

PARABLES, “THROUGH PEASANTS EYES!”

Study 21, The Good Samaritan, Part VII. Luke 10:25-37

1. Thus the lawyer asked this question in a world where there was a variety of views on just who the neighbor really is. Safari observes; “the oral law was not really uniform,” there was a lively debate on points of interpretation. The literary form is that of a seven-scene p ballad and is as follows;
 - a. A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers
And they stripped him and beat him
And departed, leaving him half dead. COME
DO
GO
 - b. Now by coincidence a certain priest was going down that road,
And when he saw him,
He passed by on the other side. COME
DO
GO
 - c. Likewise, also a Levite came to that place.
And when he saw him
he passed by on the other side. COME
DO
GO
 - d. And a certain Samaritan, traveling, came to him,
And when he saw him,
He had compassion on him COME
DO
DO
 - e. He went to him
And bound up his wounds,
Pouring oil and wine, DO
DO
 - f. The he put him on his own riding animal
And led him into the Inn DO
And he took care of him. DO
 - g. The next day on took out and gave two denarii to the manager DO
And said, “Take care of him, and whatever more you spend DO
I, on my return, I will repay you.” DO
2. SCENE 5: First Aid
*He went to him,
And bound up his wounds,
Pouring on oil and wined.*

3. The center of the p displays the unexpected appearance of the compassionate Samaritan. The rest of the action is the expression of that compassion. In this scene the Samaritan offers the first aid, the Levite failed to give him.
4. As in many of the p, the language is deceptively simple. The Samaritan must first clean and soften the wounds with oil and then disinfect them with wine, and finally bind them. However, this is not the order of the phrases in the text. The binding of the wounds is mentioned first. Granted the Greek syntax makes the actions simultaneous. But the Syriac and Arabic version without exception give us two past tenses-he bound up and poured. These translations make the peculiar order the actions even more striking. It is not possible to see the binding of the wounds deliberately mentioned first to heighten the impact of the theological implications of the act. Derrett, the binding of wounds is imagery as God 'acts to save the people.' God said to Jeremiah, "I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal." Jeremiah 30:17. In the first ten verses of Hosea 6 there are no less than 12 phrases echoed here;

He has torn

He will bind us up

He will revive us

He will raise us up

that we may live before him

he will come to us

your live is like.....the dew that goes early away.

I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice

they transgressed the covenant

robbers lie in wait for a man

priests....commit villainy

in the house of Israel, I have seen a horrible thing.

5. God's first saving act is to bind up Ephraim's wounds. Indeed, these phrases together could make a fitting prologue to the p. Each phrase can apply to some part of the unfolding drama. Specifically, in this text Ephraim is torn left lone and cries out for help. We are then told that Yahweh

Will bind us up

Will revive us

Will raise us up

Will come to us.

All four phrases apply to the Samaritan who was also first “bound up his wounds.” The symbolism here is strong. God is the one who saves and chooses His agents by His will. Similarly, here God’s sovereignty acts to save, and the agent amazingly is the Samaritan—a rejected outsider. We will observe, we understand the imagery to have Christological implications.

6. Furthermore, oil and wine were not only standard first aid remedies, but they are also sacrificial elements in the temple worship. (Derrett). The word pour is also the language of worship, there were libations in connections with the sacrifices. Yet for centuries the call had been sounded for them to go beyond ritual to respond to God’s act for them. We see in Hosea 6:6 and Micah 6:7-8; the call for sacrificial love, not sacrifice.
7. We have this same move from the language of sacrificial service to a discussion of actions of self-giving love. In Pauline writings, he talks of his own life being a libation, poured out “Upon the sacrificial offering of your faith,” Phil 2:17. Paul calls Christians to offer their own lives as a ‘living sacrifice,’ Romans 12:1. Thus for the prophets the language of the sacrificial altar evokes a concern for the self-giving love. For St. Paul, this language overlaps such a call. The Jewish priest and Levite were the religious professionals who knew the precise rituals and liturgy, they officiated at sacrifices and libations. They poured out oil and wine on the high altar before God. Here in this parable, the same freighted language is applied to the Samaritan just after the priest and Levite failed in their ability to make the ‘living sacrifice.’ It is the hated Samaritan who pours out the libation on the altar of the man’s wounds. Derrett observes, “to show what is the *hesed* (Steadfast love) which God demands, one cannot be more apt than to use oil and wine employed to heal a wounded man.” The Samaritan’s total response to the man’s need (including the simple libation) is a profound expression of the steadfast love for which the prophets were calling. It is the Samaritan who pours the true offering acceptable to God.
8. But if the man regains consciousness, the Samaritan may be insulted for his kindness as “Oil and wine are forbidden objects if they emanate from a Samaritan.” Not only is it from a Samaritan, but a tithe has not been paid on them and by accepting them the wounded man incurs an obligation to pay tithes for them. He has been robbed and obviously has no way to pay his electric bill. Derrett observes, “the Pharisees would have been pleased if the wounded man shouted, “Begone-Cuthean, I will have no oil or wine.”

9. SCENE 6: TRANSPORT to the INN:

The he put him on his own riding animal

And led him (it) to the inn,

And took care of him.

10. As we have noted, these are the acts of mercy that the mounted priest failed to carry out. Notice, 'his own riding animal,' has a unique grammatical construction to it; the Samaritan has other animals and merchandise. This animal is his own mount. (Jeremias, Bishop and Derrett). The Syriac makes this riding animal into a donkey, which may be the original in the Greek text.
11. We are not sure about the Samaritan's next act. The Greek can be; he led it (the donkey) to the inn or brought him to the inn. The pronoun can be masculine (he, the man) or neutral, (it, the animal). ME donkeys can carry two people. If we assume the first, the Samaritan is riding with the wounded man. If we assume the 2nd the Samaritan is acting out the form of a servant and leading the animal to the inn.
12. The social distinctions between riders and leaders of riding animals is crucial to ME society. Much to his surprise and humiliation, Haman (Who expects to be the rider) finds himself leading the horse on which his enemy Mordecai is riding, (Esther 6:7-11). These same social attitudes remained throughout the centuries. Louis Burckhardt, the famous Swiss rider of the early 1800's once shocked his ME traveling companions by allowing his servant to ride on his camel, while he walked. On numerous occasions the author tried to have the servant leading the donkey on which he was riding to ride with him on it. The person involved always refused to ride with him as (from his point of view) it would be presumptuous). We may have the case of a middle class merchant with a number of animals and goods, takes upon himself, the form of a servant and *leads* the donkey to the inn.
13. The willingness to go to the inn and to be there overnight administering to the needs of the wounded man is a further act of self-giving love. Mosaic legislation established cities of refuge for people under the threat of death from blood vengeance retaliation. The legislation provided an escape valve from a custom it couldn't eradicate. The concept of retaliation, deeply reflected in The OT, is still with us. Modern law in many ME countries also makes certain allowance for blood vengeance killings.