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INHALTSVERZEICHNIS

REZENSIONEN

Timothy A. Friedrichsen

A Judge, a Widow, and the Kingdom of God
Re-reading a Parable of Jesus (Luke 18,2-5)

This article considers how the Parable of the Judge and the Widow (Luke 18,2-5)[1] may have functioned in the preaching of the kingdom of God by Jesus.[2] In order to accomplish this primary purpose, we will first review the arguments for the secondary nature of the context in which the parable is now found, namely, Lk 18,1.6-8. Second, we will provide a brief discussion of this parable's historicity, that is, that vv. 2-5 comprise a parable of Jesus. This judgment of historicity will be further borne out by a close re-reading of the parable. This re-reading will attempt to engage the parable from within the context of Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God by paying attention both to the brief narrative provided by Jesus and the social context of its likely original hearers.

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[1]An earlier form of this article was delivered as a paper at the sixty-eighth annual meeting of The Catholic Biblical Association of America, held at St. John's University, Collegeville, MN, on Aug. 6-9, 2005. Major inspirations for my reconsideration of this parable are (in chronological order): *B.B. Scott*, Hear Then a Parable. A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus, Minneapolis, MN, 1989, esp., You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down. In a City There Was a Judge (Luke 18:2-5), pp. 175-187; *W.R. Herzog II*, Parables as Subversive Speech. Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed, Louisville, KY, 1994, esp., Justice at the Gate? The Parable of the Unjust Judge (Luke 18:1-8), pp. 215-232; *A.J. Hultgren*, The Parables of Jesus. A Commentary, Grand Rapids, MI, 2000, esp., The Unjust Judge, Luke 18:2-8, pp. 252-262; *N. Maestri*, The Parable of the Persistent Widow and the Unjust Judge. Luke 18:1-8, The Catholic University of America: unpublished doctoral seminar paper, 2001, 32pp. — See now the article by *W. Cotter*, The Parable of the Feisty Widow and the Threatened Judge (Luke 18.1-8), NTS 51 (2005) 328-343, which provides more insight into first century legal systems and the place of women with respect to those systems, so as to demonstrate the extraordinary 'feistiness' of the widow in the parable. This treatment will work through the parable's short narrative (cf. below, n. 32) with an eye to the audience's response as the narrative progresses and is resolved.

[2]See my similar treatment of the Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector: The Temple, A Pharisee, A Tax Collector and The Kingdom of God. Rereading a Jesus Parable (Luke 18:10-14a), JBL 124 (2005) 89-119.

Luke often introduces parables with an indication of the lesson to be taken from them. His introduction here is a clear instance of this practice: ἔλεγεν δὲ παραβολὴν αὐτοῖς πρὸς τὸ δεῖν πάντοτε προσεύχεσθαι αὐτούς καὶ μὴ ἐγκακεῖν („Then he told them a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary").[3] Luke's hand can be detected at the beginning of this verse, because „λέγειν ... παραβολήν ... as an introduction to a parable is found only in the Gospel of Luke".[4] The periphrastic λέγων of v. 2a, which picks up on this introduction is also Lucan.[5] Πρός plus the articular infinitive (τὸ δεῖν) is „characteristic ... of Luke's style"[6] and „expresses purpose",[7] namely, „the necessity ... to pray always". „This is not to be understood of perpetual or continuous prayer (contrast 1 Thess 5:17), but of continual prayer (as the following cl. implies): of prayer that continues to mark the

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[3]Unless otherwise indicated, the English translation used in this article is the New American Bible, revised edition, copyright © by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC, 2001.

[4]*Hultgren*, Parables, p. 253, n. 3. Besides the case here, he lists Lk „5:26; 6:39; 12:16, 41; 13:6; 14:7; 15:3; 18:9; 19:11; 20:9; 21:29". Among others, see *J. Nolland*, Luke 9:21–18:34 (WBC, 35B), Dallas, TX, 1993, p. 866. — *Hultgren's* treatment of this parable is included in his classification „Parables of Life before God" (Ch. 5); cf. my review of Hultgren's work in ETL 77 (2001) 214-217.

Jeremias, Parables, p. 93, n. 13, distinguishes between the redactional uses of λέγειν /εἰπεῖν παραβολήν in 5,36; 20,9; 21,29 and where the phrase „often goes back to the Lucan source, e.g., 12.41". The instance in Lk 12,41, however, is not a narrative introduction but direct speech (Peter), and thus does not seem analogous to the case here. Perhaps Lk 8,4, εἶπεν διὰ παραβολῆς (diff. Mk 4,2, καὶ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς ἐν παραβολαῖς) could be added to the instances already noted. See the narrative use—albeit a somewhat different use—in Lk 20,19, where the chief priests and scribes ἔγνωσαν ... ὅτι πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἶπεν τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην (cp. Mk 12,12 ἔγνωσαν ... ὅτι πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὴν παραβολὴν εἶπεν).

[5]*Jeremias*, Parables, p. 93, n. 13; *Nolland*, Luke 9:21–18:34, p. 867.

[6]*Jeremias*, Parables, p. 93, n. 13. So too, *Nolland*, Luke 9:21–18:34, pp. 866-867, and *F. Bovon*, Apocalyptic Traditions in the Lukan Special Material: Reading Luke 8:1-8, HTR 4 (1997) 383-391, p. 385. Of these commentators only *Nolland* notes that „δεῖν ... is found elsewhere in the NT only at Acts 26:9" (p. 866). To this observation, Acts 25,24 can be added (μὴ δεῖν αὐτὸν ζῆν μηκέτι); neither of the cases in Acts uses the article with the infinitive.

[7]*Hultgren*, Parables, p. 252; he goes on to note: „The difficulty of translation is illustrated in modern English versions: ‚to this end' (KJV), ‚to the effect that' (RSV), ‚about their need' (NRSV), and ‚to show that' (NEB, NIV)...".

existence of the disciples...".[8] Besides this continual prayer, the disciple is also (καί) to pray without tiring, failing or losing heart (μὴ ἐγκακεῖν).[9] This introduction, therefore, picks up on the durative, repetitive sense of the action of the widow in v. 3, for she ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτόν („used to come to him"). This is confirmed in v. 4, both in that the judge οὐκ ἤθελεν ἐπὶ χρόνον („for a long time the judge was unwilling") and in that the judge himself acknowledges that he will take action διά γε τὸ παρέχειν μοι κόπον τὴν χήραν ταύτην („because this widow keeps bothering me"). The introduction clearly fits the parable well, but besides λέγειν ... παραβολήν there are other indications that the introduction has been redacted by Luke.

The Lucan character of the introduction is also supported by noting that only Luke has parables that are offered as lessons on prayer. Besides the parable being studied here, brief comments on Lk 11,5-8 and 18,9-14 are in order. In a context where Jesus' own prayer inspires the disciples to ask to be taught to pray (11,1), Luke combines the Lord's Prayer (11,2-4), the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (11,5-8),[10] and further

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[8] *J.A. Fitzmyer*, The Gospel according to Luke X-XXIV. Introduction, Translation and Notes (AB, 28A), Garden City, NY, 1985, p. 1178. That „continual prayer" is to continue „until the Son of Man is revealed (17:30)"; cf. below the text at nn. 15-18 on v. 18,8b.

[9] *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 252: „Etymologically the word ἐγκακέω means ‚to act badly'. But when it comes to mean ‚to fail' and ‚to grow weary'". In the New Testament it is always used with a negative adverb or particle; see 2 Cor 4,1.16; Gal 6,9; Eph 3,13; 2 Thess 3,13. *Hultgren* refers to *W. Grundmann*, ἐγκακέω, TDNT 3:486 and to BAGD 215 for „become weary, tired". *Bovon*, Apocalyptic, p. 385, notes that ἐγκακεῖν „is known in the Pauline and deutero-Pauline epistles and thus is also appropriate for Luke".

[10] *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 253, proposes that „[i]n both form and content the Parable of the Unjust Judge is a twin of the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (11:5-8)". He lists six points: 1) a person in need goes for help; 2) that person shows a „degree ... of impertinence"; 3) the person asked for help „becomes annoyed"; 4) assistance is provided; 5) „linguistic similarity between 18:5 and 11:7"; 6) the theme of prayer. Although one can generally agree with these points, they seem too easily to pass over the differences between the two parables. First, the parable in 11,5-8 is narrated much differently, because the hearer is asked to imagine him/herself as the friend who is visited at midnight. With respect to Hultgren's points, #1 can be granted, but there is no twinning for #2, because the friend who comes at midnight asks only once and shows no „impertinence". Annoyance (#3) may be extrapolated from both parables, but for the visited friend, it is due to timing, as his household is abed, while for the judge it is due to the widow's pertinacity. Assistance is provided (#4), and we could add, not for the honorable reason(s) that the assistance should have been given. #5 is little more than a repetition of point #3, for the only

instruction on perseverance in prayer (11,9-13; cf. below).[11] The Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector (18,9-14) is offered by Luke as one of his „example stories", from which the reader/hearer is to learn to follow the example of the humble prayer of the tax collector. This example is realized by Luke's placement of and introduction to the parable.[12] These parables are all special Lucan parables; they may have been related to prayer already in Luke's source(s). Nevertheless, Luke's more general redactional use of the theme of prayer,[13] most especially Jesus at prayer or

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„linguistic similarity" is the „expression παρέχειν ... κόπον" (p. 255). With respect to the theme of prayer, #6, it is provided by Luke in both cases (cf. Herzog's comment, below, n. 14); prayer is not likely the original lesson of either parable. Finally, though it is beyond the scope of this piece to go into detail, the social relationships implied in each of the parables are quite different. While the two parables are similarly used by Luke, this reader/hearer would prefer not to go so far as to call them ‚twin parables', especially in the sense of *A. Jülicher*, Die Gleichnisreden Jesu (2 vols., Tübingen, 1910), 2nd edition, zwei Teile in einem Band, Darmstadt, 1976, p. 283: „Wir werden, ohne uns an eine Rekonstruktion der von Lc genutzten Quellenschriften zu wagen, nur behaupten, dass die beiden Parabeln 11 5 ff. und 18 1 ff. ursprünglich ein Paar bebildet haben, wie die Gleichnisse 14 28 ff. 31 f. ...". Despite this, *Jülicher* does point out a difference in addition to those already noted, namely, that in 11,7 the friend responds to the petitioner (οὐ δύναμαι), while in this parable the hearer is simply told οὐκ ἤθελεν (*ibid.*, pp. 280-281; cf. *Bailey*, Poet, p. 127 [full reference in note below]). In the end, it seems preferable to use the more moderate designation of „[a]lmost a doublet" (*Jeremias*, Parables, p. 157).

Although it is beyond the scope of this article, it seems instructive to relate this parable to that of the Dishonest Manager, Lk 16,1-8, as *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, esp. pp. 1177-1178 does, since each employs a very questionable character „as a symbol of the heavenly Father". Cp. τόν οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας of 16,8 and ὁ κριτὴς τῆς ἀδικίας of 18,6; the former, however, is part of the parable's narrative, whereas 18,6 is not (cf. below the text at nn. 21-23, and n. 33).

[11]Due to the perseverance in prayer indicated by the present indicative active verbs in 11,9, it is common to read perseverance into the midnight friend's request—to the point of mistranslating ἀναίδεια ("shamelessness") as „persistence" (NAB and NRSV, e.g.)—even though he makes his request only once. This is an example of what *K.E. Bailey* calls „the spilling phenomenon", which happens „when texts have been read together for so long that ... one text ‚spills' into the next" (Through Peasant Eyes, Grand Rapids, 1980, 147-148—now available in a combined edition with his 1976 work: Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes. A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke, Grand Rapids, 1983, in which both volumes are still individually paginated; cf. my A Pharisee, nn. 35 and 167).

[12]For more thorough treatment, see my A Pharisee, esp. pp. 91-93.

[13]The following is a synoptic comparison of the use of the verb προσεύξομαι in Luke: 3,21 (addMk 1,10); 5,16 (addMk 1,45); 6,12 (addMk 3,13); 6,28 (cp. Mt 5,44); 9,18 (addMk 8,27); 9,28 (addMk 9,2a); 9,29 (addMk 9,2b); 11,1 (addQ 11,2; cp. Mt 6,9); 11,2

teaching on prayer, tips the balance in favor of holding Luke himself responsible for the use of these parables as part of this motif.[14]

Although most commentators agree that Lk 18,1 evinces Luke's hand,[15] there is more discussion of vv. 6, 7-8a and 8b. It is probably easiest to begin at the end, because there is general agreement that v. 8b, πλὴν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐλθὼν ἆρα εὑρήσει τὴν πίστιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς; („But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"), was not part of Jesus' use of this parable. Both „the particle for restriction ‚and yet' (πλήν), and the expression ‚on earth' (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) are typical of Luke".[16] Moreover, v. 8b relates the parable to the larger narrative context of the Third Gospel. This closing rhetorical question shows that the prayerful persistence is encouraged not

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(parMt 6,9); 20,47 (parMk 12,40); 22,40 (parMk 14,32); 22,41 (parMk 14,35); [[22,44]]; 22,46 (parMk 14,38). SLk instances, 1,10; 18,1 (our case); 18,10-11. See too, Acts 1,24; 6,6; 8,15; 9,11.40; 10,9.30; 11,5; 12,12; 13,3; 14,23; 16,25; 20,36; 21,5; 22,17; 28,8.

The following is a synoptic comparison of the use of the noun προσευχή in Luke: 6,12 (addMk 3,13); 19,46 (parMk 11,17); 22,45 (addMk 14,37). See too, Acts 1,14; 2,42; 3,1; 6,4; 10,4.31; 12,5; 16,13.16.

[14] *Herzog*, Parables, p. 215, notes that one factor that „reveal[s] Luke's understanding of the parable ... is his effort to relate this parable to two companion parables in 11:5-8 and 18:9-14 by explicitly interpreting them as related to the practice of prayer" (for the other two, cf. nn. 10-11).

[15] *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 257, confidently ascribes the verse to Luke: „Clearly 18:1 is Luke's introduction". So, too, *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, pp. 1176: „almost certainly stems from Luke's redactional pen"; *J.R. Donahue*, The Gospel in Parable. Metaphor, Narrative and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels, Philadelphia, 1988, p. 181; *Nolland*, Luke 9:21–18:34, pp. 866-867; *Bovon*, Apocalyptic, p. 385; *Herzog*, Parables, p. 218; *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 176: „a clear Lukan construction"; *J.B. Green*, The Gospel of Luke (NITCNT), Grand Rapids, MI, 1997, p. 638; *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 329.

[16] *Bovon*, Apocalyptic, p. 385; ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς „is also known by Matthew and Mark (see Matt 9:6 and Mark 2:10, for example)" (*ibid.*, n. 11). For ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς in Luke: 5,24 (parMk 2,10); 18,8 (SLk, our case); 21,23 (addMk 13,19); 21,25 (addMk 21,25). See too, Acts 2,19; 10,11. While Luke can use this phrase from his source or redactionally, there are cases when Luke does not take up the phrase from his source; see, Mk 4,1.31*bis*; 9,3.20; 14,35 (without addressing the reconstruction of Q, Matt 6,19 and 23,35 can be mentioned).

For πλήν in Luke: 6,24 (Q?), 6,35 (diffMt 5,44); 10,11 (diffMt 10,7); 10,14 (parMt 11,22); 11,41 (diffMt 23,26); 12,31 (diffMt 6,33); 19,27 (cp. Mt 25,30); 22,21 (diffMk 14,20); 22,22 (addMk 14,21); 22,42 (diffMk 14,36). SLk instances: Lk 10,20; 13,33; 17,1; 18,8 (our case); 23,28. See too, Acts 8,1; 15,28; 20,23; 27,22.

simply for itself, but also for being prepared for when the Lord returns, which is certain, even though the timing is not, as Lk 17,20-37 had explicated.[17] Although v. 8b may have been present in Luke's source, because it functions in drawing the parable and its application (vv. 6-8a; cf. below) into the larger narrative block within the Lucan journey to Jerusalem, it is more likely that v. 8b is Luke's own addition.[18]

Some propose that all of vv. 6-8a go back to the preaching of Jesus, because the parable demands application/interpretation[19] and/or because of detected Aramai-

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[17]With respect to the broader context, *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 176, notes that our „parable is woven into the context of an eschatological discourse that begins in Luke 17:20 with the pharisee's question on the coming of the kingdom". In n. 1 he extends his observation: „This unit is part of the larger unit of Luke 17:11–19:44". He refers to *C.H. Talbert*, Reading Luke, p. 169, and *J. Ernst*, Das Evangelium nach Lukas, p. 482. *Green*, Luke, p. 637, similarly notes: „Verse 8 forms an *inclusion* with 17:20, indicating the concern of this larger narrative segment on the coming of the end. Together with v 7, v 8 also forms an *inclusio* with v 1, indicating the more narrow concern of this pericope with the nature of appropriate comportment in the present with respect to the eschaton". See too, *G.W. Forbes*, The God of Old. The Role of the Lukan Parables in the Purpose of Luke's Gospel (JSNT Scripture, 198), Sheffield, 2000, esp. Ch. 11: The Judge and the Widow (18.1-8), pp. 198-210, p. 198.

[18]*Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1176: „Verse 8b ... is almost universally regarded a secondary addition made by Luke...". (cf. too, p. 1177). *Herzog*, Parables, p. 215, notes that one factor that „reveal[s] Luke's understanding of the parable ... is his placement of the parable toward the close of a small eschatological discourse (17:20–18:14)". *R.W. Funk, B.B. Scott,* and *J.R. Butts* (eds.), The Parables of Jesus. Red Letter Edition (The Jesus Seminar Series), Sonoma, CA, 1988, p. 41, print v. 8b in black, which is the „consensus" (p. 106) of the seminar. See *Nolland*, Luke 9:21–18:34, p. 865, *Forbes*, God of Old, pp. 199-200, and now, *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 329: „The redirection to the theme of the Son of Man, absent from the parable core, is explained by Luke's placement of the parable directly after the Q saying on the coming Son of Man (Luke 17:20-37)".

[19]*Jeremias*, Parables, pp. 155-157 (*Scott*, Hear Then, p. 177, n. 5, notes that this was not the case in „earlier eds. of [Jeremias's] book"). *W.G. Kümmel*, Promise and Fulfillment, 59, sees these verses as comparing the widow's activity with God's activity for the elect, so there is „no need to detach the verses from the parable" (from *Scott*, *ibid.*). *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, pp. 1176-1177, notes: „Verses 7-8a allegorize a detail in the parable itself, when they introduce the notion of ‚vindication'. ... This allegorization is clearly a further extension of the application of the parable proper [see below, nn. 21-23, on v. 6]. There is no real reason to ascribe it to Luke himself; it was undoubtedly already attached to the parable in the pre-Lucan tradition, even though it may have come from an entirely different setting in the ministry of Jesus himself". *Green*, Luke, pp. 641-642, seems to attribute these verses to Jesus, even though he does detect some Lukan touches (cf. below, n. 22). *H. Sahlin*, Zwei Lukas-Stellen. Lk 6:43-45; 18:7,

cisms.[20] Although it cannot be ruled out that these verses go back to Jesus, the first thing to note is that with v. 6 the parable is clearly over, because v. 6 is not part of the short narrative that comprises the parable.[21] An indication that these verses are added by Luke (or already added in his source) is the linking expression in v. 6, εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος („The Lord said"). „Luke's reference to Jesus as ‚Lord' is characteristic for the narrator and it reminds his audience of Jesus' role as authoritative teacher".[22] That this dominical exclamation goes back to Jesus can also be doubted, because it draws attention to the judge, when the narrative functions so as to draw the hearer's attention to the actions of the widow, which will be seen in the re-reading below.[23]

Another indication of the redactional character of the Lucan introduction comes to the fore when this parable and application are compared to another teaching on the constancy of prayer, namely, Lk 11,9: κἀγὼ ὑμῖν λέγω, αἰτεῖτε καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν, ζητεῖτε καὶ εὑρήσετε, κρούετε καὶ ἀνοιγήσεται ὑμῖν („And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" [cf. Mt 7,7]). The present indicative active verbs, αἰτεῖτε, ζητεῖτε, and κρούετε, stress on-

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Symbolae Biblicae Upsalienses, 4 (1945) 3-20, esp. pp. 19-20, n. 56, does not see v. 7 as a Lucan reflection on the state of the church: „Vielmehr stammt er allem Anschein nach aus alter und gutter Überlieferung — und warum nicht von Jesus selbst?" See too, *Forbes*, God of Old, p. 199.

[20] *Jeremias*, Parables, 156 (from *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 177). On Lk 18:7, see *Sahlin*, Zwei, p. 17, who says this verse is „kein gutes Griechisch", but rather, „gutes *Aramäisch*".

[21] See below, n. 32, for the definition of a parable that informs this study.

[22] *Green*, Luke, p. 641. Cf. too, *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1179: „The use of the absolute title [ὁ κύριος] reveals Lucan redaction" (cf. below, n. 33). *Forbes*, God of Old, p. 204, seems to think that it is „Jesus [who] directs the hearers' attention to the lesson to be learnt from the unjust judge", though he says that ὁ κύριος is „Luke's use of the post-resurrection title...". *Nolland*, Luke 9:21–18:34, p. 869, proposes that this introduction „is likely to be Lukan", and that „κριτὴς τῆς ἀδικίας ... could be modeled after οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας ... of 16:8, in which case it would be Lukan. This would make it likely that the whole clause was Lukan, but this remains uncertain". *Funk, et al.* (eds.), Red Letter, p. 41, print v. 6 in black, which is the „consensus" (p. 106) of the seminar.

[23] See *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 330 (cf. below, n. 26). More generally, she notes: „With the exception of a very few scholars, the pre-Lukan commentaries on the parable, vv. 6-8a, are identified as surely secondary to the parable core" (on these verses, cf. below the text at nn. 28-30).

going, consistent asking, seeking and knocking. But in this context, the earthly fathers' ability to give good things to their children (Lk 11,11-13a, cp. Mt 7,9-11a) is contrasted with the heavenly Father's ability to give the Spirit to those who ask (Lk 11,13b: πόσῳ μᾶλλον ὁ πατὴρ [ὁ] ἐξ οὐρανοῦ δώσει πνεῦμα ἅγιον τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν — „how much more will the Father in heaven give the holy Spirit to those who ask him?" [cp. Mt 7,11b]). Even though these earthly fathers are prone to sin (Lk 11,13a: εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὑπάρχοντες — „If you then, who are wicked"; cp. Mt 7,11b[24]), they are not *deliberately* unfatherly, but rather, fulfill their fatherly roles in appropriate ways with respect to their children's requests. The judge in the parable, however, knowingly and deliberately fails to fulfill his role. All this is to say that if the parable were originally intended to be a lesson on the necessity of continual prayer, there is no need to cast the judge in such a negative, unjust light. This too is borne out by the *a minori ad maius* (*qal wehomer*) argument in Lk 11,13a, because just as the heavenly Father far outshines the earthly fathers, who dutifully fulfill their parental roles, so too could such a concluding argument be made when comparing God to a *just* judge, that is, to an earthly judge dutifully fulfilling his legal role.[25] For a lesson on prayer, an unjust judge (ὁ κριτὴς τῆς ἀδικίας) seems an odd image for God; the comparison of the use of an *a minori ad maius* (*qal wehomer*) argument in Lk 11,13a with its use in Lk 18,7-8a, seems to support seeing these latter verses as secondary to the parable.[26]

In addition, the *a minori ad maius* (*qal wehomer*) argument here is significantly more complex than it is in Lk 11,13a, because by it Luke needs to contrast both God's securing of people's rights and God's speediness with the unjust judge's lack of both: ὁ

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[24]For Luke's ὑπάρχοντες, Mt 7,11b reads ὄντες. For *J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann* and *J.S. Kloppenborg* (eds.), The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis Including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French Translations of Q and Thomas, Leuven, 2000, pp. 220-221, ὄντες is more likely in Q 11,13a. Among the Synoptic evangelists, only Luke uses ὑπάρχοντες: Lk 7,25 (addMt 11,8); 11,13 (our case); 16,14 (SLk). Cf. too, Acts 16,20; 17,29.

[25]*Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 330: „Of course, the most obvious sign of artificiality [of vv. 6-8a] is the parallel of this petty judge with God".

[26]*Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 330, convincingly argues that neither v. 7a nor vv. 7b-8a addresses the entire parable, but that they only address vv. 2-4. Moreover, she notes that „v. 7a and vv. 7b-8a contradict each other. If God is so swift to answer prayers (vv. 7b-8a), why must the faithful cry out to him night and day (v. 7a)?"

δὲ θεὸς οὐ μὴ ποιήσῃ τὴν ἐκδίκησιν τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν αὐτοῦ τῶν βοώντων αὐτῷ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός, καὶ μακροθυμεῖ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς; λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ποιήσει τὴν ἐκδίκησιν αὐτῶν ἐν τάχει (vv. 7-8a: „Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily"). Due to the complexity and to the „antithetical" aspect of the argument here,[27] when compared to 11,13a, the πόσῳ μᾶλλον of Lk 11,13a will not suffice. It is beyond the scope of this article to treat these verses in detail.[28] Rather, what is affirmed here is that vv. 7-8a,[29] like vv. 1, 6 and 8b, seem later additions to the Jesus parable in vv. 2-5 (more below).[30]

Given the discussion of the secondary nature of vv. 1, 6-8, with respect to the parable proper, vv. 2-5, „[t]he first thing to get off the table is the notion that this parable is simply a lesson in the virtue of [continual prayer]".[31] Rather, if this story can

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[27]*Sahlin*, Zwei, p. 18: „Der Vergleich Gottes mit der Richter ist antithetischer Art...".

[28]For further treatment, see, for example: *H. Ljungvik*, Zur Erklärung einer Lukas-Stelle (Luk. XVIII. 7), NTS 10 (1963-64) 289-294; *Herzog*, Parables, pp. 217-218; *Scott*, Hear Then, pp. 176-177; *Nolland*, Luke 9:21–18:34, pp. 896-870; *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, pp. 330-331.

[29]*Herzog*, Parables, p. 218, claims a „consensus" that „vv. 7-8 are independent sayings", though this does not exclude that they may be sayings of Jesus, which he notes is held by Jeremias, Marshall, and Bailey, while Bultmann and Linnemann attribute them to the Risen Lord. *Funk, et al.* (eds.), Red Letter, p. 41, print vv. 7-8a in black, which is the „consensus" (p. 106) of the seminar.

[30]*Herzog*, Parables, p. 215, notes that one factor that „reveal[s] Luke's understanding of the parable ... is the collection of sayings [18,6-8] that he has attached to this parable". More specifically, *Herzog* (p. 216) notes that v. 6b provides „a smooth transition" to vv. 7-8 „by suggesting that the judge's final speech (vv. 4b-5) is the parable's way of asserting what the Lord says in vv. 7-8. This connection makes sense only if Luke has identified the judge as a God figure whose words carry the burden of the parable's meaning. This identification has not been without problems". See too, *Donahue*, Gospel, p. 181; *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 186.

[31]This is adapted from *R.F. Capon*, Kingdom, Grace, Judgment. Paradox, Outrage, and Vindication in the Parables of Jesus, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 338, where he begins his treatment of the Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector, Lk 18,10-14a, as follows: „The first thing to get off the table is the notion that this parable is simply a lesson in the virtue of humility" (see my A Pharisee, pp. 91-92, n. 9 — Capon's volume is a combined edition of three of his works: The Parables of the Kingdom, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985; The Parables of Grace, Grand Rapids, MI, 1988; The Parables of Judgment, Grand Rapids, MI, 1989). So too, *Jeremias*, Parables, p. 93: „we may ... remark that neither 18.9-14, nor, probably, 18.1-8, was originally intended as an instruction about the right way to pray...". *B. Reid*, Luke's Mixed Message for

be traced back to Jesus himself, then it seems likely that it was part of Jesus' imaging the kingdom of God.[32] Although there is general openness to the likelihood that Lk 18,2-5 goes back to Jesus,[33] it is difficult to demonstrate definitively the authenticity of this parable.[34] The strongest argument that can be made for the parable's authenticity is

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Women, Chicago Studies 38 (1999) 283-297, p. 292, holds that prayer, faith and the delay of the parousia are all later interpretive layers applied to this „puzzling parable". Nevertheless, to interpret Lk 18,2-5 outside of the Lucan context is not easy. *Herzog*, Parables, pp. 218-219, offers an overview of interpretations of the parable, and concludes that „interpreters have had great difficulty in separating the parable from its Lukan context".

[32] As I noted in my A Pharisee, p. 92, n. 11, „I am partial to the definition of parable offered by *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 8: ‚A parable is a mashal that employs a short narrative fiction to reference a transcendent symbol'".

[33] *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1176: „The parable includes at least vv. 2-5.... I prefer to regard vv. 2-6 as the parable proper. From the beginning some comment seems to be called for about the attitude of the judge. ... Just as in 16:1-8a one expects some reaction to the manager's activity, so here one expects some comment on the conduct of the judge (even if *ho kyrios* refers to Jesus himself in this case—which it did not in 16:8a)". „This verse implies the point of the parable as a whole: If even a dishonest judge can be prevailed upon to do justice, how much more will the upright God listen to the persistent prayer of his own. ... This conclusion of the parable shifts the attention somewhat from the widow to the judge's conduct and way of thinking—and especially to his soliloquy [ἀκούσατε τὶ ... λέγει]. Implied: *a fortiori* God will heed the persistent petition of human beings who call upon him" (*ibid.*, p. 1180). *Donahue*, Gospel, p. 181, follows Fitzmyer; he includes v. 6 in the parable of Jesus, „even if Luke or an earlier editor has substituted 'Lord' ... for ‚he' or ‚Jesus'". — *Zimmermann*, Gleichnis, p. 80, rightly notes that a comparison of 18,6 with 16,8 is not appropriate, for κύριος here refers to Jesus, while in 16,8 it refers to the master in the parable. Moreover, even if v. 6 were part of the parable proper, would this *a fortiori* application be all that obvious without Luke's redactional introduction (v. 1) that connects the parable with prayer, and without „the addition of the sayings in vv. 7-8a" (*Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1178), which explicate the *a fortiori* application? It seems better, therefore, to see v. 6 as a Lucan transition from the parable proper to the later (pre-Lucan or Lucan; cf. nn. 19 and 23) *a minori ad maius* (*qal wehomer*) argument (see above, the text from n. 23 to n. 30). See too, *Herzog*, Parables, p. 216 (cf. above, n. 30) and p. 218: „since Bultmann (1963, 175), the phrase ‚and the Lord said' has been seen as an attachment formula". *Funk, et al.* (eds.), Red Letter, p. 41, print vv. 2-5 in pink (vote [p. 98]: 42 red, 38 pink, 10 gray, 10 black).

[34] *Herzog*, Parables, p. 216, notes that Eta Linnemann (1966, 121) concluded that „the parable and sayings assume a time when the fledgling church was suffering persecution, and the parable was composed to restore faith and reassure the wavering that the Lord would justify the saints".

its distinctive voice.[35] This distinctiveness will become more and more evident as we re-read the parable, but for now, we can first note that in a story meant to image God's reigning activity, it seems unlikely that either Jewish or early Christian teachers[36] would have employed a judge of the character found within this parable.

To begin our re-reading of the parable, we first consider the Lucan audience:

> In Luke 17:20, Pharisees ask Jesus about the coming of the kingdom of God, and after a brief response, Jesus turns his attention to the disciples (17:22). „They", presumably the disciples, ask a question of Jesus (17:37a); he responds to „them" (17:37b) and goes on to tell „them" a parable (18:1). There is no indication, however, that the Pharisees have departed; Luke seems to think that they are still present when Jesus tells this parable [18:10-14a].... At the very least, therefore, those who hear the parable (according to Luke) are disciples and Pharisees....[37]

In addition, while this parable is told within the travel narrative of Lk 9,51–19,27, as of 18,1, Luke has not yet reported significant geographical progress toward Jerusalem.[38] In 18,35, however, Jesus will approach Jericho. The reader has been told that on this journey Jesus has been teaching in and passing through πόλεις καὶ κώμας („towns[/cities] and villages"; 13,22). Although the parable is addressed to the disciples, but with the Pharisees within earshot, perhaps Luke's view also allows for an expansion of the hearers to include a variety of folks from towns/cities and villages. It seems likely that such a diverse audience is consistent with what can be expected of the

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[35]Cf. *Hultgren*, Parables, pp. 257-258. He offers a list of those who hold that all of 18,2-8a (and some even include 8b) as „a unity that originated in the proclamation of Jesus" (p. 257, n. 24). See too, *Forbes*, God of Old, p. 198, n. 1.

[36]It seems appropriate to paraphrase by rearrangement an observation of *D. Wenham*, The Parables of Jesus (The Jesus Library), Downers Grove, IL, 1989, p. 76, who thinks it „unlikely that the Christian church would have" come up with „Jesus' ‚crime parables', as we might describe them ... (Mk 3:23-27; Lk 16:1-9; 18:1-8; 19:11-27)", „had Jesus himself not done so". — *Wenham's* observation is specifically about employing a thief as an image for „Jesus' second coming".

[37]A Pharisee, pp. 103-104; there this quotation refers to the Lucan audience for Lk 18,10-14a.

[38]The journey begins in Galilee at Lk 9,51; the reader is reminded of the journey to Jerusalem in 13,22; 17,11 and 18,31, but there is no indication of significant progress.

original hearers of this Jesus parable. In addition, the opening line of the parable (v. 2a), κριτής τις ἦν ἔν τινι πόλει („There was a [certain] judge in a certain town [/city]") may reflect that Jesus told this parable in locations and to audiences[39] wherein tension between urban and rural folks could have been in play.[40]

From within Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God, the original hearers of this parable could certainly be expected to have identified the judge with God from the very first phrase of Jesus' narrative. This character „has two marks of honor. He has a judge's ascribed honor, and the narrator places him in a city.... This note of location situates the judge among the urban elite. These two initial marks of honor raise him above that of the majority of the parable's hearers".[41]

This rather natural expectation of the hearer that the judge is to be the metaphor for God is quickly undone by the narrator's „formulaic description of the judge as shameless"[42] (v. 2b): τὸν θεὸν μὴ φοβούμενος καὶ ἄνθρωπον μὴ ἐντρεπόμενος („who neither feared God nor respected any human being"). „Fear of God is the

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[39]What I noted about Lk 18,10-14a in A Pharisee, p. 104, can be repeated here: „The historical situation is complicated ... by the likelihood that Jesus may have told this parable more than once and in different locations, which would result in different reactions and understandings of the parable".

[40]*Herzog*, Parables, p. 222, however, notes that „Luke's use of ‚city' [πόλις] is not precise, and it would be unwise to conclude too much from his language". After further consideration of the Mishnah's presentation of judges and tribunals (see below, n. 53), *Herzog* concludes that πόλις „appears to refer to market towns or other local administrative centers, as well as to urban areas such as Jerusalem, Sepphoris, and Tiberius" (p. 222). See the note below.

[41]*Scott*, Hear Then, p. 178. In the ellipsis above, Scott notes that to place the judge in a city is „a redundancy, since judges are found only in cities". For the place of the urban elites, Scott refers the reader to *B.J. Malina*, The New Testament World. Insights from Cultural Anthropology, Atlanta, GA, 1981, pp. 71-75 (see now, rev. ed., Louisville, KY, 1993, pp. 90-94).

[42]*Scott*, Hear Then, p. 178; cf. too, p. 175: „if the interaction of a judge and widow is part of a metaphorical system that structures the understanding and experience of God, then the parable In the City There Was a Judge (Luke 18:2-5) is an anti-metaphor, for its judge is hardly a metaphor for God". *Scott* develops the „formulaic or proverbial" nature of the phrase with a parallel from History of Rome by *Dionysius of Halicarnasus* (pp. 179-180; he directs the reader to *Marshall*, Luke, p. 67[2] and *Wettstein*, Novum Testamentum Graecum 2:778-779). See too, *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1178, and *Green*, Luke, p. 639.

beginning of wisdom" (Ps 110,11; see Prov 1,7), which would be expected of any judge.[43] This fear is an „obligation ... to be learned by every Israelite (Lev 19:14, 32; Deut 4:10; 6:13; 14:23; 17:13 [19?]; 19:20[; Ps 34:12])", which is linked with keeping the commandments (Deut 5,29; 6,2.24; 8,6; 10,12; 13,5; 17,19; 31,12-13; Pss 19,10; 112,1; 119,63; 128,1) and with acting justly (Lev 25,17.36.43; Deut 10,20; Pss 15,4; 36,2; 55,20).[44] To fear the Lord is to trust the Lord and to give the Lord proper respect (cf. Pss 22,24; 31,20; 33,8; 34,10; 64,10; 115,11; 118,4; 135,20). Quite ironically, this judge fails to give to God the fear that is due God as *the* judge.[45] Given the judge's lack of fear of the Lord and his residence in a city (πολίς), some hearers may wonder whether he is a Gentile;[46] at the very minimum, so far as a judge goes, he is as worthless as a Gentile. Nevertheless, „allowing for the proverbial nature of the description of the judge, its particular form, ‚fearing God' rather than ‚fearing the gods', suggests a Jewish environment".[47]

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[43] *Herzog*, Parables, p. 221, and *Scott*, Hear Then, p 179, refer to Jehoshaphat's instruction to Judean judges whom he appointed (2 Chron 19,6-7): „Take care what you do, for you are judging, not on behalf of man, but on behalf of the LORD; he judges with you. And now, let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Act carefully, for with the LORD, our God there is no injustice, no partiality, no bribe-taking". *Green*, Luke, p. 639, notes that „the Third Evangelist portrays those who ‚fear God' in positive fashion" (cf. n. 83: „Acts 10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26", to which we might add Lk 1,50). It is instructive of Luke's perspective to note that the only other person in his narrative to lack fear of God is the „criminal" (κακοῦργος) who „reviled Jesus, saying, ‚Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us'" (23,39), for which he is rebuked by his partner in crime: „Have you no fear of God [οὐδὲ φοβῇ σὺ τὸν θεόν], for you are subject to the same condemnation?" (23,40). Because of what is said by the criminal, according to *Jülicher*, Gleichnisreden, p. 278, „so wissen wir nach 18 2^b von dem Richter, dass er sich von keiner Schandthat durch die Furcht vor dem göttlichen Strafgericht abhalten lässt".

[44] *Hultgren*, Parables, pp. 253-254; I have added to and rearranged some of his biblical references.

[45] See, e.g., Pss 7,12; 50,6; 58,12; 82,8; Eccl 3,17; Ez 18,30; 34,17.20; 35,11 (see too, n. 48, on Sirach 35).

[46] *J.D.M. Derrett*, Law in the New Testament. The Parable of the Unjust Judge, NTS 18 (1971-72) 178-191, argues that the widow goes to the Hellenistic court. *N.F. Fisher*, The Parables of Jesus. Glimpses of God's Reign, New York, rev. ed., 1990, p. 119, also surmises that the judge is „probably a Gentile".

[47] *Herzog*, Parables, p. 221. In addition, against Derrett's reading (above note), *Herzog* also comments that it „undercuts the meaning of the widow, whose standing in a Hellenistic

But the judge has another strike against him, for he does not even give another human person basic respect (καὶ ἄνθρωπον μὴ ἐντρεπόμενος). „The verb ἐντρέπομαι ... does not mean that he simply lacked respect for others, but that he had outright contempt for those who came before him".[48] The Syriac and Arabic versions capture the shame-honor culture by rendering the judge as one who „is not ashamed before people".[49] Because the judge does not fear the Lord and has no respect for others—and perhaps even has contempt for others—the hearer of the parable understands that anyone whose case is heard by this judge would have little or no reason to hope that justice would be done. In this way, and only in this way, can this judge be seen as „impartial".[50] The hearer might well wonder what would ever motivate this

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court does not parallel her privileged position in the Torah". Moreover, he writes: „It is ironic that a judge of the Torah neither fears God who gave the Torah to Moses nor respects the human beings it was specifically designed to protect, but it is neither inconceivable nor unknown" (p. 228).

[48] *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 254; he cites BAGD, p. 269, which translates the verb as „to respect", „to have regard for". *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 179 notes that the verb „belongs to the vocabulary of shame". *Hultgren* also points out the contrast between this judge and God as the „ideal judge" (*ibid.*) in Sirach 35,12-15:

For he is a God of justice,
who knows no favorites.
Though not unduly partial toward the weak,
yet he hears the cry of the oppressed.
He is not deaf to the wail of the orphan,
nor to the widow when she pours out her complaint;
Do not the tears that stream down her cheek
cry out against him that causes them to fall?

Others also refer to this passage, e.g., *Herzog*, Parables, p. 221, *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 186, *Forbes*, God of Old, pp. 200 and 202, and *Green*, Luke, p. 639.

[49] *Bailey*, Peasant, p. 132: „starting with the Old Syriac, down through the Syriac and all the Arabic versions from another thousand years, the only translation we have had here in the Middle East is, ‚He is not ashamed before people'. ... The point is that Middle Eastern traditional culture is a shame-pride culture to a significant degree. That is, a particular pattern of social behavior is encouraged by appeals to shame. ... The problem with the judge is not a failure to ‚respect' other people in the sense of respecting someone of learning or high position. Rather it is a case of his inability to sense the evil of his actions in the presence of one who should make him ashamed. In this case he is hurting a destitute widow. He should feel shame".

[50] *Derrett*, Law, p. 191, proposes that the „description [καὶ ἄνθρωπον μὴ ἐντρεπόμενος], which is by no means necessarily only a disadvantageous characteristic (it implies he was impartial), is intended to convey ... that no one could put any pressure upon him". This

judge to do justice, but the storyteller gives the hearer no hint.[51] Because the judge fails on both accounts, he is „without honor, shameless",[52] and thus cannot be a metaphor for God. It seems reasonable that the original hearers will expect that some other character will enter the parable to take on the symbolic function that would normally have been filled by the judge.[53]

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suggestion is hardly to be recommended; this reader found no commentator who followed Derrett's proposal. Among others, cf., *Bailey*, Peasant, p. 136 (and the above note), and *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, pp. 331-332, who concludes that „the author of the parable expected the listeners to perceive the judge in a completely negative way, as devoid of both *pietas* and *humanitas*".

[51] The original hearer might begin to wonder whether bribery would do the trick, as so many modern commentators propose. There are two major possibilities: 1) the widow's adversary has the wealth to bribe the judge (e.g., *Marshall*, Luke, p. 669); 2) the widow is too poor to bribe the judge to hear her case (e.g., *T.W. Manson*, Sayings, p. 306; *Green*, Luke, p. 641: „that she must ... [come] continuously suggests" this alternative; *Jeremias*, Parables, 153; *Bailey*, Peasant Eyes, 133-34; *Herzog*, Parables, pp. 226-227). There seems little hope, however, most especially because in the narrator's description of the judge „[t]he present participles highlight habitual characteristics" (*Forbes*, God of Old, p. 201).

Hultgren, Parables, p. 254, is hesitant, and thus more faithful to the original storyteller: „That may be true, but that is not said explicitly". *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 183, correctly notes that either the judge may have been bribed by the adversary or the widow had failed to do so, but „the parable demands no such assumption. It is unconcerned about the reason for the judge's failure". *Forbes*, God of Old, p. 202 notes that „such details are irrelevant to the story". — See my discussion of adding details to the (intentional) brevity of Jesus' parables in A Pharisee, p. 101, n. 62, p. 106, nn. 82 and 84, and pp. 115-116, n. 162.

[52] *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 180.

[53] *Scott*, Hear Then, pp. 183-184, notes that some discuss that there is only a „single judge", when the Mishnah notes that the „standard practice required three judges" (cf. n. 31: m. Sanh. 3.1, with reference to *Danby*, 385; see, too, *Green*, Luke, p. 640, who cites *Jeremias*, Parables, p. 153 [n. 89]). Nevertheless, for „some civil cases an expert in the law (*mumheh la-rabbim*) could function as a single judge, if both parties agreed" (cf. *Scott's* n. 32: b Sanh. 5a, with reference to *Soncino* 12:16, and *Cohen*, bet Din, pp. 721-723). But *Scott* offers a cautionary note: „Actually the legal situation in Palestine at the time of Jesus was vague and complex" (p. 184). Despite this, *Scott* opines that the parable's „scene is a clear violation of Jewish legal practice in several ways" (p. 183). *Forbes*, God of Old, p. 200, is also cautious: „there does not appear to have been a uniform judicial system operating in Israel at the time...". See too, *Herzog*, Parables, pp. 222-223. *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1178, writes (somewhat gruffly): „See J. D. M. Derrett, ‚Law', for distracting trivia about Jewish courts and secular judges; the parable does not depend on such details". This may well be true for some readers of Luke, but to have a sense of the possibilities that the original hearers would have been imagining while

The first phrase to introduce the parable's second character (v. 3a), a widow—except for the possible Lucan touches of τις (v. 2a)[54] and ἐκείνῃ (v. 3a)[55]—is quite parallel to the introduction of the judge:

κριτής τις ἦν ἔν τινι πόλει
χήρα δὲ ἦν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐκείνῃ

The similarity of the introductions of the two characters, most especially noting that the widow is from the same city, „serves to bring her into the judge's narrative

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listening to the narrator—the intent of this article—requires careful consideration of the „social scene" (*Herzog*, Parables, 220).

[54]See, for example, *Jülicher*, Gleichnisreden, p. 277, who compares τις here with 7,41 (τινι); 19,12; „auch" 12,16; 10,30; 14,16; 15,11. *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1178, notes the „Lucan predilection for indef. *tis*." *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 178: „'Certain', *tis*, is part of an expected Lukan adaptation of the introduction" (cf. n. 10, where he cites *Ong*, Orality and Literacy, 39-40). For *Nolland*, Luke 9:21–18:34, p. 867, „τις ... could well be Lukan...".

Consider the synoptic evidence: Lk 8,27 (addMk 5,2); 9,8 (diffMk 6,15); 9,19 (diffMk 8,28); 10,25 (diffMk 12,28); 14,16 (diffMt 22,1); 18,18 (addMk 10,17); 18,35 (addMk 10,46); 19,12 (diffMt 25,14); 20,9 ([τις] addMk 12,1); 22,50 (par Mk 14,47 [τις]); 22,59 (diffMk 14,70). Luke omits Mk 14,51-52, wherein Mark uses τις in v. 51. SLk instances: Lk 1,5; 10,30.31.33; 14,2 (diffLk 6,6, parMk 3,1); 15,11; 16,1; 16,19.20; 18,2 (our case). See too, Acts 3,2; 4,34; 5,1.34; 8,9; 9,10; 10,1; 13,15; 14,8; 16,1.9; 18,24; 19,24; 20,9; 21,10; 22,12; 25,14.

[55]Cf. *Jülicher*, Gleichnisreden, p. 277: „ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐκείνῃ (vgl. 6 48 ! [τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐκείνῃ])". — Although ἐκείνῃ may be redactional here, it is not possible to demonstrate that with surety. Consider the synoptic evidence (* = ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις, or var.): Lk 4,2* (add Mk 1,12; diffMt 4,2); 5,35* (parMk 2,20); 6,23* (addMt 5,12); 6,48 (parMt 7,25); 6,49 (parMt 7,27); 7,21 (addMt 11,4); 8,32 (diffMk 5,12); 9,5 (addMk 6,11; cp. Mt 10,14); 9,36* (addMk 9,8); 10,12a* (addMt 10,15a); 10,12b (parMt 10,15b); 11,26 (parMt 12,45); 12,43 (parMt 24,46); 12,45 (parMt 24,48); 12,46 (parMt 24,50); 12,47 (addMt 24,51); 14,24 (addMt 22,10); 17,31* (addMk 13,15; cp. Mt 24,17); 20,18 (addMk 12,11-12; addMt 21,[44]); 20,35 (addMk 12,25); 21,23* (parMk 13,17 // Mt 24,19); 21,34* (diffMt 24,44); 22,22 (parMk 14,21 // Mt 26,24). SLk instances: Lk 2,1; 10,31; 12,37.38; 13,4; 15,14.15; 19,4; 18,3 (our case); 18,14. See too, Acts 1,19; 2,18.41; 3,13.23; 7,41; 8,1.8 [ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐκείνῃ]; 9,37; 10,9; 12,1.6; 14,21; 16,3.33.35; 19,16.23; 20,2; 21,6; 22,11; 28,7.

In the interest of full disclosure, there are instances where Luke has a parallel text to Mark, but does not take up ἐκείνος from him: Mk 1,9*; 3,24.25; 4,11.20.35*; 12,7; 13,11.19*.24a*.24b.32*; 14,25*. Without going into the complex question of reconstructing Q, we can at least point out sayings material in Matthew for which Luke has a parallel (less than clear direct parallels will be indicated by „cp."), but does not have Matthew's ἐκείνος: Mt 7,22* (cp. Lk 13,25); 8,13 (cp. Lk 7,10, reminiscent of Mk 7,30?); 10,19; 11,25; 22,7.10 (cp. Lk 14,21.22; see above on Lk 14.24); 24.38*.43; 25,19.

space".[56] The very mention of a widow would no doubt raise much sympathy on the part of the original hearers,[57] who are more than familiar with „the plight of widows" who „could easily become victimized by unscrupulous persons, even members of their own family".[58] The hearers also knew well God's particular concern for the widow[59] and the Torah's protection of them.[60] Nevertheless, it is unlikely that this widow would immediately fulfill the hearers' expectation of a character who represents God's reigning activity.

The storyteller continues with a description of the widow in terms of her actions toward the judge (v. 3b): καὶ ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγουσα („[and she] used to come to him and say"). Both the indicative imperfect, ἤρχετο, and the present participle, λέγουσα, indicate the durative nature of her actions. What must have struck the original hearers is that much as the judge failed to live up to the social mores governing the kind of person he ought to be as a judge, the widow's action of coming directly to the judge and speaking are not consistent with her social place (more below)—at the

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[56] *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 180. *Nolland*, Luke 9:21–18:34, p. 867, notes that „ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐκείνῃ ... occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Acts 8:8 and may (particularly since it is not integral to the story) be a Lukan touch".

[57] *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 180: „‚widow' in Israel's heritage is a value term demanding response".

[58] *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 260.

[59] See above, n. 48, as well as Ex 22,22-23; Deut 10,17-18; Pss 68,6; 146,9; Prov 15,25; Jer 49,11 (LXX 30,5).

Scott, Hear Then, p. 181, writes: „The triadic formula ‚widows, orphans, and foreigners' summarizes in the Hebrew Bible the need of special protection. ... Not only is the Israelite to protect this class but God himself is their protector". *Green*, Luke, p. 639, points out that „Luke habitually portrays widows as persons of exemplary piety and/or recipients of divine beneficence": „2:37; 4:25-26; 7:11-17; 20:45–21:54; cf. Acts 6:1; 9:39-41" (n. 85).

[60] Ex 22,21; Lev 22,13; Deut 14,29; 24,17.19-21; 26,12-13; 27,19. God's (and the Torah's) concern for the widow also plays a role in the message of the prophets; e.g., see Isa 1,17.23; 10,2; Jer 7,6; 22,3; Bar 6,37; Ezek 22,7; Zech 7,10; Mal 3,5; cf. too, Ps 93,6.

Green, Luke, p. 640, notes that „the scene Jesus paints is not atypical but develops the well-known topos of the widow who struggles with a corrupt judicial system for her rights. Indeed, it is probably not too much to say that so much attention is given the divine concern for widows in the LXX precisely because this concern was so little evident among God's people". On this topos, *Green* refers readers to *Stählin*, χήρα, p. 434, and to *Schottroff*, Lydia's Impatient Sisters, pp. 102-104. Cf. too, *Herzog*, Parables, p. 225.

very least, it „is a breach of etiquette".[61] „As widow she has a claim on [the judge]",[62] so where is her advocate? „Inasmuch as the ancient court system belonged to the world of men, the fact that this woman finds herself before the magistrate indicates that she has no kinsman to bring her case to court...".[63] In the end, „[p]ersistence was her only weapon",[64] even if this forwardness risks some of the sympathy that her status as a widow would evoke naturally from the hearers of the parable.

But while the hearers may be wondering about this widow, the storyteller seems again to call on their sympathy for the widow, while at the same time showing her as overstepping acceptable social interaction. Through her direct speech the hearer learns that she is being unjustly treated and hears her demand for vindication in the imperative (v. 3b): ἐκδίκησόν με ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀντιδίκου μου („Render a just decision for me against my adversary"). As already noted, the powerlessness of a widow would have been assumed, but the storyteller undermines that understanding, for „in a situation of shame-honor, the woman's speech is particularly inappropriate for her situation. She does not begin with a formal address. There is no ‚Sir, I request'...".[65] Rather than

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[61] *Herzog*, Parables, p. 228.

[62] *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 182.

[63] *Green*, Luke, p. 640; *Forbes*, God of Old, p. 202; see too, *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 255: „[S]ince it would have been extremely unusual for a woman to appear in court, she must not have a brother, son, or other person to serve as an advocate". *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 333, notes that „legal visits were performed by lawyers or some male relative of the woman". Nevertheless, *Cotter* adds that in the first century CE Greco-Roman judicial system a woman pleading a case before magistrates was not unheard of (pp. 333-335), though such a woman may be suspected to be „inviting male attention" and of being immodest (p. 333).

[64] *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1179.

[65] *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 183, with reference, in n. 28, to *C. Spicq*, La parabole de la veuve obstinée et du judge inerté aux decisions impromptus (Lc xviii, 1-8), Revue biblique 68 (1961) 68-90, p. 74. „Thus we see in these first two lines the curious ambivalence of the narration toward the shame-honor schema. A judge with ascribed honor is described as shameless; a widow pleading for him to become her patron addresses one above her without an appropriate honorific title" (*Scott*, p. 183). *Scott* also refers (in n. 28) to the parable „A Man Entrusts Property", Lk 19,11-27, where each servant addresses the master with κύριε (vv. 16, 18, 20, and 25; cp. Mt 25,14-30, esp. vv. 20, 22, 24). See now, *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 335: „It is a curt command devoid of any title of respect for the magistrate". *Cotter* also offers some examples of women addressing the courts with deference (pp. 335-336).

powerlessness, the widow demonstrates forwardness by directly approaching the judge and speaking to him in the imperative, ἐκδίκησόν με.[66] Although the hearers may well have been struck by the widow's rather unladylike forwardness, they would also have understood the difficulty of her situation; she not only is without an advocate but she has an adversary. Moreover, the hearers know that the judge, whom she approaches and appeals to again and again, lacks the requisite virtues of a judge. The narrator, however, has not indicated whether the widow is aware of this judge's character—or lack thereof. For the hearers, the widow's persistent imperative could indicate that „her life may depend on the settlement of her case".[67] Nevertheless, „this widow's brief command, with no title for the judge ... serves to reinforce the image of her as tough and unwilling to accept the judge's refusal. This judge has met his match".[68]

Commentators often speculate on the particular illegality that the widow's adversary is committing against her, usually focusing on a monetary issue. Most propose that she is not being supported out of her late husband's estate,[69] while noting that her case

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[66] *Scott*, Hear Then, 182: „‚Vindicate,' *ekdikēson*, is used in Greek papyri to mean ‚settle a case', but in the LXX it means to avenge or punish, especially in issues dealing with purity of blood" (with reference, in n. 26, to *Schrenk*, *ekdikeō*, pp. 442-443). *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1179: „Lit. ‚vindicate me from my adversary'.... She seeks not the punishment of her opponent, but the settling of her rights". *Herzog*, Parables, p. 225, puts it somewhat differently: „her plea in the parable is not for vengeance against her adversary (*antidikos*) but for vindication".

[67] *Herzog*, Parables, p. 228. Cf. *Donahue*, Gospel, p. 182: „she is faced with poverty and starvation if her rights are not respected" (quoted by *Herzog*, Parables, p. 228). With respect to the widow's adversary, *Forbes*, God of Old, p. 203, makes an interesting observation: „The narrative ... is quite condensed, which leads the hearer to view the judge as the actual opponent of the woman".

[68] *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 336; for this reader, the widow is „feisty" and then some!

[69] *Hultgren*, Parables, pp. 254-255: „Most likely it would be a money matter. Possibly she has a lawsuit against one of the heirs of her husband's property, or perhaps she is being evicted from her home, as widows sometimes were (cf. 20:47). Though not technically an heir under Jewish law, she has the right of continued support from her husband's estate and the right to continue dwelling in his home as long as she remains a widow" (cf. p. 254, n. 7, where he refers to *Jeremias*, Parables, p. 153, and to *Bailey*, Peasant Eyes, p. 133). With respect to the inheritance law, *Hultgren* cites *Ben-Zion Schereschewsky*, Widow: In Jewish Law, EncJud 16:491. *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 180, notes that though this kind of support was „normal", „[m]any widows and their children were left destitute. So common was this state of affairs that ‚widow'

probably does not involve property issues.[70] Certainly the original hearers would have been thinking of various possibilities, but it seems best to accept the laconic nature of the parable and realize that in the end the specific offense is not central to the storyteller's imaging of the kingdom of God.[71]

The storyteller now returns to the judge by first showing his unwillingness to adjudicate the widow's case (v. 4a): καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν ἐπὶ χρόνον („For a long time the judge was unwilling"). „Since she is not his equal, he does not have to respond to her request, although if he should respond it would redound to his honor, for she would then become his client".[72] Given the shamelessness of the judge, however, the hearer is probably not surprised by his refusal,[73] which has lasted for some time, though an unknown amount of time (ἐπὶ χρόνον).[74] „Having been slighted by the judge, ... [the

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came to mean not simply a woman whose husband was dead but also one who had no means of financial support and thus needed special protection".

[70]Cf. the note above. With respect to a monetary issue, „a single judge could decide such a case. But the Mishnah (*Sanhedrin* 1:1) specifies that ‚cases concerning property [are decided] by three [judges]'" (*Herzog*, Parables, p. 223; his bracketed additions). For treatment of inheritance issues as they relate to a widow, see *Herzog*, pp. 223-224. On the Mishnah's concern for a woman who is not „within a household", *Herzog* (*ibid.*) refers the reader to *J. Neusner*, The Mishnah. Introduction and Reader, Chicago, IL, 1992, pp. 176-177.

[71]Cf. above, n. 51, on speculating that the judge may be moved by bribery, which is not explicit in the parable. *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 182, n. 27, puts it well: „the concern of the parable is not with the case but with the interaction between judge and widow". The durative sense of the verbs, both with respect to the widow's request and the judge's refusal, „creates a narrative loop, a vicious circle that eventually he will break by rendering judgment. What is not realized in the actual narrative is either any hint of a trial itself or what the issue for litigation might be. The narrative simply skips from request to vindication" (p. 183).

[72]*Scott*, Hear Then, p. 182.

[73]His unwillingness (οὐκ ἤθελεν), without further reasons, „fits the description of him already given", according to *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1179. *Jeremias*, Parables, 153, proposes the judge „would not venture" because of the adversary's standing in the community. *Fitzmyer* (*ibid.*) rightly notes that this „scarcely suits the character" of the judge. Marshall, *Luke*, 672, suggests that the judge was lazy. „Who knows?" is *Fitzmyer's* (*ibid.*) summation of whether there are any reasons beyond the judge's character; he could well indicate that these speculations are also „distracting" (cf. n. 53).

[74]*Green*, Luke, p. 640, n. 91: „ἐπὶ χρόνον designates an unspecified passage of time (BAGD 289)". *Forbes*, God of Old, p. 203, notes that with ἐπὶ χρόνον „the reader is prepared for some future development..., which is picked up in turn by μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα (v. 4b)".

widow's] role should have been that of the helpless, hopeless victim. ...however, this woman assumes unusual responsibility for her own well-being, adopts a self-presentation of shocking initiative, and thus continually returns to the magistrate in her quest for justice".[75]

Just a glimmer of hope may have been experienced by the hearers when it appears that the judge might reconsider (v. 4b): μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα εἶπεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ („but eventually he thought"). After all that has taken place, the judge talks to himself, beginning his internal monologue[76] with a confirmation of what the narrator had already told the hearer about him (v. 4c): εἰ καὶ τὸν θεὸν οὐ φοβοῦμαι οὐδὲ ἄνθρωπον ἐντρέπομαι („While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being"). Εἰ καί „indicates actual fact. The judge agrees with the narrator's description. There will be no turning (i.e., denouement) in this parable. The judge will remain dishonorable, shameless".[77]

Nevertheless, his initial unwillingness is giving way because of the pertinacity of the widow (v. 5a): διά γε τὸ παρέχειν μοι κόπον τὴν χήραν ταύτην („because this widow keeps bothering me").[78] However long (ἐπὶ χρόνον) the judge has refused to hear the widow's case is how long she has been coming and seeking a settlement. „How long ... is unclear — long enough, though, for the judge to begin to feel badgered".[79]

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[75] *Green*, Luke, p. 640; he compares her to the hemorrhaging woman (Lk 8,43-48).

[76] By means of such dialogues (see too, Lk 12,16-21.42-46; 15,11-32; 16,1-8; 20,9-19), the hearer/reader is privy to the character's motivation—here only a repetition of the narrator's introduction (v. 2)—while other characters in the story remain clueless, as the widow does here. See *P. Sellew*, Interior Monologue as a Narrative Device in the Parables of Luke, JBL 111 (1992) 239-253, esp, 247-248 (cited by *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 255, n. 9).

[77] *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 185.

[78] *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1179: „Lit. 'because this widow furnishes me with trouble'".

[79] *Green*, Luke, p. 640. „The NRSV [and NAB, quoted above] rendering of τὸ παρέχειν μοι κόπον as ‚bothering me' is weak, suggesting neither the duress the judge was under nor the level the widow's shocking behavior had reached in the judge's view". *L.T. Johnson*, The Gospel of Luke (SP, 3), Collegeville, MN, 1991, p. 270, proposes translating it „giving me such a beating" (cited by *Green*, Luke, p. 640, n. 92).

Moreover, the judge „realizes that the widow may keep on coming for an indefinite time".[80]

With the realization of the widow's persistence and its effect on him, the judge announces to himself that he will decide in the widow's favor (v. 5b): ἐκδικήσω αὐτήν („I shall deliver a just decision for her").[81] The original hearers may nearly exclaim, „Wonder of wonders!", because they must be relieved. From the opening of the parable, they could expect—if all things were right with the world—that „the judge ... [would] come to the widow's aid for three reasons: (1) The narrative structure demands it. (2) Widows are to receive special protection. (3) His honor as judge demands that he function as patron".[82] But the hearers' expectation of a judgment has been delayed, due to the judge's unrelenting unwillingness, rooted in his shameless character. The hearers realize that this judge's character and his refusal to protect the very kind of person who is protected by both God and the Torah reflects, not the ideal, but rather the too often and all too real application of Torah law.[83]

Although the hearers' expectation of a judgment will be met, the real situation rather than the ideal persists, because the widow's vindication will not be given for any honorable reason. The judge, whom the narrator showed to be shameless, remains so, and the judge himself confirms it thus. In addition, although the widow would normally have received automatic sympathy, the narrator presented her as less than widow-like, because of her persistent forwardness and her failure to give the judge due honor in her speech. And, the judge confirms it thus: She is bothersome and then some, and the

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[80] *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1179.

[81] *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 184, translates ἐκδικήσω αὐτήν as „I will vindicate her". He later notes: „The outcome of the judge's vindication of the widow may have been just (although the parable does not state that)..." (p. 187). It seems safe to say that the hearers would have assumed the justness of the widow's request, and thus also assume that a judgment in her favor was just. Nevertheless, at the very least this hearer/reader has to admit that nearly all other assumptions which any hearer might have had at the beginning of the parable have been upended by the narrator, so at this point the hearer/reader might also wonder about the presumed justness of her request.

[82] *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 185.

[83] *Herzog*, Parables, p. 227: „the conflict between the ideal Torah and its actual use is present wherever the system of Torah is present".

judge himself connects this with his decision to vindicate the widow. The hearers may wish that the judge had become more judge-like and that the widow had become more widow-like, but at least justice has been done. All is well that ends well—or is it?

As much as the hearers may be relieved at the outcome—this reader/hearer imagines a pregnant pause between our v. 5b and 5c—the storyteller completes the judge's internal monologue, which shows both that the judge remains as described from the parable's start and that the widow remains as she was shown from the narrator's introduction of her. The judge's heart is not changed, he renders a judgment for her ἵνα μὴ εἰς τέλος ἐρχομένη ὑπωπιάζῃ με („lest she finally come and strike me").

The use of the verb ὑπωπιάζω ... presents lexical and syntactical puzzles. It is related to the noun ὑπώπιον, meaning the „part of the face under the eyes"; the verb itself means „to strike someone on the face (under the eyes) in such a way that he gets a ‚black eye' and is disfigured as a result". It is possible that in this parable the judge fears that the woman will literally strike him in the face.[84]

As much as the widow has bothered the judge (τὸ παρέχειν μοι κόπον τὴν χήραν ταύτην), he does not decide the widow's case on that alone,[85] but rather on the basis of what the judge believes she is capable of doing, which is indicated by the purpose clause + negation + an „adverbial modifer": ἵνα + μή + εἰς τέλος.[86] Throughout the parable, the hearer is well aware of the judge's character, but the widow is not explicitly

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[84] *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 255, quoting *K. Weiss*, ὑπωπιάζω, TDNT 8:590. *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 185, notes that the verb „is derived from the language of boxing...". He refers (n. 38) to Marshall, *Luke*, p. 673, and to Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 223, for summaries of commentators' positions. See too, *Fitzmyer*, Luke X-XXIV, p. 1179.

[85] It seems to be an overstatement to say that „[t]he judge responds purely because of the woman's persistence" (*Hultgren*, Parables, p. 255). Truly the woman's pertinacity has bothered (τὸ παρέχειν μοι κόπον) the judge, but he himself says that there is another reason that motivates his decision by use of a final clause (ἐκδικήσω αὐτήν ἵνα μή...).

[86] *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 255, notes that „the adverbial modifier εἰς τέλος ... can mean ‚in the end, finally', a temporal meaning. If that is the sense here, the verse could refer to some future action that the woman is capable of doing (rather than simply the conclusion of what she has been doing)" (quoting BAGD 812 [εἰς τέλος, 1, γ]). In the end, however, Hultgren does not accept this temporal meaning (see the excursus at the note below).

clued-in, and her persistence may indicate that she is unaware of the judge's essential shamelessness. It can also be noted that until the judge's own interior monologue, the hearer does not know how the judge perceives himself. With the interior monologue, the hearer now knows that the judge knows who and what he is (one who neither fears God nor respects anyone else) and that he is not sorry for it, that is, that he is not changing his doubly flawed character. But also, the judge's interior monologue gives the hearer a snippet of the judge's thoughts on the widow: she is a bother to him, but even more, he will rule, „lest, in the end, coming she punches me in the eye!" The judge seems to answer a question he posed to himself: If this widow is willing to overstep the bounds of what is socially acceptable to the degree that she already has, *how far will she go*? The judge sees that her pertinacity shows no sign of diminishing; it may result in physical harm.

By way of an excursus a few interpretative options need attention for the purposes of substantiating the approach taken here. Some object both to the temporal understanding of εἰς τέλος and to taking ὑπωπιάζω in a physical sense. First, rather than understanding it temporally, εἰς τέλος with the present participle, ἐρχομένη, and the present subjunctive ὑπωπιάζῃ, „can mean ‚completely, fully, absolutely,' [in] the sense of the completion of a thought or action".[87] In this sense, εἰς τέλος refers to „...a continuing action of the woman (rather than some future, separate action). The verb can thus be translated ‚to annoy greatly, to wear out'.... A very literal translation might be: ‚in order that she may not gradually wear me out completely by her continued coming'".[88] But, „in the end" (pun intended), this seems to be a distinction without much of a difference. Whether εἰς τέλος is translated „in the end" or „completely, fully, absolutely" the judge's interior monologue is affirming that his decision is not motivated simply by the bother that she has already been, but that she will continue in her doggedness, which the judge himself says may result in ἐρχομένη ὑπωπιάζῃ με. That is, the judge worries about what this widow is yet capable of. Regardless whether one takes εἰς τέλος temporally or in terms of completion, the decision is made „due to a possibility in the future".[89]

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[87] *Hultgren*, Parables, pp. 255-256; citing, in n. 13, „BAGD 228-29 (εἰς τέλος, 3); favored by BDF 112 (207, 3)".

[88] *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 256; his quotation is cited, in n. 14: „LSJ 1,904; BAGD 848".

[89] *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 338.

Perhaps it can be proposed that the use of the indeterminate temporal clause, ἐπὶ χρόνον, in v. 4a tips the scales toward a temporal meaning here.

Second, how are we to understand ὑπωπιάζω? „The language ... is startling, perhaps even humorous, borrowed as it is from the boxing ring, for it invokes images of the almighty, fearless, macho judge cornered and slugged by the least powerful in society. Thus Jesus accents the astonishingly uncharacteristic initiative and persistence of an allegedly impotent woman in the face of injustice".[90] „We are meant, I think, to laugh".[91]

The hearer might wonder whether the widow really would punch out the judge. Even though a widow crying out for vindication might be tolerated at the gate where the judge holds court, a turn to violence would not be taken in stride.[92] It is not surprising, then, that commentators, and perhaps even some of the original hearers, would understand this in a metaphorical way; the judge is concerned that „‚She will blacken my face!', [which] is a well-known expression throughout the Orient".[93] But to understand that the judge is concerned that the widow „will

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[90] *Green*, Luke, p. 641.

[91] Johnson, *Luke*, p. 173.

[92] *Bailey*, Peasant, pp. 134-135.

[93] *Derrett*, Law, p. 190. How? „Now the widow could blacken the judge's face by spreading rumors about him, namely that he *could* not hear her case as he was obliged to her adversary" (*ibid.*). *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 339, correctly questions this: „Putting to one side the very questionable method of translating good Greek backwards into Aramaic and then criticizing the poor fit as the fault of the Greek text, the more direct problem with Derrett's proposal is that it does not fit what the judge says he fears". *Nolland*, Luke 9:21–18:34, p. 868, is rightly cautious: „A weakened sense for ὑπωπιάζῃ of ‚annoy/exhaust/wear out' is also regularly proposed. The difficulty here is that such a sense is difficult to document. It is not an unbelievable development.... To be struck is wounding in pride as well as to body. So it is not surprising that the root developed a use in the direction of ‚shame/dishonor/defamation' (...it is uncertain whether one should go further and accept Derrett's account ... of the underlying Semitic idiom...)".

Hultgren believes that understanding ὑπωπιάζω „in a metaphorical way" is more likely than to take it in a literal way so as to refer to physical damage (p. 255); he refers to the use of the verb in 1 Cor 9,27: „there too it is used in a metaphorical sense, meaning to ‚punish' (NRSV) or ‚discipline' one's body". — First, one can question whether 1 Cor 9,27 is an analogous case. Second, *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 340, points out that some scholars propose „circumlocutions" in Lk 18,5, but „translate the verb literally in 1 Cor 9.27 ... due to its

make him look bad in public"[94] ignores both the narrator's description of the judge as well as the judge having just affirmed that description. Therefore, „the action he proposes on behalf of this widow is not motivated by his commitment to God's priorities nor by his concern for his standing in the community nor by any residual altruism on his part".[95] It seems best, then, not to „dilute the irony the literal meaning ‚blacken the eye' conveys, which is part of the intentional twist of the story".[96]

From the beginning the hearers know that the judge lacked the character of a judge, but the widow is privy neither to the narrator's opening line nor to the judge's internal monologue. So the widow, acting beyond what is expected of a widow, keeps on coming and demanding that the judge rule in her favor against her adversary. If she is willing to overstep the bounds of what is socially acceptable as far as she has, then just how far will she go? Neither the judge nor the hearer knows; the judge, however, decides: *she will not give up*. Again, the widow does not know, but the hearer knows from the judge's soliloquy that his shameless character is unchanged. Moreover, although the judge has been bothered, he does not put it past this pertinacious woman to keep coming, and „in the end", punch him out! The judge does not fear God; the judge does not fear a metaphorical black eye. Nevertheless, he will vindicate the widow in order (ἵνα) to avoid the possibility of being punched out by a woman—at the very least

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[perceived] inappropriateness when used to describe the possible actions of a widow who is [supposed to be] meek and humble".

[94] *Hultgren*, Parables, p. 255.

[95] *Green*, Luke, pp. 640-641. In n. 93, *Green* refers to *Derrett*, Law, pp. 189-191 (and commentators who follow Derrett), who interprets ὑπωπιάζω to mean „to slander", so that the judge is protecting his reputation from the widow's slander. *Green* provides a correctly negative assessment: „The explicit denial of the judge's concern for public opinion in vv 2 and 4 speaks against this view, however". Moreover, on the understanding of ἄνθρωπον μὴ ἐντρεπόμενος for being one who cannot be shamed, cf. above, nn. 48-49.

[96] *Reid*, Mixed Message, pp. 289; quoted in agreement by *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 340. But *Cotter* (pp. 340-341) rightly critique's *Reid's* decision (esp. p. 295) that the judge does not really believe that the widow might do him physical harm, but simply wants to end the pestering. Like Reid, *et al.*, *Forbes*, God of Old, p. 203, believes that „it is unlikely that the judge feared actual physical assault". *Forbes* does not, however, accept „*annoy*, for [the judge] was already annoyed", or a loss of standing or prestige, because „[t]he judge cannot be afraid of losing a sense of shame that he does not have! ...the word may carry its literal meaning of *blacken the eye*, but be meant in a humorous or sarcastic sense".

the judge does seem to care about his manhood. Similar to Abimelech (Jdgs 9,50-56), who preferred his armor-bearer to dispatch him with a sword, „lest [μήποτε] they say of me that a woman killed me" (v. 54), the judge seems unwilling to sport a shiner given him by a woman! What a great shame it would be for a man—a judge at that—to be given a shiner by a woman! This is so much the case that this judge, who otherwise seems to have no sense of shame, does render the judgment that he ought to have given out of fear of God and respect for the widow and her (presumptively) legitimate claim.[97]

„Now, ... it is time for *parable*";[98] the kingdom of God has been imaged by this brief narrative. What is the hearer to do? How can this be an image for the kingdom of God? It seems to this hearer/reader—and I am hoping to the original hearers (and current readers) as well—that the first thing the narrator asks of the hearer is acceptance of the misdirection he uses. As an image for God's reigning activity, the parable's first phrase holds out to the hearer a likely metonym for God: a judge in a city. But the next phrase, a doubly negative assessment of the judge's character, shows that this judge is not up to that metaphoric task. The hearer, then, is left in a bit of a lurch: Who will come along to fill-in the loss of the judge as the metonym for God? The narrator then introduces a second character, but it is unlikely that the original hearers would have considered a widow a likely metonym for God, even though she certainly would have had God's concern and the hearer's sympathy. This is confirmed as the narrator presents her persistent forwardness and lack of legal etiquette. She has an adversary, so it does not seem too much a stretch to surmise that the hearers will hope that she will have an advocate (male, no doubt), who can be the character who most represents God in the parable. But the storyteller moves back to the judge, who in talking to himself

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[97] *Cotter*, Feisty Widow, p. 341: „this woman has upset [the judge's] tidy, selfish and vain world. For the same reason that explains his refusal to give justice—that is, a lack of regard for anyone but himself—he decides he had better give it now in case she finally loses her temper and gives him a black eye". *Fisher*, Parables, p, 119, writes: „The word he uses could be translated that he fears he will be beaten black and blue".

[98] *M. Farris*, A Tale of Two Taxations (Luke 18:10-14b). The Parable of the Pharisee and the Toll Collector, in *V.G. Shillington* (ed.), Jesus and His Parables. Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today (foreword by *S. Freyne*), Edinburgh, 1997, 23-33, p. 30 (see my use of this expression in A Pharisee, p. 114).

shows that his character is unchanged, but the widow will be vindicated, lest in her coming she finally punches the judge in the eye!

Justice is rendered, but the expected metonym for God has been deflected, because the judge, from beginning to end, fails to be a judge of God-like character. Justice is rendered, but the adversary, who remains in the background, has not relented. Justice is rendered, but no advocate on the widow's behalf emerges. Justice is rendered, and the only person who remains as a possible metonym for God is the widow. Neither she nor the judge lives up to the cultural expectations of the hearers[99]—but justice is rendered. The judge does not act because of the merits of her case; the hearer can only assume that her case has merit. The judge does not act because of any change of heart, but only because of the persistent, bold, strong action of the widow. Because she comes again and again, demanding vindication, she violates her place and the judge's space so intensely and incessantly that, according to the judge himself, he would not rule out her persistent coming to result finally in a punch in the face. So the judge acts because the widow acted and will continue to act if he does not. Similar to the woman who hides leaven (Lk 13,21//Mt 13,33) or the woman who searches for a lost coin (Lk 15,8-9), the storyteller, Jesus, leaves the hearer again with an active woman, and a widow to boot, as the „carrier of the kingdom".[100]

The original hearers are left with many questions. What was the precise matter of the widow's case? Why would the judge take on the case himself? Why was he so unwilling to hear her out? Would the widow really do the judge bodily harm? The original hearers, like many commentators after them, might well begin trying to fill in the blanks. The hearers—then and now—might feel a bit cheated, for the storyteller leaves them with a legal system in disarray and characters who violate the hearers' sense of order. If the reigning activity of God can only be at hand (ἤγγικεν; Mk 1,14) when Torah is being perfectly followed by characters who not only know their proper roles but follow them faithfully, then the kingdom can hardly be experienced now and remains but a hoped-for future experience. But if the hearer can accept Jesus' parable,

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[99]Cf. *Reid*, Mixed Message, pp. 292-293.

[100]The phrase is from *Maestri*, Widow, p. 30. See too, *Scott*, Hear Then, p. 187, and *Reid*, Mixed Message, pp. 292-293.

then the hearer can experience God's reigning presence now, whenever justice is rendered, even if for the wrong reason(s), and even if injustice continues.[101] God's reigning presence can be experienced whenever joy is encountered, despite reasons for weeping. God's reigning presence can be experienced whenever a job is well done, even if not for the right, socially acceptable, reasons.

If the kingdom of God is like a city where a judge, who neither fears God nor knows shame, but renders justice when faced with the socially inappropriate pertinacity of a widow, then, to quote Jesus, „Blessed are the poor!" (Lk 6,20b).

[101] *Fisher*, Parables, p. 120, puts it as follows: „Thus we glimpse God's Reign when we see one who is powerless persisting until she receives justice. The Reign of God is vindication of the oppressed. It is glimpsed when the oppressed get justice, even when they have to take it from an unwilling and an unjust judge. ... Can we rejoice at the vision of one who is without power securing for herself what is rightfully hers, or is this a threat?"