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J. Duncan M. Derrett

‘On That Night’: Luke 17:34

We welcome another contribution from the indefatigable pen of Professor Derrett, drawing attention to the background in Exodus of the eschatological discourse in Luke 17.

When verses are not understood, inappropriate sermons can be woven around them.¹ One may become resigned to one's ignorance. The strange and unique Lk. 17:34 is understood by the layperson perhaps to allude to death (as did the author of Gosp. Thom. 61), and/or the caprice (or unfairness?) of God. Does God exempt some, but not others, from the Judgment? When, as here, to recover the meaning we must refer to matter not explicitly stated by Luke, some will exclaim that an 'extratext'² is being called upon, carrying little conviction. Yet many a difficult passage has been illuminated by rabbinic literature and expertise in Aramaic. Some of that in fact helps with Lk. 17:34, in particular a citation which could share our saying's origin.³ It seems the inadequate translation, 'take', for παραλαμβάνειν, and corresponding inadequacies in other languages,⁴ have hindered research.

Lk. 17:34–35 differs from Mt. 24:40–41 so as to give rise to theories how Luke constructed this passage (was he inventing?).⁵ But first we

¹ As by E. Schweizer, *The Good News according to Luke* (London, 1984), 276–7.

² J.T. Carroll at CBQ 56 (1994), 369.

³ *Bab. Talm.*, R.H. 18a (R. Meir about AD 150) speaks of two ill in bed, and two before a judge. Only one gets better (cf. 2 Ki. 1:4) and only one is absolved. Why? One prayed more fervently than the other. Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I, 966 (on Mt. 24:40). The passage has been known since Schoettgenius (1733). It can have been adapted (poorly) from the source Luke shared. Κλίνη means 'bed (of sickness)' (Andocides 1.64), 'bier' (Plato, *Laws* 12,947B), even grave-niche. R. Meir inherited the first. But see n.37 below.

⁴ Tyndale, Cranmer and the Geneva (1557) versions had 'received . . . forsaken'. From the Rheims version (1582) onwards the current rendering is used save that Weymouth (1907) and the TEV (1966) have 'taken away', and NWT (1961) has 'taken along'. German fortunately has *mitgenommen*. Delling (*TWNT* IV,14) has *zu sich, mit sich nehmen*. Jörg Zink (1978) has 'werde ich zu mir nehmen.' Translators into Hebrew use *lqḥ* or, interestingly, 'sf ('gathering', cf. Jdg. 19:15,18).

⁵ S. Schulz, *Q. Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* (Zurich, 1972), 277–287, 444–6; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Exeter, 1978), 667–8. See also J.

should know what the words imply. Since it is part of the Central Section one wonders whether Evans' celebrated theory⁶ may throw some light on Luke's purposes, and there is the equally startling notion that Luke wrote chiasmatically.⁷ According to this strange idea Luke folded passages round an arbitrarily-chosen central point, so that the end reinforced the beginning, and so on. If we rediscover what our verse was about, we can, perhaps, check those theories.

Noah, Lot, and the Saved

Lk. 17:34–35 is about the sudden Coming of the Kingdom, but, unlike Lk. 21:5–36, it concentrates on it as a method whereby some people are irrevocably separated from others without any apparent warning. Such a separation is a genuine synoptic theme.⁸ That the angels will gather the 'elect' had been known since Mk. 13:27 (*q.v.*). The 'coming' of the Kingdom cannot be dated, and is in a sense already present. This generation will reject the Son of man; but the *classic patterns* of Noah and Lot (cf. Philo, *V. Mos.* II.53–6) will be relevant even in his days. People went about their normal business until Noah (and his pitifully small company: cf. Gn. 7:1) went into the Ark and all the remainder were destroyed. When Lot and his disappointingly small company (Gn. 19:14) left Sodom all who remained were destroyed. The 'saved' were literally, if miraculously (Gn. 19:16), 'caused to go out', therefore 'taken out', lest they be caught up (17:μήποτε συμπαραλημφθῆς) in the catastrophe. Lot's neighbours (even his sons-in-law) were abandoned. Noah and Lot did not escape on their own initiatives: Luke says flight is essential on the individual's part (17:31), he does not say whither, but some refuge is assumed.⁹ One must not chase after bogus saviours meanwhile (17:23). One must not imitate Lot's wife (Gn. 19:17,26 cf. Lk. 9:62). Even to think of returning to secure one's (worldly) life is futile.¹⁰ The old pattern is valid. The 'day' of the Son of man, a facet of the Kingdom, means (as it were) flight from the lure of Sodom and the insouciance of Noah's neighbours (of great

Zmijewski, *Die Eschatologiereden des Lukas-Evangeliums* (Bonn, 1972), 326–340; R. Geiger, *Die Lukarischen Endzeitsreden* (Bern & Frankfurt, 1976), 53–169; X. Léon-Dufour, 'Luc 17:33,' *RSR* 69 (1981), 101–112 at p. 109.

⁶ See n. 39 below.

⁷ See n. 40 below.

⁸ Cf. Mt. 13:30,41,49–50, 25:34,41; cf. Lk. 12:51–53.

⁹ Cf. Gn. 19:17 (the mountain). John's 'many mansions' seem to address the question. Gn. 19:19–22 shows that in spite of the angel's urgency God is prepared to wait while shelter is found.

¹⁰ Derrett, *New Resolutions of Old Conundrums* (Shipston-on-Stour, 1986), ch.4.

interest to pagans, descended from Noah)—a rational decision, unlike the hysterical atmosphere of Lk. 21:25–28, itself followed by the rational exhortation to *watch* (vv. 29–37). Apparently 'this generation shall not pass away before all comes to pass' (v.32)—the crisis is not comfortably remote. Our quandary follows upon the story of Lot. Luke partly agrees with Matthew, partly differs:

³⁴I tell you in that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁵There will be two women grinding at one mill; one will be taken and the other left.

'Bed' (as opposed to a mat) implies a well-to-do establishment (Am. 6:4). Pharaoh, Jacob/Israel, Solomon and even the daughter of Jairus—whose bed was so nearly a bier—all had beds. We remember those super-frogs which jumped up onto Pharaoh's bed (Ex. 7:28 (8:3)). The RSV says that two men are on one bed. The repeated word 'one' is masculine, but we observe that Luke omits the Matthaean passage which some manuscripts¹¹ insert (adapted) at v.36, 'Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.' The NJB has 'two', the REB 'two people', when what is wanted is two males to contrast with the two females.

'Taken' (as we shall see) implies 'taken up as company' (like a Romeo calling for a Juliette); 'left' means 'left to his/her fate'. The passage fits rather poorly with Noah, though older scholars thought it ought to fit;¹² and even less well with the Lot story. No doubt the creatures which went into the Ark were taken there by angels,¹³ and so saved; and Lot & Co. were physically abstracted from Sodom;¹⁴ but neither pattern prefigures separation from a bed-fellow, or a fellow-labourer. Yet all these pictures could consist with a 'ransom', since 'rescue' would be a plausible point of comparison between our verses and what went before. 2 Esd. 16:28, which used to be compared with our passage, is about the almost total destruction of the objects of God's wrath—and that is a different matter.

The Night

Whether or not Luke found v.34 in his copy of Q, or invented it, *night* sets the tone of the passage. Strobel saw this.¹⁵ The separation would

¹¹ For the apparatus see Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 26th edn., *ad loc.* Was Luke city-orientated and indifferent to 'fields', 'the country'? Note v. 31.

¹² J.A. Bengel, *Gnomon* (Edinburgh, 1857), I, 434 n.3 (on Mt. 24:40).

¹³ Tg. Pal., Gn. 6:20.

¹⁴ On Sodom see Derrett, *Law in the New Testament* (London, 1971), 87–89; id., *Making of Mark* (Shipston-on-Stour, 1985), 114,150,219,221,305.

¹⁵ A. Strobel, 'In dieser Nacht (Lk. 17:34),' *ZTK* 58 (1961), 16–29. Not approved by Marshall, *Luke*, 667–8 (work is inconsistent with *Passover night*).

take place at Passover, the great Night of Jewish mythology.¹⁶ Ernst, likewise, felt Passover was alluded to, 'extratext' or no 'extratext'.¹⁷ The Passion is bound in with Passover, and 17:2 fits. But the annual Feast does not separate two in a bed, etc. Moreover, if we accept Evans' theory, this part of the Central Section is not associated with Passover as indeed Lk. 22:8-13,15 is. We welcome allusions which are free from embarrassment.

Yet, is not ταύτη τῆ νυκτί 'on the night in question', linked with Passover? If we exclude Ru. 3:2, the phrase occurs in the LXX only twice, each instance referring to Passover Night (Ex. 12:8,12). Where do the bed and the mill come in? We remember that the Jewish day runs from sunset to sunset. Night sees people in bed (or on the mat); morning and evening hear grinding, typical female labour (see below). Commentators¹⁸ visualize a husband and wife in bed while their servants go out to the field and the girls start grinding. But what is meant is that the grinding was not finished even by sunset (the householder would know the workers were not idle).

The grounds are not stated why there should be discrimination between two similarly placed people. But the whole generation of the Flood and the generation of Sodom perished because they did not heed warnings. The Jews are clear that Sodom was well warned. The wickedness of the Men of Sodom was proverbial (Gn. 6:11-13; *Mishnah*, Sanh. X.3). They were devoid of charity and benevolence, especially towards *strangers*.¹⁹ No amount of warning (Gn. 19:7) had any effect, while if only ten had repented (Gn. 18:22) those cities would have been spared. All the preparations were made at night if Lot left Sodom in daylight (Gn. 19:2-4,15-16). Night is decisive.

Redemption/ransom from Egypt

Jesus does not claim that his achievement was analogous to the Redemption from Egypt; he was not constrained by existing images. The Church observed his success, and its limitations; and adopted from the Old Israel's experience a scenario placing Jesus' life within the cycle of Jewish history.²⁰ That the death of Jesus effected a

¹⁶ R. Le Déaut, *La nuit pascale* (Rome, 1963).

¹⁷ J. Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Regensburg, 1977), 491.

¹⁸ Marshall, where cited, 667. E. Schweizer, *Good News*, 275 (doubtfully).

¹⁹ See n.14 above.

²⁰ Jn. 14:15-21. L. Goppelt, *Typos* (Grand Rapids, 1982), 38,108 and see Index, 'Redemption'. On Exodus typology: G.W. Buchanan, *Typology and the Gospel* (Lanham MD, 1987), 9,34. For Jesus as Passover-lamb see J. Jeremias, *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu* (Göttingen, 1967), 211-223. On redemption-imagery see G.W. Buchanan, *New Testament Eschatology* (Lewiston NY, 1993), 37-8; on Exodus typology, *ibid.*, 106-111.

redemption analogous to that from Egypt was widely accepted (cf. 1 Cor. 5:7–8, 10:1–11; Heb. 3:7–4:11). The trek out of Egypt, across the Sea, and around the Desert, typified the soul saved from idolatry, offered bliss, yet tempted. The new 'contract' could be more effective than the old. That which was dramatized at Mt. Sinai was frustrated by Israel's sins, whereas the renewed covenant, though subject to the same risks of transgression, could improve on that fiasco.

The Old Israel were told *ad nauseam* how much they owed (2 Ch. 6:5, 7:22), in point of behaviour, to Yahweh for rescuing them. This remained true. His great act was to ransom them from Egypt,²¹ bringing them out (Ex. 7:3), taking them (*lqh*) (Ex. 6:7, 14:11; Dt. 4:20), without actually paying for them. Redeem/ransom (*pdh*) is the technical term, resulting in a great obligation on the part of the ransomed towards the redeemer, even though no price was paid. The metaphorical use of the term is notorious (Ps. 25:22; Je. 13:21, 31:11). When separation is decreed between the righteous and the wicked, and some go to bliss, and some to hell (Lk. 16:23), the criterion will be whether that debt had been recognized in practice.

The myth of the redemption from Egypt is assumed to be instructive. The exodus commenced at night (Ex. 12:29), though it was consummated by the following sunset.²² No one had moved till day (Ex. 12:22). The last of the ten plagues could be observed in daytime (Ex. 12:33). Every Egyptian household perceived the death of at least one member, from Pharaoh *on his seat* (throne) to the servant-woman (Is. 47:2) who ground at the mill (Ex. 11:5, cf. 29).²³ Ex 11:5 was seen by Grotius and Diodati to be relevant to us. The Hebrew text can be taken in two ways: the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his chair/throne, or the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits *with* him, as it were on a *bisellium*. The Targums however render the phrase 'the firstborn who (as heir) would have sat on Pharaoh's throne.' Familiar as the targumic version would have been to Luke's contemporaries, the second alternative reading of the Hebrew text cannot be ignored since the Vulgate follows it. The image emphasizes the harshness and subtlety of judgment.

Plausible allegorical implications can be found in the old tale by

²¹ Ne. 1:10; Hos. 7:13; Mi. 6:4; Zc. 10:8. See n. 30 below.

²² Ex. 12:51; Nu. 33:3; Pirque de P. Eliezer 48 (end).

²³ *Mishnah*, Ket. V.5; *Bab. Talm.*, Nidd. 60b; Plutarch, *mor.* 1101F. W.M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book* (London, 1886), 526–528 is most helpful. Likewise Abraham M. Rihbany, *The Syrian Christ* (London, 1919), 280–282.

Philo,²⁴ and therefore by others. One observes, as Grotius did, that whereas female slaves would have been at the bottom of the hierarchy in Egypt as elsewhere, Moses led even them out of Egypt—and we can conclude Christ has redeemed even them. Furthermore it is worthwhile to examine 2 Sa. 7:23, ‘What one nation . . . is like thy people . . . whom God went to redeem (*pdh*) to himself for a people . . . to do great things for you . . . before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee out of Egypt (cf. 1 Ch. 17:21), from the nations and their gods?’ See Je. 44:8–11. The experience is not expired but still continues (Ex. 13:8). Its details are relevant.

The Egyptians refused (for the most part) to listen to Moses and Aaron, or to understand the previous nine warnings. Pharaoh had Moses and Aaron to converse with, whereas Jesus’ generation must use Moses and the prophets (Lk. 16:29–31), who indeed threaten the plagues of Egypt upon Israelites (Dt. 28:27–29,60), and claim that these and the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah have actually been employed by Yahweh on his own people in vain (Am. 4:10–11).

Both then, and now, the presumption must be that the judged have been warned sufficiently, but God alone knows who are the rebellious. Earthly assizes can be dilatory, but the Son of man’s coming will operate instantaneously like a natural disaster or catastrophically as the first exodus was—but one remembers the Exodus itself was about *salvation*.

Luke uses the word παραλαμβάνειν which it seems was present in the original of Mt. 24:40 (which could be echoed by ‘field’ at Lk. 17:31c). If the three illustrations are all original, παραλαμβάνειν is of the essence of the idea. Whether in classical, Septuagintal, or NT Greek the verb means to receive any thing personally except money, to ‘take’ a person in the sense of ‘escort’,²⁵ ‘take along with oneself’,²⁶ and ‘make up a company with’ for military, ceremonial, festive, or

²⁴ The firstborn of Egypt are lust, etc.: Philo, *Somn.*, II.266–7 (Loeb edn., Philo, V, 561–3). The paschal night suggests purification to Philo at Q.A. *Erod.* 1.17. He is clear that learners of piety and the wicked were judged on Passover night more clearly than on any other occasion: V. Mos. I.134 (Loeb edn., Philo, VI, 353).

²⁵ Ct. 8:2; La. 3:2. As family: Mt. 2:13,14,20,21; for employment: Nu. 22:41. See Mt. 4:8, 17:1, 20:17, 26:37; Mk. 4:26; Lk. 9:10; Acts 15:39, 21:24,26 and especially 16:33.

²⁶ To make a family (Mt. 1:20,24; cf. Jn. 14:3); ditto but negatively (Jn. 1:11); to take into deliberation (Arist., *E.N.* 1112b10); to take over for education (Plato, *Rep.* 460b, 541c).

sombre purposes.²⁷ The Aramaic equivalent is *dēvar* . . . 'immēyh 'take along with himself'.²⁸ We are to imagine God or an angel (Lk. 9:26) choosing one of a pair as company, while the other is abandoned. 'Draw me not away with the wicked,' says the psalmist (Ps. 28:3-4), understandably. What was night for v.34 is also night for v.35, and the mention of night is important since 'day' occurs so frequently here (vv. 27,29,30,31). For him/her who is to be redeemed it is no less τούτη τῇ νυκτί whatever hour it is. See Lk. 21:28, where 'redemption' is actually mentioned, and an allusion to the slavery in Egypt may be detected. The allusion is no longer tied to firstborn, or even sons.

Exodus Past and Future

God promised Abraham benefits subject to a long exile: 'Know . . . that thy seed shall be a *stranger* in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years' (Gn. 15:13). When the Israelites obeyed the call to leave Egypt they went *en masse* (by their 'hosts': Ex. 12:51) without time to let dough rise (Ex. 12:34). The suddenness of the Exodus is emphasized at Ex. 12:11, a scene mimed annually. The company eating Passover must have their staffs in their hands. To even think of returning to Egypt is wicked (Ex. 16:3; Nu. 20:3-5). For there is an ethical dimension to all this. The Israelites are told that because Yahweh redeemed them from Egypt he had a right to their obedience (Ps. 81: 10; Je 11:4), and especially they must treat *all* human beings with humanity.²⁹ They were slaves in Egypt, they were redeemed from 'the *house of slaves*'.³⁰ They had been *strangers* in Egypt, and therefore must be generous to people less fortunate than themselves.³¹ This principle, abundantly illustrated, is linked to the redemption from Egypt.

The image persists: the nations and their gods are spoken of at

²⁷ To recruit forces: Herod., *hist.* 1.76, 7.150; 2 Mac. 5:5; to adopt as commander (Jdg, 11:5); to take allies to battle (Thuc., *hist.* 1.111); to present to the king (Gn. 47:2); to give hospitality (Jn. 14:3,18); to enjoy love (Cl. 8:2); to invite to dinner (Plutarch, *mor.* 40B; Lyc. 20.2); to take possession of minds (Plato, *Ap.* 18B); to achieve a sombre purpose (Gn. 22:3, 31:23; Lk. 11:26; Mt. 27:27); to arrest (Acts 16:35D). Cf. Josephus, *ant.* 1.302, 17.9.

²⁸ 28 Gn. 22:3, 31:23; cf. 47:2. *Davar* is the equivalent of *laqah*. G. Schwarz, 'Und Jesus sprach' (Stuttgart, 1985), 348b suggests NSB, NSYB at Mt. 12:45, relying on Tgg. Gn. 2:21-22, 3:22. But Aram. NSB means 'to lift up, take, carry off,' (as in marriage)(Tg. Zc. 5:6).

²⁹ Dt. 5:14-15, 15:15, 16:12 For ethical laws see also Dt. 24:18. See below, pp. 44-5.

³⁰ Ex. 20:2; Dt. 5:6,14-15, 6:21, 7:8, 9:26, 13:5, 15:15, 21:8, 24:18; cf. 1 Ch. 17:21; Ne. 1:10; Je. 34:13; Mi. 6:4.

³¹ Ex. 22:21, 23:9; Lv. 19:34, 22:31-33; 25:35,40,42,55, 26:13.

2 Sa. 7:23 (above), and the psalmist asks to be redeemed from ill-treatment.³² Is. 35:10, 51:11 expects an ultimate redemption. Zc. 10:6–12 promises that redemption will be repeated on a larger scale. Lk. 9:31 tells that Jesus' Passion, death and Resurrection are an 'exodus'. He gives more marked attention to the Exodus theme than the other evangelists do,³³ though John knows the idea and develops it (Jn. 13:2–3,18). Jesus and Moses are placed in parallel at Jn. 6:31–32,49–51; Acts 3:22 (cf. Heb. 3:1 6. much is the ambience of Lk. 17:34–35. Our forefathers placed Ex. 11:5 in the margins of this passage and *vice versa*, not idly. One must assume *every* Israelite was redeemed. Jewish legend says a few rascals preferred to stay in Egypt, but at the Exodus virtually everyone was entitled to be ransomed. It does not follow that a future exodus will be so indiscriminating. Not even one hoof of the Israelites' beasts was *left behind* (Ex. 10:26), and the reason stated was that any one of them (being pure) might be needed for an offering to Yahweh. It is obvious that no beast could be abandoned on moral grounds, and the contrast with the Israelites themselves is implicit, not voiced. That distinction could come into its own in a future redemption. Meanwhile let us return to the Egyptian scene, acknowledging that neither Q nor Luke was anchored in it.

The Israelites were slaves. Some must have been useful to the nobility as Joseph was. Some occupied the lowest status, 'maid-servants behind the mill' (Ex. 11:5). Matthew's males went into the country, carrying tools, or trotting behind donkeys (cf. Ex. 1:14, 9:21; Wisd. 17:17). If one of a pair consisting of an Egyptian and an Israelite is 'called for' the work collapses. I see the two males on one bed as modelled on a nobleman and his slave-companion (more handy than the domestic pets people keep for much the same purposes), and the slave is taken. The women at the mill remind us of an Egyptian peasant woman and her Israelite slave. The latter is 'taken' and the mill stops. Luke himself asks us to use our imagination for comparable situations in the coming Exodus, when some will serve sin (Rom. 6.6).

Wherever the Israelites were³⁴ their original houses had kept Passover for them, and they were taken together to form an immense army (Ex. 12:17). Israelites were in Egyptian houses and *vice versa*,

³² Ps. 25:22, 26:11, 31:5, 34:22, 44:26, 49:15, 71:23, 130:8.

³³ Lk. 7:27 quotes Ex. 23:20; Acts 7:40 quotes Ex. 32:1,23. D. Daube, 'A reform in Acts and its models,' in R. Hamerton-Kelly and R. Scroggs, ed., *Jews, Greeks, and Christians. Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity. Essays in Honour of W.D. Davies* (Leiden, 1976), 150–163 at p. 151.

³⁴ *Mekilta de R. Ishmael*, Pisha 7.31–35, 83–95 (ed., trans. J.Z. Lauterbach (1961), 53–4, 57–8).

because when the firstborn were killed (before midnight) Egyptians (and their dependant peoples)³⁵ lost the firstborn wherever they happened to be.³⁶ If an Israelite slept in an Egyptian house the Israelite was saved (at least in that generation) even if there was no lamb's blood on the door-frame.³⁷ If we read Ex. 12:13,27 carefully we find that (as R. Simeon b. Yoḥay said) wherever an Egyptian and an Israelite were laid on the same bed only the Israelite was 'passed over'. Yahweh's son, Israel (Ex. 4:22–23), was saved because the nation was obedient on that night, and had faith. Who believed Moses could lead them through the Red Sea? 'When the Son of man does come will he find faith on the earth?' (Lk. 18:8). Will any pray for the coming redemption (Lk. 7:16) as the Israelites cried to Yahweh trusting they would be redeemed (Ex. 2:23, 3:7,9; Ps. 81:7), or as victims of the Men of Sodom (Gn. 18:20–21) did and so were avenged?

Indeed ransoming (ἀπολύτρωσις) is to be expected: Lk. 21:28 (cf. Rom. 3:24, 8:33, etc.), at which time some may hope to see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked (Mal. 3:17–18). That at that stage some would be ransomed and some left would be less shocking than it would be to us. It was normal for captives to be ransomed (*pidyôn š'ebūyîm*), a process less objectionable than the lucrative distinctions observed in Christian Europe until the 17th century (when the poor would be butchered and the gentry ransomed). It was and is a prime work of charity incumbent on the Jewish State and otherwise on Israelite congregations. Since the right to be ransomed and the duty to ransom were dependent on the identity of the captive—a woman should be ransomed before a man, and a wife should be ransomed by her husband unless he opts to divorce her timeously³⁸—the concept of 'taking' one and 'leaving' another was by no means strange. One just could not ransom everyone, nor, practically speaking, did it make good sense to do so. For example partners allowing themselves to be captured by pirates could not expect their partners to ransom them as a matter of course. They might split the amount with the pirates!

³⁵ Rabbinical interpretation of Ps. 78:51.

³⁶ Ps. 136:10. See n.34 above.

³⁷ Note also the fourth-century *Mekilta de R. Simeon b. Yoḥay* on Ex. 12:27 (ed. J.N. Epstein and E.Z. Melamed (Jerusalem, 1955), 27 lines 4–5). Morton Smith, *Tannaïtic Parallels to the Gospels* (JBLM 6: Philadelphia, 1951, 140).

³⁸ *Mishnah*, Hor. III.7, cf. Ket. IV.9; Sheq. II.5; Gitt. IV.6. *Bab. Talm.*, B.B. 8a; Hull. 7a; Ket. 51b. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Zera'im*: *Hilkôt matnôt 'aniyîm* VIII.10 couples ransom of captives with Lv. 19:6,18,25:35–36; Dt. 15:7–8; Pr. 24:11 (add Ps. 62:4; Is. 58:6). A postbiblical obligation. G.F. Moore, *Judaism* (Cambridge MA, 1958), II, 176.

The wife of Lot, even though advised by an angel, hankered after the things of Sodom (had she gossips there?), for there are no limits to perversity, while Lk. 11:27–28 teaches that the status of the proud mother is nothing compared with one who hears the Word and obeys it. The wisdom of Solomon is what is wanted, not the ethics of the world. Lk. 18:7 shows that God will avenge the ‘elect’, who are picked out of the mass. The person in the bed and the woman at the mill can be understood to have faith, though God alone is aware of it. They have put their special opportunities to good use (Ex. 19:5; Mal. 3:17).

Abstract

Salvation, *present* for Matthew (24:40b,41b), is *future* for Luke, who may have discarded the image of the two men in the field, and substituted the two in the bed. As at the Redemption from Egypt almost all Israelites were made into companies by Yahweh and led (with a strong arm) out of Egypt, whereas their Egyptian comrades were left behind, so the critical moment on the path to the Promised Land, coinciding with the coming of the Son of man, will find people of apparently like circumstances divided into the saved and the damned. There is no more time for probation and amelioration than there was at the first Exodus, for all necessary warnings have been issued to him/her who, willy nilly, consorts with the ‘world’ (Lk. 12:30). The Redemption from Egypt not only created a special obligation of obedience towards God and love towards the ‘neighbour’, but also excluded the idea, encouraged by appearances, that those who share the life of this world will share in the next. Luke’s ‘on that night’ ensures that we refer to the Exodus, which is a suggestive way of describing Jesus’ activity as leader (Ps. 78:52). Nevertheless mere membership of a group will not avail (cf. Mt. 23:9–10,27–29), since redemption is an individual affair. Slaves of sin, lacking faith in the redeemer, will not be ransomed at the final Exodus.