



For You Today a Savior: The Lukan Infancy Narrative

JAMES L. BOYCE

[The birth narratives] function like an overture to the Gospel, sounding the crucial themes in visions, oracles, and songs, alerting the reader to watch and listen for what is coming.¹

“**A**nd it came to pass in those days...” (Luke 2:1 KJV). Other than those of Ps 23 perhaps no biblical words are as familiar to Christian imagination and piety as these opening words of Luke’s narrative of the birth of Jesus Messiah. Familiar as the narrative may be, it is still important to place it in its context in order to catch something of its importance for the whole sweep of Luke’s gospel narrative. A simple outline of Luke’s Gospel along with some phrases drawn from key sections of the narrative serve to focus the overall structure of the Gospel and highlight some important themes related to its movement.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Preface: Statement of Purpose: 1:1–4 | <i>That you may know the truth... 1:4</i> |
| 2. Birth and Infancy Narrative: 1:5–2:52 | <i>Today a Savior born for you... 2:11</i> |
| 3. Preparation for Ministry: 3:1–4:13
John/Baptism/Genealogy/Temptation | <i>All flesh shall see God’s Salvation... 3:6</i> |
| 4. Ministry in Galilee: 4:14–9:50 | <i>Anointed to bring good news... 4:18</i> |
| 5. Journey to Jerusalem—“Lukan Travel
Narrative”: 9:51–19:44 | <i>His face set for Jerusalem... 9:51</i> |

¹David L. Tiede, *Luke* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988) 39.

Luke’s story of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus presents a compelling narrative that shapes a Christmas message of the promises of God for today and has power to awaken faith and transform hearers into witnesses of the gospel.

6. Ministry in Jerusalem before the Passion: *The kingdom of God is near... 21:31*
19:45–21:38
7. Passion and Resurrection Narrative: *Forgiveness for all nations... 24:47*
22:1–24:53

Consistent with Luke's promise in the prologue, aspects of his distinctive perspective and narrative skills shape the entire Gospel.² Yet, of the sections outlined above, it is section 5, commonly identified as Luke's "travel narrative," and section 2, Luke's narrative of the annunciation and births of John the Baptist and Jesus, that are essentially unique to Luke's narrative in both structure and content. As countless hearers testify—fascinated, delighted, and warmed by Luke's Christmas gospel—the infancy narrative draws readers into Luke's story of Jesus and engages them with themes of the surprising mercy and promises of God that will be rehearsed again and again as the story unfolds.

A COMPELLING NARRATIVE

After a prologue that is "perhaps the most elegant sentence in the Greek New Testament,"³ the author launches directly into one of the longest and most beautiful narratives in the New Testament. In contrast to the scholarly rhetoric of the prologue—and even somewhat troubling to readers convinced of Luke's Hellenistic and Gentile leanings—this narrative is profoundly steeped in and reminiscent of Jewish characters, customs, and scriptural traditions as it testifies to the sure, even necessary,⁴ working out of the will and plan of God through God's "favorable visitation" (ἐπισκέπτουμι, 1:68) in the birth of this savior.

In transparent allusion to the stories of Abraham and Sarah, the narrative focuses immediately on the figures of Zechariah and Elizabeth (1:5–25), two of the faithful ones of Israel, of whom the first thing and most important thing that we hear is that they are "righteous."⁵ Yet, when in the next breath we hear that they have no children and are getting on in years, our anticipation is set for the unfolding of what will be once again God's compassionate answer to prayer. The fulfillment comes in a series of surprising angel-delivered promises: "Elizabeth will bear

²For a concise treatment of Luke's gospel and its distinctive features, see Mark Alan Powell, *Fortress Introduction to the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998) 85–111, and especially fig. 16, p. 86.

³Tiede, *Luke*, 33.

⁴In 2:49 the boy Jesus speaks of the "necessity" of his being engaged in his Father's house. In 4:43 Luke has rewritten Mark to have Jesus refer specifically to the "necessity" of his "preaching the good news of God's kingdom." Luke uses the Greek δεῖ (it is necessary) eighteen times to describe the will and purpose of God in Jesus the Christ, including in 24:26 and 44, where at the conclusion of the Gospel it summarizes the necessary fulfillment of God's promises in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

⁵Their righteousness is described as their living blamelessly according to the commandments and the "righteous ordinances" of the Lord (Luke 1:6). The theme of "righteousness" or "justice" is a favorite of Luke, occurring at least five times in the infancy narrative (1:6 [twice], 17, 75; 2:25) as well as in other crucial and uniquely Lukan material in the Gospel. For example, it is at the heart of the contrasting presentations of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in 18:9–14, though the repeated use of the word there is often disguised in translations. In Luke's telling, the theme reappears in the centurion's pronouncement as the final statement about Jesus at his death: "Surely this man was righteous" (23:47).

you a son...you will name him John...you will have joy...many will rejoice...he will be great” (13–16). The setting and details of the announcement in the context of temple rituals, complete with angel visions, an expectant father whose silence confounds a suspense-filled audience, and a mother who remains in seclusion, reticent in spite of her joy, simply add to the reader’s engagement.

“the angel points to the cryptic yet explosive promise on which the whole of Luke’s Gospel will be seen to rest: ‘For nothing will be impossible with God’”

In an instant the narrative transports us through six months’ time from urban Jerusalem and the temple to a small town in Galilee, where we join the angel Gabriel to zoom in on a young virgin Mary (1:26–38). With significant irony, though far from the temple in Jerusalem and the seats of power, we learn almost as an afterthought that she is engaged to one Joseph “of the house of David.” In the midst of this maiden’s understandable fear, we hear the overwhelming yet tender announcement of another child, replete with promises whose content the language, let alone this potential mother, can hardly contain: “in your womb...Son of the Most High...throne of his ancestor David...everlasting reign...Son of God” (31–35). In response to Mary’s simple and thus so unnatural response to so fantastic an announcement—“How can this happen since I have no sexual relationship with a man?” (34)—the angel points to the “power of the Most High” in these events, to the sign of her elderly kinswoman Elizabeth already six months pregnant, and to the cryptic yet explosive promise on which the whole of Luke’s Gospel will be seen to rest: “For nothing will be impossible with God” (37). In the next breath the impossible begins to take on possibility; Mary, now as “servant of the Lord,” confirms the promise: “Let it happen to me according to your word” (38).

As the narrative puts it, the angel has no sooner departed, than Mary sets out “with haste” to visit Elizabeth (1:39–56). We readers are granted special privilege as we are invited to overlook the scene as these still secretly pregnant women meet and share their common joy at what they know to be the presence and blessing of God. In concert with their joy, even the infants in the womb leap in anticipation of promises that are yet to be fulfilled. Mary, meanwhile, cannot restrain her joy and launches into a hymn that rehearses themes of the salvation of God experienced both in her own person and also in the wider context of the whole nation of Israel. These infants are the signs of a God of mercy who remembers the poor and the downtrodden, whose promises have been sure to Abraham and his descendants forever (47–55).

For three months more these women remain together in silence. But now it is time. Though a pregnancy might be hidden, a birth cannot. The promised events, known to this point only to the parents and to us the readers, now become public (1:57–80). When it is time, the birth of John comes suddenly and in few words:

“The time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son” (1:57). Now her neighbors and relatives also hear, of course, not only of this surprising birth—exciting as that might be in itself—but also that the birth is a sign of the Lord’s mercy to her, and they rejoice along with her (1:58). If the birth announcement has been simple, much more interest is occasioned by the naming. The issue arouses an argument among the relatives, to be settled only by Zechariah’s affirmation of the promised name as John and accompanied by the miraculous return of his speech and the wonderment of the whole region. In anticipation of the narrative to come, all the people are set to asking, “What does this mean about the future of this child?”—a question which for Luke might well be rather, “What is God about in the birth of this child?” In direct answer, Zechariah is, in what will become familiar Lukan idiom, “filled with the Holy Spirit” and speaks a prophetic oracle of blessing whose words have captivated Christian worshipers through the centuries: “*Benedictus...*” (68–79). Its lines are filled with themes of God’s tender and merciful redemption in fulfillment of promises made to the ancestors about knowledge and salvation in the forgiveness of sins. One concluding sentence takes care of this child’s growing years, assuring us that the Spirit remained with him, but noting at the same time that he remained outside of the public attention until the time was ready and he “appeared publicly to Israel” (80).

“our imaginations and those of artists, storytellers, and Christmas pageants—complete with wide-eyed children in makeshift costumes—have been quickened by the details of the story”

Now, in contrast to the brief words regarding the birth of John, the narrative appropriately expends great skill and artistry when it turns to the narrative of the birth of Jesus (2:1–20). Appreciation for this narrative has so delighted the hearers of the Christmas gospel that almost no one ever reads the story of the birth of Jesus according to Matthew in the context of Christmas celebrations. Our imaginations and those of artists, storytellers, and Christmas pageants—complete with wide-eyed children in makeshift costumes—have been quickened by the details of the journey to Bethlehem, the impending birth, an inn with no vacancy, the shepherds with their sheep, the visiting angels chorusing in the heavens, Mary and Joseph, the baby Jesus lying in a feed bin, Mary pondering all these things in her heart, and shepherds who, seeing the infant, are transformed into an angelic chorus singing God’s praises and confirming that everything had turned out exactly as it had been told them (20).

As with John, on the eighth day it is time for the naming of the child. Significantly, now we are told that the child Jesus is brought to Jerusalem to the temple for presentation to the Lord (2:21–40). More important than the naming, this visit becomes the occasion for an important meeting—with Simeon, who is tellingly described as righteous. Simeon is looking for the consolation of Israel, is vested with

the Holy Spirit, and has been given a visionary promise of seeing the Messiah. Now, in continuing guidance of the Spirit, Simeon shows up at the temple at exactly the same time as Jesus and his parents (2:26–27). While holding the child in his arms, Simeon sings a song of praise that parallels the song of Zechariah with words that have inspired Christians with confidence in the surety of God’s promises: our eyes, too, have been granted to see the light of God’s salvation which has been prepared for all peoples, for Gentiles and for the people of Israel alike (2:29–32). The auspicious nature of this birth is further underscored by the appearance of a prophetess, Anna, who adds her words of praise to God for this child who will be the occasion of the “redemption” of Jerusalem (38). The parallel narratives of annunciation and birth finally draw to a close as Mary and Joseph have now “finished everything required by the law” and return to Nazareth where the child grows in strength and wisdom with the mark of God’s grace (χάρις) resting upon him (2:40).

Though this concluding benediction balances the one for John (cf. 1:80), as if to underscore the importance of the child Jesus in contrast to John, the narrative adds what might be described as an epilogue, the familiar account of Jesus’ boyhood journey to the temple with his parents. After turning up missing, he is found in the temple conversing with the teachers and remarking on the necessity of his being in his Father’s house (2:41–52). The episode concludes with a provocative note about his parents’ failure to understand, but an accompanying repeated reminder of Mary’s treasuring all these things in her heart (cf. 2:19) and of Jesus’ growth in wisdom and in divine and human favor (χάρις; cf. 2:40).

AN INTRICATE STRUCTURE

If the events of the story and their particular telling were not enough to excite and engage the imagination of hearers, the intricacy of structure and interwoven themes of Luke’s narrative further enhance and define its appeal. At its simplest level that structure may be seen in the sequential interweaving of the stories of annunciation and birth of John and Jesus:

- | | |
|--|--|
| A. Announcement of John’s Birth (1:5–25) | A’. Announcement of Jesus’ Birth (1:26–38) |
| B. Mary Visits Elizabeth (1:39–55) | |
| C. Birth of John (1:57–80) | C’. Birth of Jesus (2:1–52) |

This structure, “too remarkable to be casual,”⁶ is further enhanced by matching elements in each of the components, including such motifs as dating and characters, announcements by an angel, and questions and response. Although ostensibly parallel in form, the section recounting the birth of Jesus (C’) encompasses approximately as much space in the narrative as all the other sections combined, thereby testifying to its significance and accounting for its appeal.

⁶Tiede, *Luke*, 40.

ANGEL (1:14–17)

You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.¹⁶ He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.¹⁷ With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

MARY (1:46–55)

My soul magnifies the Lord,⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.

ZECHARIAH (1:68–79)

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.⁶⁹ He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David,⁷⁰ as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,⁷¹ that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.⁷² Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant,⁷³ the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us⁷⁴ that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear,⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.⁷⁸ By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

ANGEL (1:32–33)

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

ANGEL AND CHORUS (2:10–14)

Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!

SIMEON (2:29–32)

Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word;³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

Most important for the narrative and noticeable for the hearer is the fact that at the center of each of these segments stands a hymn or poetic refrain.⁷ Whether or not these “hymns” are fragments of early Christian worship tradition, it is clear from the structure that Luke has intricately worked them into the narrative framework as commentaries on one another and on the unfolding gospel story. The hymns explicate the significance of these births in terms of the Scriptures, revealing God’s purposes and plans for Israel in the careers of these children of promise.

In order to grasp more easily the crucial and central role of their themes in the narrative of Jesus’ birth, it is helpful to see these hymns excerpted from their context in the same pattern as the narrative segments noted above. The hymns not only contribute to the appeal of this opening section of the Gospel, they also reveal how this whole section anticipates themes to be worked out in multiple ways in the story of Jesus’ ministry, death, and resurrection to come. These themes signal confidence in the present and active power of the Spirit and in a savior God who is mercifully faithful to the promises made to ancestors. Now, in fulfillment of those promises, God is preparing salvation in the form of the forgiveness of sins for all people as a mark of God’s continuing favor.

Embedded in the narrative of Jesus’ birth, these themes uniquely link the celebration of Christmas to the rest of the story, which for Luke is above all the story of witness and mission. To hear these themes is to be invited to share Luke’s conviction that we cannot truly celebrate or understand the birth of Jesus without seeing the way in which its implications are played out in the rest of the Gospel—in its attention to the word and promise of God, the miracle of faith, the today of God’s promise in Jesus, the transforming power of the gospel, and the future of the call to witness. It remains to explore each of these themes briefly.

THE WORD AND PROMISE OF GOD

When the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will bear a child, Mary questions “How can this be?” (1:34). In Luke’s story, the angel responds not with detailed biology, but with an appeal to the power of God’s Spirit, to the sign of that power already at work in her kinswoman Elizabeth, and finally with a promissory rationale that could well serve as the thematic for the whole of Luke’s gospel: “For nothing will be impossible with God” (1:37). Unfortunately, this and most English translations mask an important word and a key theological point in this verse. A more literal translation would be, “Because every *word* from God will not be impossible,” or, stated positively, “Because every *word* from God is possible.” The key “word” here for Luke is ῥῆμα (word or thing); the key assertion in this its first use

⁷Tiede, *Luke*, 42. Many commentators have called attention to these structural details. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993). For an expanded treatment of the structural details and reference to other literature, see Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 47–158, especially 47–55.

in the Gospel⁸ is not that “things” are possible, but rather that God’s *word* is of such power and portent that nothing can prevent its fulfillment in the working out of God’s promises. Testimony to the surety of this promise and to its power comes in Mary’s immediate and only response: “May it come to pass for me in accordance with your *word*!” (1:38). Likewise, the shepherds, when they hear the announcement of Jesus’ birth, say to one another, “Let us go to Bethlehem and see this *word* which the Lord has made known to us” (2:15). Twice we are told that Mary kept all these *words* in her heart (2:19, 51). Later in the Gospel, we hear that it is at the *word* of Jesus that Simon Peter agrees to let down his nets on the other side of the boat and so becomes a disciple (5:5). Finally, it is the *words* of Jesus—who is described by the two disciples on the Emmaus road as “powerful in deed and *word*” (24:19)—that occasion the memory of the women at the tomb, words that have to do with Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection as part of the necessity of God’s promise (24:6–8).

THE MIRACLE OF FAITH

The response of Mary to this word of promise is linked to Luke’s major concern with the miracle of faith. If God’s word of promise is a key, then that promise seeks to call forth and shape a response of faith. Martin Luther notes that miracle of faith first in the response of Mary, and then also in all who believe the preaching of the good news of the incarnation.

One can never sufficiently ponder the announcement of the good news that here divine majesty stoops to enter a woman’s womb. Therefore St. Bernard says that three miracles are accomplished here: that God should become a human being; that a mother should remain a virgin; and that the human heart should be able to believe that all this is true. The last of these is not the least. What is proclaimed and promised here cannot be believed unless the Holy Spirit grants the heart such faith. It is fitting and necessary that the One by whose power a mother conceives should also bring about such faith in our hearts.⁹

For Luke, in a certain sense, to be “righteous” is to respond in faith to the surety of God’s promises. The issue of faith brackets the whole of Luke’s Gospel. Zechariah, at the beginning of the birth narratives, loses his ability to speak “because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their time” (1:20). A key motif of Luke’s resurrection narrative is that the disciples are at risk when they “persist in disbelieving the *words* of the women” who announce the resurrection (24:10). They are still

⁸This word occurs nineteen times in Luke, often unfortunately disguised at key places in the translations. The passages are 1:37, 38, 65; 2:15, 17, 19, 29, 50, 51; 3:2; 5:5; 7:1; 9:45 (twice); 18:34; 20:26; 22:61; 24:8, 11. Significantly, nine of these are in the birth narrative.

⁹Martin Luther, “Sermon on the Day of the Annunciation to Mary” (25 March 1525), in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 71 vols. to date (Weimar: Herman Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1883—) 17/1:150, my translation. Roland H. Bainton, paraphrasing Luther in *The Martin Luther Christmas Book* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1948) 23, gathers more of this reflection by Luther on the significance of Mary’s faith: “Had she not believed, she could not have conceived.”

“disbelieving and wondering,” albeit “because of joy” (24:41), in the presence of the risen Lord, until Jesus himself “opened their minds to understand the scriptures” so that they might become believing witnesses of the resurrection.

THE TODAY OF GOD’S PROMISES

At the heart of the Christmas gospel and of Luke’s entire narrative is the angel’s announcement to the shepherds of a good news of great joy that is for all the people. “To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (2:10–11). The particularity of God’s salvation promise is marked by reference to the “this day” (σήμερον) of the promise. This adverb is a favorite of Luke, occurring here for the first time, but then showing up again and again at key points in the narrative.¹⁰ When Jesus begins his ministry and reads in the synagogue, he concludes by saying “*Today* this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (4:21). The implication of Jesus’ ministry and mission for the here and now is clear in the response of his hearers, who are ready to do away with him on the spot. More telling is Luke’s unique story of Zacchaeus, situated pointedly in Jericho, the last stop before Jerusalem and Jesus’ eventual passion and death. There Jesus interrupts his journey to tell Zacchaeus, “Hurry and come down, because *today* it is necessary (δεῖ) that I stay at your house” (19:5). Without further word from Jesus, Zacchaeus stands boldly in confession and testifies to a reorientation of his whole life, and Jesus confirms the reality of this testimony: “*Today* salvation has happened to this house, because he too is a child of Abraham” (19:9). More clearly in the original Greek than in translation, the words here are almost a mirror image of the angel’s announcement to the shepherds in 2:11. In this man Jesus, salvation has indeed happened, not in the abstract. Properly heard, Luke says: “It is Christmas for Zacchaeus.” So it is Christmas for the thief on the cross who hears the same *today* of Jesus’ promise (23:43). The *today* of Jesus’ birth points to the significance of the Christmas gospel for the particular events of history. Just as there is for Luke’s infancy narrative no abstract pregnancy or birth, God’s promises never come in the abstract nor are they only about some future possibility. The cradle of Jesus bears and risks the promises of God. In the story of Jesus’ birth we hear the promise that in the word of God all things are possible, and in the hearing of the gospel these promises find their yes.

TRANSFORMING POWER

We have already noted the way in which the promise of God through the angel had power to transform Mary into a faithful and obedient servant of the gospel. So, too, Zacchaeus heard and experienced the extraordinary reach of that promise stretching from the birth narrative to Jerusalem, cross, and resurrection. In his story we see that the promise was full of transforming power enabling him to con-

¹⁰A total of eleven times: 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 12:28; 13:32, 33; 19:5, 9; 22:34, 61; 23:43.

fess the wrongs of his past, to experience Jesus as present guest, and to embody the promise and hope that tomorrow his life would be different in ways that impacted those around him. In the same way, Peter at the lakeside (5:1–11), Levi the tax collector (5:27–28), or a woman with ointment (7:36–50) will hear the call of Jesus to “follow me” and will find their lives transformed by the Christmas promise.

THE FUTURE OF WITNESS

The Christmas story is for Luke only the prelude to a beautiful gospel story and to a story of mission that engages the whole of Acts. The Christmas story cannot remain an end in itself. It presses forward to witness and mission. The shepherds in the Christmas story returned different than they were when they set out on their journey, “glorifying and praising God” for all they had heard (2:20). The shepherds, Elizabeth and Zechariah, Mary and Joseph—though chief characters of the Christmas story—do not appear again in Luke’s narrative, but their witness stands in the themes that continue to resonate throughout the Gospel. At the end of the Gospel Luke says that the message of repentance and forgiveness will be proclaimed in the name of this same Messiah announced to the shepherds, marked to suffer and then to rise on the third day (24:47). Jesus promises the disciples and us, “You will be my witnesses to all nations” (24:48). When we respond with Mary, “May it happen to us according to your word,” then *today* the Christmas story happens once again. ⊕

JAMES L. BOYCE is professor of New Testament and Greek at Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Most recent of his contributions to Word & World is his article on Mark’s Gospel, “Hearing the Good News: The Message of the Kingdom in Mark,” 26/1 (2006) 30–37.