

PARABLES, “THROUGH PEASANTS EYES!”

Study 22, The Good Samaritan, Part VIII. 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 Jer. to Jericho, he fell among robbers COME
And they stripped him and beat him DO
And departed, leaving him half dead. GO
 - b. Now by coincidence a certain priest was going down that road, COME
And when he saw him, DO
He passed by on the other side. GO
 - c. Likewise, also a Levite came to that place. COME
And when he saw him DO
he passed by on the other side. GO
 - d. And a certain Samaritan, traveling, came to him, COME
And when he saw him, DO
He had compassion on him DO
 - e. He went to him COME
And bound up his wounds, DO
Pouring oil and wine, DO
 - f. The he put him on his own riding animal DO
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 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.

3. Thomas thought that this subject was a “curious question” of ancient history. In the villages of upper Galilee he saw it as a continuous part of life. “But in the Jewish in the time of Moses, so here now the custom of blood vengeance is deeply rooted under the control of feudal lords of the land. They & their families are bound to it in the strictest commands. Even Moses clothed with the influence of the power of the ‘law giver,’ could not eradicate this dreadful custom, and was merely commissioned to mitigate its horrors by establishing cities of refuge. Here there are humane regulations detailed in Number 35 and Deut. 19...as the law of retaliation remains in its vigor is executed with energy by surrounding tribes around.”
4. This was a problem for OT society and continued in force until the 1800s. Thomson shares that this retaliation is against any member of the attacker’s extended family or his associates when bodily injury is sustained. The actual assailant is thought of if he is available, if not anyone related to him in the remotest way may suffer, Thomson explains; “It is one of the cruel features of ‘lex talionis,’ that if the real murdered can not be reached, the avengers have the right to kill any member of the family, then any relation no matter how remote, and finally any member of his confederation. Several members of my intimate acquaintances have been literally cut to pieces by the infuriated avengers of blood & in some instances poor victims had no possible implication with the clan involved.”
5. We are dealing with an irrational response, not a reasoned action. We have no evidence of an inn at the middle of the desert. The natural assumption is that the man took him downhill to Jericho (Ibn al-Tayyib and Dalman and Ibn Al-Salibi). In any case the inn is at a community or in touch with one. The Samaritan, by allowing himself to be identified, runs a grave risk of having the family of the wounded man seek him out and take vengeance upon him, after all, “Who else is there?” The stranger who involved himself in an accident is considered if not partially, but totally responsible for the accident. After all why did he stop? Irrational minds seeking a focus for their retaliation do not make rational judgments, especially when the person involved is from a hated community.
6. Much of what we are arguing for required no special ME cultural attitude, but a common human response. An American equivalent would be Plains Indians in 1875, walking into Dodge City with a scalped cowboy on his

horse, checking into a room at the local Saloon, and staying the night to take care of him. Any Indian so brave would be lucky to get out alive even if he had saved the cowboy's life. So with the Samaritan in the p, his act of kindness will make no difference. Caution would lead him to leave the wounded man at the door of the inn and disappear. The man may still be unconscious, in which case the Samaritan would be completely protected. Or the Samaritan could remain anonymous to the wounded man, but when he stays at the inn to take care of the man and promises to return anonymity is not possible.

7. The courage of the Samaritan is initially shown as he stops to help in the desert (as thieves are still in the area). But his real bravery is seen his final act of compassion at the inn. The point is not his courage, but the price he is willing to pay to complete his act of compassion. This price he continues to pay at the final scene.

8. SCENE 7: THE FINAL PAYMENT:

"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

9. So the story has come full circle. The inversion of themes in this p ballad makes clear the reason for this final scene. The p could of ended with the wounded man brought to safety. But now having made up for the failures of first of the Levite, then of the priest, he now compensates for the thieves. Specifically, the Samaritan's reversal of the actions of the robbers can be seen as follows;

<i>The Robbers</i>	<i>The Samaritan</i>
<i>Rob him</i>	<i>Pay for him</i>
<i>Leave him dying</i>	<i>Leaves him taken care of</i>
<i>Abandon him</i>	<i>Promises to return.</i>

10. The comparison reveals the magnificent construction of the p. The natural place to take the wounded man would be to his or a friend's home. The p is constructed to make the last scene possible. Obviously, the Samaritan could not pay his family or friends, and there would be no point in his returning had the drama ended in the wounded man's village, and there would be no point in his returning if the drama ended in the man's village. These final actions are just not filler. They are true to 1st century life, the

wounded man has no money, if he can't pay the bill he'll be arrested for debt (Derrett). Innkeepers in the first century had a very unsavory reputation, the Mishna warns;

“Cattle may not be left in the inns of gentiles as they are concerned about bestiality; nor may a woman remain alone with them since they are suspected of lewdness, nor may a man remain alone with them as they are suspected of shedding blood.” (Mishna/Darby)

11. Jewish inns did not fare any better in popular opinions, for in Targum Jonathan the word “prostitute,” is regularly translated, “woman who keeps and inn.” (Josh 2:1, Judges 16:1, I Kings 3:16). Thus the wounded man cannot anticipate a noble quality of life at an inn. From Jesus' own p we know that people were imprisoned for debts. If the Samaritan does not pay the final bill, the wounded man (on recovery) whatever the cost, will not be able to leave. “The Samaritan enabled the man to get out of town.” (Derrett). And Derrett observes that a Jew treating a Jew would get his money back. But, the Samaritan had no hope of getting reimbursed. (Derrett). The Samaritan is an unknown stranger, yet in cost of time, money, personal danger, he freely gives unexpected love to the one in need. Is this not the dramatic expression of the kind of love that God gives through His unique agent in the Gospel and (in Scripture)?
12. The exegesis (Bible commentary) of the early centuries consistently identified Jesus as the Good Samaritan. Indeed, in John 8:48, the Jews throw a taunt at him with the words, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” Yet the far greater consequence is the costly demonstration of unexpected love that we see in the actions of the Samaritan. He appears suddenly and unexpectedly from the outside and acts to save as the traditional leaders of the community have failed. Yet, God's agent arrives to ‘bind up the wounds,’ of the sufferer as Barth writes; “The Good Samaritan is far from the lawyer. The primitive exegesis of the text was fundamentally right. He stands before him incarnate, although hidden under the form of the one whom the lawyer believed he should hated as the Jews hated the Samaritans.”