



Sword for the Prince of Peace (Lk 22:35-38)?

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Abstract: Two texts from the Lucan version “Do you think I have come to bring peace upon earth? No I tell you, but rather division” (Lk 12:51) and ““The one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one” (Lk 22:36) – are among the challenging and difficult texts to interpret. Very often these texts are used to justify violent approaches to solve issues, not only for self-defence but also to make our missionary and evangelical activities more effective and fruitful. But the question is: Luke in the whole of the Gospel, emerges to be, among others, an evangelist of peace, but how come in these texts he encourages ‘division’ and the use of ‘sword’? Raising this pertinent question, the paper seeks to analyze the nuances of the usage of these two terms in the over-all context of Luke’s Gospel and invites the readers to find an answer for the question whether Jesus offers universal peace and all-inclusive salvation or division.

Keywords: Peace in NT, Sword, Peace on earth, Prince of peace.

Introduction

One of the harshest and difficult sayings of Jesus is, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Mt 10:34). In a way, Black is right when he says, such a statement from Jesus looks like “a cry of Muhammad proclaiming a Jihad or holy war, rather than a genuine utterance of the Prince of

Peace.”¹Understanding this difficulty, Luke has already tried to soften this harsh saying of Jesus by changing ‘sword’ into ‘division’: “Do you think I have come to bring peace upon earth? No I tell you, but rather division” (Lk 12:51). The absence of the word ‘sword’ suggests that either Luke has the fear that ‘sword’ would convey a literal meaning and hence be misunderstood, or as we would see later, Luke wanted to use the word not in this section, but elsewhere on the eve of his arrest, where no other gospel writer has referred to it: “The one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one.” (Lk 22:36).

This verse has led numerous Christians to justify their stand on weapons and say it is right and just to carry and use weapons not only for personal safety but also in the pursuit of missionary activity of bringing Jesus to the world. This also makes us wonder why on earth Luke, the evangelist, who emphasizes peace all through his gospel, suddenly talks about sword just before the arrest of Jesus.

I am of the opinion that the above mentioned two passages about division and sword (Lk 12:51 and Lk 22:36) should be understood in the light of the general context of the gospel of Luke where the concept of peace plays a theologically significant role. This paper hence attempts at first to see how, among the other Synoptics, Luke has made more use of the term peace to explicate the life and mission of Jesus. This will help, then, to appreciate the nuances of the difficult sayings of Jesus about division and sword. Studying the nuances of ‘peace’ and ‘sword’ in the light of each other, I hope, we would perhaps be able to find an answer to an age-old question - is what Jesus offers to the world, universal and an all-inclusive offer of salvation, irrespective of caste, creed and culture.

1. Peace in the New Testament

The Greek word for peace, εἰρήνη (*eirénē*) could be seen in the New Testament as many as 92 times. Although we find the word in every book of the NT, except 1 John, mostly the word is seen in the gospels and in the Pauline letters. It is interesting to note that out of the twenty five occurrences of the word in the gospels, it is Luke who uses the word more often than the other evangelists.² The meaning of the word *eirénē* in the NT could be perceived in three different shades of meaning. First, the word *eirénē* in the NT corresponds to the OT and Rabbinic understanding of the term *shalom*, meaning health, wellbeing and deliverance.³ Just as *shalom* is used as a normal expression of greeting of the Orientals, we also see that in Luke (as well as in the other books of the NT), *eirénē* is often connected with a formal way of greeting someone, not only at the beginning of the meeting, but also as a farewell greeting. The first thing that the disciples are asked to do, when they enter the houses to which they go, is to greet them and wish them peace. Along the similar line, the resurrected Christ greets the disciples, with the word 'Peace be with you' (Lk 24:36).⁴ Secondly the word could also be seen in the NT in the context of reconciliation of humans with each other (2 Tim 2:22; Eph 4:3; Jam 3:8) and with God Eph 2:16). Finally, *eirénē* could be seen as referring to the end time salvation. Foerster understands the references Lk 1:75 where Zachariah talks of peace, and Lk 2:14 where the angels sing of peace to the people of good will, pointing to the arrival of the end-time salvation.⁵ Taken in this way, one could say that the word *eirénē*, just like the Hebrew word *shalom*, could be understood or used interchangeably with the word σωτήριον (*sótérion*). In the gospels, however, especially in Luke, the word *eirénē* comes either from the mouth of Jesus, or at least, it is spoken in reference to Jesus.

2. Peace in the Infancy Narratives in Luke

Luke uses the word *eirénē* three times in the Infancy Narratives (Lk 1:79b, 2:14, 29). The first is placed in the *Benedictus* where Zachariah sings his song of praise to God and ends it with the prophecy about his son preparing the way of the Light which will “guide us in the way of peace” (Lk 1:79b). The arrival of Jesus is understood to be the arrival of the Light, whose mission is to guide people in the way of peace. Hence at the very beginning of the gospel, Jesus, his life and mission are shown to have something to do with peace. Donahue suggests that the Lukan phrase “*hodon eirénēs*” has its origins in the negative usage of the phrase in Isaiah 59:8. The Isaian condemnation is that the people do not know the way of peace. “They have made their ways crooked and no one who walks in them knows peace” (Is 59:8). While the entire ch. 59 talks about the evil doings of the Israelites and God’s judgement against them, the reference to peace in the *Benedictus* on the other hand portrays the phrase positively. In Donahue’s words, “The way of peace will be that kind and quality of life which Jesus will embody in the gospel and the way of discipleship to which he will summon his followers. The way of peace becomes a virtual paraphrase for the gospel itself.”⁶ Hence we see that the word *eirénē* is nothing but a synonym for the Good news which Jesus came to preach, and ultimately it refers to Jesus himself. The arrival of Jesus into the world is then to be equated with / to be understood as the arrival of peace for people on earth. This is again attested in the second reference to peace in the Infancy Narratives of Luke.

3. The Birth of the Messiah and Peace on Earth (Lk 2:14)

In the Roman world, the birth of a Roman prince would create an occasion for numerous poets in the empire to compose poems, singing of the prosperity and peace which

the newborn king would achieve. Luke is very much aware of such a practice and molds the announcement of the birth of Jesus in a similar way. But at the birth of Jesus, it is not the earthly poets but it is the heavenly angels who sing joyfully and proclaim the birth of the King of the World. The birth of Jesus is the cause for great joy for the heavenly hosts. Their song, “despite its brevity, recalls the opening and closing themes of the *Benedictus*: glory for God, and peace for those favored by him.”⁷ Hence Luke shows that the birth of Jesus brings peace to the world, as it was prophesied earlier. This peace, as Donahue rightly points out, has “more of the comprehensive nuance of the Hebrew *shalom*, the fullness of salvation.”⁸ But one doubts whether the phrase ‘peace only to the men of good will’ limits the recipients of peace. In other words, one wonders whether the peace (salvation) which Jesus is and which Jesus came to give, is all-inclusive. The overall context of the gospel of Luke does not justify such a view. The peace which the birth of Jesus brought to the world cannot be partial. Such an understanding is, as Donahue aptly puts it, coming out of “a wrong theology: that is, that the peace given in the birth of Jesus is somehow limited to those of good will. The opposite is the case... The gift is prior to the demand. Peace on earth will be a consequence of people’s realization that they are recipients of the goodness of God.”⁹ However when one looks at the wordings of Luke, they mean to show to the readers something different. Though the birth of Jesus is “a cause of great joy for *all* people” (Lk 2:12), the peace that is offered is *only to those men, on whom God’s favor rests* (Lk 2:14). This seems to show to the readers that here Luke does make a difference between those men on earth who have found God’s favor, and those who have not. This subsequently means that “true and lasting peace is the portion of those, and only of those, whom God has graciously chosen.”¹⁰ Such an understanding needs confirmation from other passages of Luke as well.

When we learn the word *eirēnē* we see that it is used here to denote more than a mere absence of war between nations or absence of fight or strife between individuals. It is not only about the peaceful co-existence of humans but more importantly it is about the harmony of mankind with God; apart from the fact that it “evokes a whole social order of well-being and prosperity, security and harmony,”¹¹ ‘peace on earth’ together with ‘glory in the highest’ suggests reconciliation between God and humans, which would lead one to salvation; in this way Marshall is right in saying, “εἰρήνη is thus tantamount to σωτηρία.”¹² Since this is brought by the birth of Jesus, glory and peace are “the twin fruits of the Incarnation.”¹³

The third use of ‘peace’ in the Infancy Narratives is placed in the *Nunc Dimittis*, on the mouth of the old prophet Simeon who, after having seen the Savior and holding the child Jesus in his hands, requests God that he might be “released in peace” (2:29). This ‘release in peace’ is understood by scholars as a Semitic expression of his peaceful death. As Bock suggests it could also be understood to denote the satisfaction of having known that the Messiah is born and the satisfaction of the achievement of the longing of Simeon.¹⁴ What was sung by the angels about men of good will has been actualized in the person of Simeon.¹⁵ Once again we see the concepts of ‘salvation’ and ‘peace’ coming together at the birth of Jesus. But the peace, offered through the birth of Jesus the Savior, is not only to the individual Simeon; for Simeon further states that Jesus is the light for the gentiles and glory to Israel (2:32). Does it mean then, that the peace which Jesus came to offer is an all-inclusive offer? When we further look at the words of Simeon, we tend to think in the negative. Simeon who foretells the unification of gentiles and Israel through the birth of Jesus also talks about division. This child of peace would be cause for the rise and fall of many in Israel (Lk 2:34). Once again question arises as to what Luke wants to say to the readers. If he is suggesting that the peace which Jesus came to give the

world is for all, why should Jesus then be the cause for the 'fall' of some and for the rise of others? An all-embracing concept of salvation once again comes under scanner.

4. “Peace be with You”: First Word in the Missionary Work of the Disciples (Lk 10:5)

After the Infancy Narratives we see a major section of peace-sayings in the missionary sending of the seventy-two disciples of Jesus in Luke 10:5ff. The first word that the disciples should say to those to whom they go is “peace to this house.” It goes along with the general form of oriental greetings when one meets another. Just like the sons of Jacob are greeted in Egypt (Gen 43:23), just like David sends greetings to Nabal (1 Sam 25:6), just like Nebuchadnezzar begins his speech with the initial greetings (Dan 4:1-2), Lukan Jesus asks his disciples to begin their ministry to the people with the initial wishing of peace. Luke however binds the word with the message of Jesus. The disciples who bring peace to the houses are the direct messengers of Jesus himself, who is Peace Incarnate. “In the name of their Sender these apostles not only *wish* peace but actually *bring* it.”¹⁶ Here we get a clarification for our earlier question, whether there is a universal offer of salvation. Yes, the offer of peace by Jesus is universal. Whomever the disciples meet, they are supposed to wish peace. However, it depends on whether the families and houses would receive peace or reject it. If there is a “son of peace” in the house, this peace will stay in that house (Lk 10:6). Through this Semitic phrase which Luke might have received from his source, Luke understands the resident of the house as one who loves peace and is committed to work for peace.¹⁷ Hence those who receive this peace in their houses receive Jesus incarnate himself. Luke makes it clear here that the offer of peace and salvation is offered to everyone who accepts Jesus and his message i.e., who is attuned to the peace offered by Jesus.

5. Entry into Jerusalem, the 'City of Peace' (Lk 19:37-38)

Another important Lukan addition of peace in the gospel is at the entry of Jesus in Jerusalem. We know that Luke has referred Jerusalem in his gospel with a great theological significance. The entire gospel of Luke is composed as a journey of the Gospel towards Jerusalem; when the first book ends with Jerusalem, the Acts, the second work of Luke continues this journey of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the then known world. Such an importance to the city of Jerusalem is not only to be seen from a theological point of view but also from the literary point of view. This is why Luke begins his gospel from Jerusalem (Lk 1:5ff.) while the other synoptic writers begin with Galilee. The ending of the gospel too is placed in Jerusalem. The risen Christ would appear in the gospel of Luke in and around Jerusalem, while for the other Synoptics, the disciples have to go to Galilee to see the risen Christ. In the ministry of Jesus too, Luke writes in frequent intervals that Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem (Lk 9:51, 53; 17:11; 18:11; 19:11). Once Jesus is in the vicinity of the city and as the people welcome him singing joyfully, Luke once again uses the word *eiréné*. While the people who welcome Jesus into the city acclaim in other two synoptic gospels ““Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” (Mk 12:9-10; Mt 21:9), Lukan acclamation is slightly different. He changes the cheering of the people to “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! *Peace in heaven*, and glory in the highest heaven!” (Lk 19:38). This is intriguing and interesting because it takes us back to a similar acclamation of peace by the angels at the birth of Jesus (Lk 2:14). As Donahue rightly points out, Luke has sandwiched the entire ministry of Jesus into these two acclamations of *eiréné*.¹⁸ However there are differences between the two. While at the birth of Jesus it

was the angels who sang, now at his entry into Jerusalem it is the people who sing. While the angels sang, “*peace on earth* upon men of good will,” the people sing at the arrival of Jesus, “*peace in heaven*.” Why should Luke change the recipient of peace from earth to heaven? What does he achieve through such a change? In the apt words of Just, “at Jesus’ birth, there is peace *on earth*; as he enters into Jerusalem for his passion and resurrection, there is peace *in heaven*. Thus *earth and heaven* are joined together in peace through the incarnation and atonement of Christ.”¹⁹ Through the life, ministry and death of Jesus, *shalom*, i.e., the reconciliation between God and man is achieved. Hence the peace that Jesus came to bring is not only for the whole wellbeing of the humanity; it also unites God and man, destroying the barriers that hinder human’s relation with God. The question however is whether Jerusalem, which literally means the city of peace, actually understood and accepted such a gracious offer of peace. Luke answers in the negative.

6. Jerusalem’s Lost Opportunity for Peace (Lk 19:41-44)

Looking at the City of Peace, Lukan Jesus weeps (Lk 19:41-44). It is the only place in the Synoptics, where Jesus is seen weeping. His weeping is specifically over the City of Peace and its inhabitants: “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes” (Lk 19:42). It is tempting to look at *eiréné* here in the context of war, since the next verse is about the destruction of Jerusalem (Lk 19:43-44). What exactly did Luke want to tell the readers with the phrase ‘the things that make for peace’? Scholars are divided in their understanding. There is definitely a pun involved between the phrase and the name Jerusalem which means the City of Peace. This peace, which Jerusalem fails to recognize is Jesus himself. Because for Luke, he is the giver of peace. Hendricksen suggests that

Luke infers penitence and conversion as the things that make for peace. Jerusalem does not repent, but hardens its heart instead of showing conversion.²⁰ In Donahue's opinion, Luke might have tried to contrast the way of peace, i.e., the way of Jesus over against the way of Zealots which was the way of war.²¹ Hence, the peace which Jesus points to, is not the peace that emerges out of a bitter battle but it is the peace which God alone could give. This God-given peace was gifted to Israel in the person of Jesus. Israel did not recognize it. Marshall goes a step further and states that peace here should be understood in its broadest scope as it is in the Hebrew word *Shalom*. Hence the things that make for (your) peace, is to be understood as your salvation - salvation of the entire nation.²² A city which is proud of prosperity, welfare and peace (*shalom*), has actually missed the opportunity to recognize the embodiment of peace who is coming to it. Hence, instead of peace, destruction awaits the city (Lk 19:43-44). Luke once again brings in the difference between the universal offer of peace by Jesus on the one side and its rejection by people of Jerusalem on the other, resulting in destruction.

7. Peace of the Resurrected Christ (Lk 24:36)

Luke climaxes his references to *eiréné*, at the resurrection event. The first thing that resurrected Christ offers to the desolate and confused disciples is peace. At a time, when the disciples were direly in need of someone who could strengthen them, Jesus comes in and wishes them peace. Nolland is right in his comparison between the resurrected Christ entering the house and wishing the residents with the disciples peace with the disciples entering and wishing peace to the residents of the house (Lk 10:6).²³ Although this looks like the casual greetings of the then known world it is here more than just a greeting. It is the same peace that Jesus came to give the world. It is the same "peace which Jesus had obtained for all his people by his death on the cross."²⁴

Summing up all the texts that refer to peace in Luke, we find Jesus is at the center of *eiréné*; his birth has inaugurated the period of peace; in his ministry Jesus bestowed this God-given peace to everyone who was ready to receive him. This peace took the form of healing, or forgiveness of sins or even assuring eschatological salvation. In short Jesus was the embodiment of *shalom* / *eiréné* which is summed up well by Luke in the Acts, “You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ - he is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36).

Such a strong message of peace, such a strong connection between the person of Jesus and concept of *eiréné* is disrupted by two short but very important references within Luke, which portray Jesus as someone who has not come to bring peace but division and sword. Why should Luke bring these references at important junctures of his gospel? What could be the teaching, which Luke would like to impart in the minds of his readers? How could they clear our doubts regarding the universal offer of salvation? We shall try to answer these questions below.

8. “Division, not Peace” (Lk 12:51)

The first of the references which deviate from the peace-bringing mission of Jesus is when he unambiguously says that his mission is not to bring peace but division. Such a strong statement from Jesus is very much shocking: the one who came “to guide our feet in the way of peace” (Lk 1:79), the one whose birth has brought peace upon earth to men of good will (2:14), instead of bringing peace, speaks of dividing even the basic societal structure of a family. To the question, why Jesus should say he has come to bring not peace but division, Donahue suggests that Luke perhaps had modeled this saying after Jeremiah’s prophecy, which condemns against the false prophets who advocate false peace: “For from the least to the

greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace” (Jer 6:12-14). Similar wording, we find also in Jer 8:11. Luke contrasts Jesus with these false leaders of Israel who assure false peace.

The peace which the Prince of Peace offers is not the peace that is proclaimed and promised by the false leaders of Israel. The leaders of Israel thought that the Messiah would bring apolitical peace achieved by a bitter war whereby Messiah would overthrow the foreign powers and would regain the land from the non-Jews. Luke points out to the readers, the peace that Jesus would bring, is not the peace which comes after a bitter war, not the peace emerging out of enmity, not the peace that glorifies one race and vilifies all the others. “The Lucan Jesus is the true prophet who rejects false peace and that peace which can be achieved only through sectarian violence.”²⁵ Godet tells it succinctly, “Jesus does not deny that peace should be the final result of His work; but certainly He denies that it will be its immediate effect.”²⁶ This means peace has its own price to pay. There would be misunderstanding, divisions even between the family members, suffering and even death for those who search and propagate such peace.

9. Sword for the Prince of Peace (Lk 22: 36)?

Another intriguing passage which seemingly goes against the peace-bringing mission of Jesus is Lk 22:35-38 where Jesus explicitly asks his disciples to buy swords for their protection; if one does not have a sword, he should sell his mantle in order to buy one (22:36). One could immediately see the contrast between the advice of Jesus here in Lk 22:36 and in 10:4-5. When Jesus sent the seventy-two disciples on their mission, he asked them not to carry purse, bag or sandals. What they carried along with them was peace which they

would offer to the house in which they entered. But here the disciples should not only take purse and bag; Jesus tells them a sword is more important for them than their mantle. Lk 22:36 is the only reference in the gospels which shows us that the disciples were advised by Jesus to possess a sword. Was the sword their own (one of the disciples of Jesus was in fact a former member of Zealots)? Was it found in the upper room and the disciples just took it in case of emergency? Above all the question that haunts us is that why it is, that Jesus allowed the disciples to carry a dagger exactly when he is going to be arrested?

One group of scholars say the advice of Jesus was and should be understood literally. At the time of Jesus, the cloak (*himation*) was an indispensable element of a person on a journey. A common man who was on a journey usually used his mantle as his blanket for the cold night in the open.²⁷ Jesus asks the disciples to sell even a cloak in order to buy a sword. Because “the sword was a part of a traveler’s equipment in the Roman world and the possession of a sword meant nothing more than protecting oneself.”²⁸ Since Jesus and the disciples were often on the roads travelling from one end of the country to another, they needed protection not only from bandits on the way side (cf. Lk 10:25-37), but also from wild animals.²⁹ Hence Jesus advised the disciples to keep swords for protection. It sounds logical but. But the placement of this advice by Jesus is intriguing and makes one wonder, why Luke brings in the procurement of swords, just before the arrest of Jesus. Did the Lukan Jesus want them to protect him and them against those who came to arrest him that night?

The other group of scholars, a majority of them, reply in the negative. They suggest, the advice of Jesus should be understood symbolically.³⁰ According to them, Jesus - who set his face towards Jerusalem even after known his fate, who asked his disciples to bless those who curse and pray for those

who abuse and even love their enemies (Lk 6:27ff; 9:54-55), and who just before his death would forgive and pray for those who killed him (Lk 23:34) - would have never advocated his disciples to use force. They suggest that the symbolic buying of sword is nothing but a call to be ready for battle against the spiritual enemy, i.e., Satan, as it is told by Jesus just a while earlier (22:31). In the words of Godet, the sword is an “emblem of avowed hostility... This weapon represents the power of holiness in conflict with the sin of the world.”³¹ Jesus actually reminds the disciples about the times when they were sent. They were asked to go without bag, purse or sandals. Yet they lacked nothing (Lk 22:35), for at that time of their ministry they were welcomed by sons of peace (Lk 10:6). But the times have changed. Instead of sons of peace, they would encounter hostility and rejection and suffering.

Conzelmann and others contrast advice of Jesus at the sending of the seventy-two disciples in 10:4, where he said not to take the three things (purse, bag and sandals) with the advice of Jesus now to take the three things (purse, bag and sword). Through the new addition of sword Luke brings a change in the period. This change is marked with the phrase *ἀλλὰ νῦν* (*alla nun*). Through this phrase Luke paves way not only for the beginning of the arrest and gruesome murder of Jesus; he also gives the foretaste of what the disciples would face in their community. Hence as the time of Jesus and his ministry comes to an end, the Time of the Church and its ministry is introduced in this verse.³² Jesus would no longer be with them physically. But it is hatred, suffering and threat to life which the disciples of Jesus would face. Jesus himself has been rejected by the leaders of Israel and hence all those who follow him should be ready to face the world which would be full of hatred for those who belong to Jesus. This is why buying a sword assumes its symbolic significance specially in the light of the fate that Jesus is to undergo shortly (Lk 22:37). The disciples are asked to empower themselves for

the coming days. They are asked to be armed as he would arm himself with Prayer before his arrest. In the Gethsemane scene Jesus prays to his Father for the strength to face the upcoming events (22:41-44) and advises the disciples to pray, because he knows only prayer will give them strength (22:40, 45-46). That shows to the readers what sort of sword his disciples should be armed with.

10. “No More of This Sword-Business!” (Lk 22:38, 51)

The symbolic meaning of the sword gets confirmed from what follows at the Last Supper. To the advice of Jesus to buy sword, the disciples answer, “Lord, look, here are two swords.” The reply of Jesus in 22:38 is significant for our understanding of the symbolic meaning of sword. As the disciples say to him that there are two swords there, Jesus replies to them “enough.” This does not mean that Jesus actually considered two swords would be enough to protect them; on the contrary, he recognized that the disciples have completely misunderstood what he meant by procuring swords. Still worse, the disciples have completely failed to recognize the mission and the message of Jesus all through. Actually the word ‘enough’, expresses the displeasure of Jesus. It is as if Jesus is saying “enough of it.”³³ With these two words Lukan Jesus has concluded the entire discussion, and thereby has convincingly conveyed to the readers that the disciples have completely misunderstood what Jesus was saying up until now. The sword he is talking about and the sword the disciples are showing are completely against each other.

Again another passage in Gethsemane scene elucidates that Jesus did not refer to sword in the literal sense. At the arrest of Jesus one of the bystanders took the sword and cut the right ear of the slave of the high priest. Jesus’ reply for this action

was once again, “No more of this!” (Lk 22:51). And Jesus does just the opposite of what the disciples did. He heals the slave. This shows the Prince of Peace has no need of swords. Even at the last minute he attempts to be an instrument of peace. Hence in his whole life, Jesus proves he is the one who has come to bring into the world God’s Kingdom of peace.

11. Lucan Message for His Community

The following lessons could be drawn from the Lukan references to the concept of peace and sword in his gospel and from Jesus, the Prince of Peace: At a time when the talk in the Roman empire was the enjoyment of *pax Romana*, Luke wants to show to his community, who alone could give that peace which would satiate the totality of the human person – Jesus Christ. As seen above, Luke began his gospel in Jerusalem the city of peace and ended there, showing thereby its important role in bringing God’s reign of peace in the world. In the portrayal of Jesus too, Luke has been careful in showing how the entire life of Jesus has moved along the divine plan of bringing peace to the world. At his very birth we hear the song of peace. Through this song, Luke has reminded the readers of the prophecy of Isaiah about the birth of the future King, who is the Prince of Peace. “For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Is 9:6). All through his life he has been the agent of peace, not only through his healing and giving health but also through his forgiving of sins and thereby reconciling men with God and assuring them of salvation. And as he is lifted up from this world, he once again wishes peace to his apostles and leaves this peace with them as his farewell gift to them. Hence the Lukan Jesus is the **embodiment of Peace**.

The two references in Luke regarding division rather than peace (10:6) and the advice of Jesus buy sword (22:36)

show to the readers, there is a heavy cost one must pay for this peace. The invitation and the **offer of peace by Jesus is an all-inclusive, all-embracing offer. But the reception of peace is not.** Only the “sons of peace” i.e., those who accept Jesus and his message are the recipients of peace offered by Jesus. In other words, the all-embracing offer of peace by Jesus, as Luke understands is not, and will not be accepted by all. This is very evident from the very passages of peace that we have seen. The joyful choir of angels who sing the song of Peace at the birth of Jesus, proclaims that Jesus’ birth brings peace, *not to everyone on earth, but to those who are favored by God*. The same Simeon who talks of peace after having seen the Prince of Peace, talks about ‘sword’ that would pierce the mother of Jesus. He prophesies about the child as “destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed...” (Lk 2:34-35). Simeon talks of salvation which is prepared for “all” peoples and of Jesus as ‘the Light of revelation to the Gentiles’ as well as of the people of Israel (Lk 2:31-32); all the same, only those who accept Jesus are the recipients of peace. This message is once again apparent from the sending of the seventy-two. Peace is offered to every house the disciples go. Only when they are received, this peace stays, otherwise it returns to them (Lk 10:6). The same is true again, when Jesus talks of division instead of peace (12:51). Division and hatred between family members is dependent on the fact who is for Jesus and who in the family is against him. The procurement of sword in Lk 22:36 also should be understood in the light of the rejection of Jesus by the leaders of Israel despite his continuous offer of peace. Hence the acceptance of Jesus and his disciples is pivotal for determining who would receive and enjoy the peace offered by God, for which Jesus came to this world and who would be excluded from such an offer. All the same, God through Jesus issues an unconditional, all-inclusive offer of Peace which affects every sphere of life, here on earth and

further in the future. It all depends on the individual to accept or to reject this offer.

Notes

1. M. Black, "Not Peace but a Sword: Matt 10:34ff; Luke 12:51ff," in *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*, ed. E. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 287.
2. Matthew uses it 4 times and John 6 times; while Marks employs the term only once, Luke uses it as many as 14 times apart from the seven occurrences of the word in the Acts. See V. Hasler, "εἰρήνη," in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Balz, Horst & G. Schneider, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1990-1993), 1, 395.
3. We would do injustice to the word *shalom*, if we translate it only with peace. *Shalom* in the OT has a wide range of meaning, whose root should be understood as overall wellbeing of a person including one's bodily health (1 Sam 16:5; 2 Sam 18:28; Jer 6:14; Is 57:18). Another important meaning of *shalom* is the enjoyment peace and prosperity in the land (2 Sam 17:3; 1 Kings 2:5). This means the nation is not tarred with war. But one should not reduce the meaning if *shalom* with earthly security, health and prosperity alone, as Neufeld suggests. He opines there is some "earthiness" in the meaning of *shalom*. See T. R. Y. Neufeld, *Ephesians, Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 129. One cannot forget the religious nuance of the term. The Hebrew *shalom* is also used in the religious sense of salvation, and it is always a gift of God. It is God who is the source of Peace (Job 25:2) and it is He who grants peace to David and his house and all his faithful (1 Kgs 2:33; Ps 85:8; 147:14). He makes a covenant of peace with his people (cf. Nu. 25:12; Sir. 45:24; Mal. 2:5; Ezek 34:25; 37:26). In this way *eirēnē* and σωτήριο are interlinked. For further clarifications on the term see Foerster. W., "εἰρήνη," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich (Michigan: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 2, 400ff.

4. One would clearly see that Paul begins most of his letters with the phrase “grace and peace ...” (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:2; Tit 1:4; Philem 1:3).
5. Foerster. W. in G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, 412.
6. J. E. Donahue, “The Good News of Peace,” *The Way* 22 (1982), 90. Fitzmyer is of the opinion, Lukan idea of peace is not only influenced by the OT understanding of shalom; it is also influenced by the Roman ‘*pax Augusta*.’ The very reference to the rule of Augustus Caesar in the Infancy Narratives (Lk 2:1) displays this association. See Fitzmyer, J. A., S.J., *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2008), 224.
7. R. E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, The Anchor Bible reference library* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 391.
8. Donahue, 91.
9. Donahue, 92.
10. Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J., *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke.*, vol. 11 of *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2001), 156; Bock too points out that the phrase ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκίας (*anthrōpois eudokias*) is a technical term for chosen people of God in the first century. Hence from this context peace cannot be understood as an inclusive term. D. L. Bock, *Luke: Volume 1: 1:1-9:50, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 1994), 220.
11. J. Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, 35A of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word Books, 2002), 108.
12. I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text, The New international Greek testament commentary* (Exeter: Paternoster Press., 1978), 112; see also R. H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 109. That the reconciliation between God and humans is seen in the Lukan reference to

peace could be well seen from the words of Jesus to a woman in Lk 7:50. The woman is of a sinful character and her reception of Jesus is highlighted over against the host Simon who invited Jesus to dine with him. Through her action of anointing Jesus with oil and wiping his feet with her hair, she has shown her reception of Jesus and thereby her sins are forgiven, which subsequently assures the peace, which is nothing but her reconciliation with God. Similar understanding is also present in the healing of a woman in Lk 8:48.

13. A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke* (London: T&T Clark International, 1896), 58.
14. Bock, *Luke*, 242.
15. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 457; Just too writes along the same line, “the peace the angelic host promised for all on whom God’s favors rests comes to Simeon.” See A. A. Just, *Luke 1:1-9:50, Concordia commentary* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1997), 120; also Donahue, 92.
16. Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J., *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, 574.
17. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke*, 273; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 419; Donahue, 93.
18. Donahue, 95.
19. A. A. Just, *Luke 9:51-24:53, Concordia commentary* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1998), 747.
20. Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J., *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, 877.
21. Donahue, 96.
22. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 718.
23. J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 35C of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word Books, 2002), 1212.
24. Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J., *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, 1073.
25. Donahue, 94.

26. Godet, F. L., Shalders, E. W., & Cusin, M. D., *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke* (New York: I. K. Funk & co., 1881), 2, 114.
27. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 1068; Black in Bammel and Moule, 337.
28. R. C. Blight, *An Exegetical Summary of Luke 12-24* (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2008), 442; also Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel*, 1068.
29. R. E. Gingrich, *The Gospel of Luke* (Memphis, TN.: Riverside Printing, 2001), 63.
30. J. Bond, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1890), 149; Stein, *Luke*, 555; Fitzmyer, J. A., S.J., *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2008), 1432; Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J., *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, 976; R. K. Hughes, *Luke: That you may know the truth, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1998), 326; D. M. Sweetland, "The Lord's Supper and the Lukan Community," *BTB* 13 (1983), 26.
31. Godet, F. L., Shalders, E. W., & Cusin, M. D., *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke*, 2, 302.
32. Conzelmann H., *Die Mitte der Zeit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964), 9,74,97,186; also Fitzmyer, J. A., S.J., *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 1432; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 824. However Lampe doubts this view of Conzelmann and others, whether the *alla nun* bears the entire weight the turning point of two different Periods of the church. See Lampe G.W.H., "The Two Swords: (Luke 22:35-38)," in *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*, ed. E. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 337.
33. Earle Ellis E., *The Gospel of Luke* (MI: Eerdmans, Grand Rapids), 257; Fitzmyer, J. A., S.J., *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 1434; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 827; Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 1077; Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke*, 507; Sweetland, 26.

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