of Luke," *NovT* 30 (1988): 114.

As we have seen in the previous section, when this story within the story is over, the lawyer describes the Samaritan as "the one who did mercy" (*ho poiēsas to eleos*, 10:37).<sup>59</sup> Careful analysis shows that he performed eight progressive acts of compassion.<sup>60</sup> The first act of the Samaritan was "seeing, he made his eyes to see." When his eyes really saw, they took the pitiful sight into his heart, which moved him with compassion (10:33). The second act of the Samaritan was to turn toward a new form of purposive action with his feet. He turns away from his "journeying" to "go toward" the wounded man (*proselthōn*, 10:34). The third and fourth acts of compassion occur when the Samaritan puts his hands, the other agency of purposive action, to work. Pouring on oil and wine, he binds up the wounds of the man (10:34). The fifth act of compassion occurs when he lifts the man onto his own beast of burden, not only using his hands with skill but also with "all their strength" (cf. 10:27).

Once the wounded man is on the beast of burden, the Samaritan enacts the sixth act of compassion by turning his feet toward an inn, taking the man there, and caring for him (10:34). With these actions, he continues to use his feet and hands "with all their functions" for the sake of the wounded man. The seventh act of compassion occurs when the Samaritan takes out two denarii on the next day and gives them to the innkeeper (10:35). With this action, he is not only loving the wounded man with his hands but also with his soul (*psychē*, 10:27), his very being and livelihood (cf. 21:4). The eighth act of compassion occurs when the Samaritan uses his self-expressive speech, telling the innkeeper to take care of the wounded man, and promising that he will return to pay whatever additional expense is owed (10:35). At this point, the Samaritan uses the third body zone associated with the mouth and ears to make a promise out of his heart and mind (cf. 10:27) that he will use his feet to return to the

59. See the analysis of *poiēō* in the opening and closing scenes: John O. York, *The Last Shall Be First: The Rhetoric of Reversal in Luke* (JSNTSup 46; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 131.

60. Bock, *Luke*, 2:1032–33, without the aid of a taxonomy of body zones, details six concrete compassionate units: (1) he comes up to him; (2) binds his wounds; (3) anoints the cuts with oil and wine; (4) loads the man on his mule; (5) takes him to an inn; (6) provides care and comfort to the man.

inn and use his hands to pay the innkeeper an additional amount. In an eightfold progression, then, the narration describes the Samaritan loving his neighbor with “his whole heart, his whole soul, his whole strength, and his whole mind” (10:27). And surely the overall context implies that these actions exhibit the Samaritan’s complete love for God and all that God has created.

As is well-known, the deep shock of the parable comes from the presence of the Samaritan as the “folkloric third person” who comes along in the story within the story.<sup>61</sup> As Tannehill has indicated, the logical progression would have been priest, Levite, and lay Israelite.<sup>62</sup> The result, in the words of John O. York, is a “bipolar reversal”: “The shameful Samaritan is shown to be honorable by his actions; the honored Jews are shameful because of their inaction.”<sup>63</sup> The history of Judean disdain for Samaritans as a despised outgroup has been detailed well recently by Philip F. Esler.<sup>64</sup> It is possible, however, that 2 Chr 28:5–15 functioned as a precedent for Samaritans helping wounded Judeans.<sup>65</sup> Of particular interest is the detailed description of the actions of the Samaritans:

[Certain chiefs] took the captives, and with the booty they clothed all that were naked among them; they clothed them, gave them sandals, provided them with food and drink, and anointed them; and carrying all the feeble among them on donkeys, they brought them to their kindred at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria. (2 Chr 28:15 NRSV)

61. For Samaritans, see Scott, *Hear*, 192; and Philip F. Esler, “Jesus and the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict: The Parable of the Good Samaritan in Light of Social Identity Theory,” *BibInt* 8 (2000): 329–32.

62. Tannehill, *Luke*, 183; cf. Scott, *Hear*, 197–99; Michel Gourgues, “The Priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan Revisited: A Critical Note on Luke 10:31–35,” *JBL* 117 (1998): 712.

63. York, *Last Shall Be First*, 132.

64. Esler, “Jesus and the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict,” 329–32.

65. F. Scott Spencer, “2 Chronicles 28:5–15 and the Parable of the Good Samaritan,” *WTJ* 46 (1984): 317–49. A major problem with this essay is a single focus on what Jesus may have known and thought, rather than on the possible role of the passage in Lukan discourse; cf. Vernon K. Robbins, “The Socio-Rhetorical Role of Old Testament Scripture in Luke 4–19,” in *Z Nového Zákona/From the New Testament: Sborník k narozeninám Prof. ThDr. Zdenka Šázavy* (ed. Hana Tonzarová and Petr Melmuk; Prague: Vydala Církev československa husitska, 2001), 81–93.

The function of these Samaritans as “ministers of healing”<sup>66</sup> suggests that earlier in biblical discourse these people had shown that they knew what obedience to Lev 19:18 means.<sup>67</sup> If this passage does have an intertextual relation to the Lukan story, it is yet another example of the manner in which stories in Lukan discourse are powerful vehicles for configuring and reconfiguring Torah, Prophets, and Psalms in a continuation of the story of Israel through the story of Jesus of Nazareth (Luke 24:44).

## Conclusion

For many years Robert C. Tannehill has shown a keen interest in “forceful and imaginative language” and in “pattern and tension” in Gospel stories.<sup>68</sup> The story of the Compassionate Samaritan within the story of the lawyer seeking eternal life exhibits both qualities. Throughout, the story features pattern and tension of various kinds. First, there is the pattern and tension with the dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer as the lawyer moves through a series of steps to an identification of the Samaritan as “the one who did mercy.” Second, there is pattern and tension in the story of the wounded man as “seeing” finally progresses to “compassion,” which unfolds in an eightfold progression of actions in which the Samaritan activates his emotion-fused thought, purposeful action, and self-expressive speech. Third, there is pattern in tension between the Samaritan, who “did mercy” with his “whole heart, soul, strength, and mind,” and the lawyer, who earnestly uses emotion-fused thought and self-expressive speech to find out how to inherit eternal life, but has yet to fulfill what he has thought and said by “going and doing likewise.”

In the language of Tannehill, the shock of the embodiment of compassion in the Samaritan stretches love of neighbor “until it becomes love of enemy (as in 6:27–36), except that it is more unsettling.”<sup>69</sup> The forceful and imaginative discourse presents the

66. F. S. Spencer, “2 Chronicles 28:5–15,” 327–33.

67. *Ibid.*, 334–37.

68. Tannehill, *Sword*, 11–58.

69. Tannehill, *Luke*, 184.

Samaritan not only as “bearer of God’s eternal mercy” but as “the Irruptive Other.”<sup>70</sup> Therefore, this story within a story functions beyond metaphor and analogy by becoming a tensive pictorial narration of “the substance of a new reality.”<sup>71</sup> In the language of Brendan Byrne:

This is the way to inherit eternal life. The God whom one is attempting to love with all one’s heart is the God who reaches out to the world in compassion in the same way as the good Samaritan did. In the ministry of Jesus, which the Church has to continue, God offers extravagant, life-giving hospitality to wounded and half-dead humanity. The way to eternal life is to allow oneself to become an active instrument and channel of that same boundary-breaking hospitality.<sup>72</sup>

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70. Mazamisa, *Beatific Comradeship*, 164–65.

71. McDonald, “Rhetorical Issue,” 67.

72. Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke’s Gospel* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000), 101–2.