existence of the Peace Now movement; the fact that Labour Zionism is not closed to the possibility of negotiating the future of the West Bank, and that so many Palestinian hopes focus on the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank even at the cost of co-existence with a Zionist state. A few of the paradoxes generated by Zionism could also push towards a change in the status-quo which could tend towards our eschatological reconciliation. The fact that Sephardim are caused to be increasingly disenchanted by Euro-centrism in Israel, and the Zionist ideological edifice is definitely Euro-centric, is one such paradox which could conceivably be used to effect a rapport in time between Sephardis and Palestinians, however unlikely this may seem at the moment. The very dependence of Israeli industry on cheap Palestinian labour, opposed as it is to the notion of Jewish self-sufficiency enshrined in Zionist ideology, while it can be made into a case for Israeli territorial expansionism, could suggest to those unhappy with exploitation the possibility of the integration of what is now Israel into the economy of the region in a non-exploitative fashion, and without territorial aggrandizement. I am not suggesting by any means that migrant Palestinian labour is a good thing. The exploitation of Palestinian labour is wicked, as is the exploitation of any other type of labour. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to see whether the rate of inflation in Israel and the constant drop in the standard of living can induce Palestinian and Israeli workers in the same work-place to make common cause in taking industrial action against their employer. That would be interesting, and would represent a giant stride towards the almost eschatological and apparently unlikely reconciliation we have been thinking about.

# The Emmaus Story: Necessity and Freedom

Timothy Radcliffe O P

The Emmaus story, Luke 24:13-35, is a bifocal narrative. It pivots on two moments of disclosure and the puzzle is how they relate. The first is on the road, when Jesus interprets the Scriptures: "'Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and so enter his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (v 26). The second is in Emmaus, when they recognise him in the breaking of bread, but Luke cleverly links it with the first by having the disciples immediately remember what happened on the road: "And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to



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us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures'" (v 31f). Finally, the two climaxes of the story are brought together in the last line of the pericope, when they report back to the disciples in Jerusalem: "Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread" (v 35). The first moment of insight is in the perception of the *necessity* of Christ's death; the second is in the repetition of the gesture of the Last Supper, Jesus' *free* appropriation of that death in the breaking of bread. The whole narrative is about coming to understanding, the passage from ignorance to knowledge, and what we are invited to understand is the coincidence in Jesus's death of necessity and freedom, of God's eternal plan and man's free response. Luke reconciles them in the form of the story. Let us first see how the narrative is structured around these twin foci.

The story has both a textual and a geographical pivot. The text turns around the phrase, "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter his glory?" just as the disciples themselves turn again at Emmaus having recognised him in the breaking of bread. And their return to Jerusalem is an act of repentance, of conversion. The word that Luke uses is etymologically close to the one used in Peter's sermon in Acts 3, "Repent therefore and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). To have left Jerusalem in the first place is to have failed, for it is the holy city, the place of enthronement and the city where every prophet must die. The gospel starts as it finishes, in the Temple. Almost half of the gospel, from 9:51 to 19:44, is the story of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, and it is the place where the disciples must wait to be given the Holy Spirit (24:49). Luke has eliminated all Mark's references to a resurrection appearance in Galilee. So the journey from Jerusalem is a sort of anti-pilgrimage. For Luke Christianity is The Way (eg Act 9:2), and to walk from Jerusalem is to walk in the wrong way. The Emmaus story at the end of the gospel echoes the story at the end of infancy narratives, in which the parents of Jesus have walked away from Jerusalem, leaving him behind in the Temple. This too is a story of departure and return, a futile journey made because they failed to understand the *necessity* for Jesus to be in Jerusalem: "Did you not know that I *must* be in my Father's house", Luke's first use of the theologically crucial word *dei*. Only, the parents turn because they discover the absence of Jesus, whereas in the Emmaus story the disciples turn because they have encountered his presence.

So the story tells of a turning again, a moment of conversion. But the text of the story turns on the discernment of a necessity. This can best be shown by means of a chart, which I have adapted from an analysis made by a french dominican sister, Soeur Jeanne d'Arc.[1]



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Aa The women go to the tomb and do not find the body. They announce this to the disciples.

Ba Peter goes to the tomb and sees the linen cloths. The Eleven dismiss the story.

Ca "That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

Da and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

Ea While they were talking and discussing together Jesus himself drew near and went with them.

Fa But their eyes were kept from recognising him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?"

Ga And they stood still, looking sad.

Ha Then one of them, named Cleophas, answered him, 'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?' And he said to them, 'What things?'

Ia And they said to him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.'

Ja And he said to them, 'O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

K Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?'

Jb And beginning with Moses and all the prophets

Ib he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Hb So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him saying, 'Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent'.

Gb So he went in to stay with them.

Fb When he was at table with them, he took bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him.

Eb And he vanished from their sight.

Db They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?'

Cb And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem.

Bb And they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!'

Ab Then they told what happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of bread.



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This analysis shows how the geographical pivot, the turning around in Emmaus, is in tension with the textual climax of the story. The halt in Emmaus balances a temporary pause on the road, as they stop in response to his question (Ga), just as the moment of disclosure in the breaking of bread (Fb) is no longer the centre of the text but answers their initial failure to recognise him. It also suggests that the function of the story is not just to bring the disciples back to Jerusalem but to surpass the failure of the eleven to accept the women's announcement of the good news of the empty tomb: "but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them". The Emmaus pericope concludes with the eleven apparently accepting the story of what happened on the road to Emmaus (Ab). The narrative brings one to sight, which is insight. It supports the textual tradition which includes v 12, the visit of Peter to the tomb and his puzzlement at finding only the linen cloths.[2] The principal reason for not accepting v 12 (Ba) is that it appears to contradict v 34 (Bb). We never read anywhere of the appearance to Simon that v 34 presumes. Yet perhaps the function of the whole story is precisely the passage to sight, Peter's and our own, achieved in the movement from failure of the disciples to recognise him (Fa) to the opening of their eyes (Fb).

As we move towards the centre of the text we find two counterbalancing ironic dialogues, which is appropriate in so far as irony, being mid-way between truth and falsity, is a step towards illumination. Cleophas berates Jesus in Ha for being the only person who does not know about what has happened to him, and this is balanced by the beautiful irony of the disciples inviting Jesus to stay with them, for indeed it will be through the breaking of bread that he will stay with his Church. Ia tells us the story of Jesus and of the women's visit to the tomb and of their encounter with the angels. This is the story which the disciples had dismissed as "an idle tale". The telling of this story does not of itself bring illumination: "but him they did not see", although of course he is standing before their eyes. Jesus' interpretation of his story does not add any new facts; we are not given any additional information about Jesus. All we need to do is to perceive that it was *necessary* that he die, by reading the prophets. But even Jesus' exposition of the necessity of his death does not trigger illumination. The necessity of his death is only perceived in the moment of his free gesture of breaking the bread. Yet this moment of disclosure propels one back to the structural centre of the text, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Db). This toing and froing between the structural and geographical pivots of the narrative move one



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from the absence of the body from the tomb to its absence from the table, from an absence that puzzles to an absence perceived as a presence.

It may help us to see what is happening in the Emmaus story if we reflect on the reasons for Luke's concern with the relationship between freedom and necessity, and it is important to see that it does not derive from any abstract philosophical interest in the possibility of free will, but in his desire to undergird the identity of his community. Acts tells us of how it was "in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called christians" (Acts 11: 26). And the new name suggests the problem, which was one of discontinuity, of difference. Whether Luke was writing for the Church of Antioch, or for some daughter church, it was a largely Gentile community that had become remote from the roots of Christianity in Judaism. The original heirs of God's promises through the prophets had rejected and killed the Messiah, and now they had excluded christians from the synagogues. LaVerdiere and Thompson write, "Luke confronted the historical distance between the Gentile churches of the eighties and their early Jewish origins. Awareness of temporal separation and *de facto* removal from socio-religious roots in Judaism, coupled with a need to confront ongoing history and assume a place in the Greco-Roman world, called for a clarification and a new affirmation of historical continuity".[3] Luke made sense of the discontinuity by writing a history, and a *necessary* history, that told the story of how it was that Jesus had to suffer these things and so enter his glory, and how the gospel came to be preached all over the world. The convert Gentile community for which Luke wrote really was the heir of the promises, since the scriptures themselves foretold that the good news would move beyond the boundaries of Judaism. The risen Jesus tells the disciples, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:45-47). So Luke, then, writes a history which articulates and explains the difference between the early Jewish community gathered around Jesus and his own. The implication of the first verse of his gospel is that he intends to write a *diēgēsis;* a word which, Fitzmyer suggests, etymologically "denotes a composition that 'leads through to an end'".[4] The gospel is a tale which enacts a journey, makes sense of a difference. In the third verse Luke promises an account which will be *kathexēs,* orderly. That is a word which only Luke uses in the New Testament, and it too has connotations of travel, as when he says of Paul that "after spending some time there he departed and went from place to place (*kathexēs*) through the region of Galatia and



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Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples" (Acts 18:23, cf Luke 8:1). And Luke-Acts travels in an orderly way from Jerusalem to Rome, from Judaism to the Gentile churches that Luke knew. Luke alone of all the evangelists has a strong sense of salvation being achieved through a variety of distinct, discrete moments; Christ's death, the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost. And Luke shows that this history is indeed necessary, foretold by the prophets, willed by God from the beginning, taking one step by step from Zechariah worshipping in the Temple to Paul preaching in Rome. And this concern of Luke's represents one axis of the Emmaus story: "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter his glory?" (Luke 24:26), the structural pivot of an orderly narrative.

The other pivot of the story, the turning at Emmaus, the moment of conversion precipitated by Jesus' gesture of breaking bread, represents another axis. For his church largely consists of Gentile converts, people whose lives started outside the history that he tells, and who have made free and individual decisions to belong to the community. The gospel of Luke is a gospel of forgiveness, of conversion, of making a break with one's old history and starting again. This can be seen in Luke's transformation of the pericope of the calling of the disciples. It has become the story of a conversion. Peter falls down at Jesus' knees and says "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (5:8). And they do not just leave their father, as in Mark; they leave *everything* to follow Jesus. Repentance and conversion is what may happen when ever an individual encounters the gospel and is forced to choose.

Luke-Acts is filled with the stories of such encounters, from Zechariah and Mary in the gospel, to Paul in Acts. So then, in counterpoint to the orderly progression of a history, marking out different and unrepeatable moments in the story of salvation, is the repetition of the "Today" of conversion and repentance. "Today" is one of Luke's favourite words. He uses it twenty times against Mark's once. Sometimes it is an unrepeatable "today", as when the angels announce to the shepherds that "to you is born today in the city of David a Saviour" (2:11). Normally it is the recurring "today" of conversion; at Nazareth, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (4:21); for Zacchaeus, "Today salvation has come to this house" (10:18); for the good thief on the cross, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (23:43). And this last, the admission of the thief to Paradise three days before the Resurrection, shows the difficulty that Luke has in relating a theology of conversion to one of salvation history. The problem is one of continuity and discontinuity, of repetition and difference, as Acts repeats and yet is different from the Gos-



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pel. The reader stands both at the end of the story as it moves from Galilee to Jerusalem and from Jerusalem to Rome, and yet the reader also finds himself in the story, in its invitations to conversion.

The Emmaus story itself reflects this pattern of repetition and difference. It occurs in that unrepeatable period between Resurrection and Ascension, while Christ was with his disciples to instruct them, and yet it is a story that is foreshadowed in the story of how Jesus' parents left him behind in the Temple and went home without him, and it is echoed in the story of Philip's baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch[5] (Acts 8:26-40). The eunuch, like the disciples, is going away from Jerusalem. Unlike them he will not have to go back. Instead of being puzzled by Jesus and having the mystery interpreted by reference to the prophets, it is the other way around. It is Isaiah whom he cannot understand, and whom Philip explains by telling about what happened to Jesus. And as the disciples invited Jesus to come into the house, so the eunuch invites Philip to sit in his chariot. This story culminates in baptism and Philip being snatched away, as the Emmaus story ends with the eucharist and Jesus vanishing from their sight.

So, for those Gentile converts who called themselves by a new name, christians, the problem was one of repetition and difference, of freedom and necessity. It was only a pre-ordained history that would explain the difference between their community and that of the beginning and yet this necessary history could not exclude the freedom that they had known in breaking with their own past histories and converting. The Emmaus story is the narratival reconciliation of these themes, but we can best see how it works by glancing at Luke's treatment of the problem in some of the missionary speeches in Acts.

In his Pentecost sermon Peter says: "This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (2:23f). Holtzmann comments' "Thus human freedom and divine necessity here go hand in hand, the oldest way of reconciling oneself to the paradoxical fate of the Messiah".[6] But in the next chapter Luke does offer us a middle term, ignorance, *agnoia.* It is through their ignorance that they came freely to play this part in the divine plan: "And now brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out. . . ." (3:17ff). These verses bring together the strands of the Emmaus story, the necessity of Christ's suffering and conversion, via "ignorance". *Agnoia* is overthrown by *metanoia.* Repentance is a com-



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ing to sight. The two terms are sharply juxtaposed in Paul's sermon to the Athenians, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all everywhere to repent" (17:30). It is ignorance, for Luke, that explains how the Israelites came freely to fulfill the prophets: "For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognise him nor understand the utterances of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning him" (13:27). And so when the crucified Jesus says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), he is being not merely merciful but expressing a Lukan understanding of history. When, in Acts, we have the repetition in difference of this event in the stoning of Stephen, he can only say "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60), for the time of the Church is the time of knowledge. In Acts, of course, the model convert is Paul himself. Three times we have the story of his conversion, and it is always quite literally a coming to sight: "Brother Saul, receive your sight" (Acts 22:12). Conversion is the passage from darkness to light.

So Luke's theology of history always preserves man's freedom. In ignorance we freely do what was foreordained. The decree of the Emperor takes Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, where the Christ is to be born; the stoning of Stephen leads to a scattering of the disciples, and the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles; the Roman administration takes Paul to Rome, so that the gospel may be preached to the ends of the earth. But the consummation of freedom is when *agnoia* is overthrown in *metanoia,* and one is free to choose one's destiny. The Emmaus story, then, is profoundly Lukan in reconciling necessity and freedom in its movement from blindness to sight. It is closer to the stories of Paul on the road to Damascus than is often suspected. And in fact, though we shall not explore this in depth, the stories of Paul's conversion, too, are bifocal. A man on a road from Jerusalem who meets Jesus and does not know him, "Who are you Lord?" (Acts 9:5); there is a moment of necessity – "It hurts you to kick against the goad" (Acts 26:14), a greek proverb suggesting the uselessness of struggling against necessity[7] – followed by a moment of conversion, a sacrament, and the return to Jerusalem to preach.

So far we have been trying to see how Luke relates necessity and freedom in Acts by attributing man's free fulfillment of God's plan in crucifying Jesus to ignorance, an *agnoia* that is overthrown in *metanoia*. But the Pauline stories suggest that there is another dimension in the relationship of freedom and necessity. Paul must accept his destiny, he is a man set apart to preach to the Gentiles. The Jewish leaders crucify Jesus, and Paul assists in the stoning of Stephen, and the disciples walk away from Jerusalem, free acts in



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which God's eternal plan is fulfilled through ignorance. But freedom and necessity must also coincide in Jesus' and Paul's free appropriation of their destiny in full knowledge. Ignorance is overthrown as Jesus walks with them and interprets the scriptures, but illumination only occurs in the repetition of the gesture of the Last Supper, "he was made known to them in the breaking of bread".

"And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me'" (Luke 22:19). This is very close to the tradition that Paul claims he received, and which he gives us in 1 Cor 11:23-25. Unlike Mark and Matthew, they both say that it is a body "for you" and include the instructions to "Do this in remembrance of me". So, it is sometimes argued, Luke and Paul are both quoting from the liturgy, probably as celebrated in the church of Antioch. And so, it is suggested, the words have no particular theological significance for Luke; he simply received them from the tradition. But this is to fail to see that the words are important for Luke precisely as words that are *repeated,* words that the community uses time and time again, recognised at Emmaus and re-enacted in the community. Here, at this unrepeatable moment in the foreordained drama of the Christ's life, one encounters the known and familiar words and gestures, so that at Emmaus they could recognise him in the breaking of bread. And so these words are theologically important in the first place just because they are liturgical, words to be repeated in a history that articulates difference. What is more puzzling, though, is quite what Luke means when he claims that the bread is a body *given for you,* since he himself never seems to attribute any soteriological significance to Christ's death. Luke constantly insists that it was *necessary* that "the Christ should suffer these things and enter his glory", but he does not appear to give us any reason as to why it was necessary, other than that God willed it and the prophets foretold it. He omits the Markan claim that the Son of man came "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). The disciples on the road to Emmaus are blind because they do not see that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and die; most Lukan scholars are still waiting to have their own eyes opened! And when we turn to the saying over the cup, the necessity is more stressed than in any other evangelist. Luke alone combines these words with the saying about his betrayal: "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But behold the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of man goes as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed" (Luke 22:20-22). This is surely the moment in which, for Luke, necessity and freedom ultimately coincide. The cup is handed over, poured



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out for them, a free act. And yet "The Son of man goes as it has been determined". This is the gesture in which he hands himself over, and the moment in which he is handed over himself. The hand of the betrayer is on the table. Even the betrayer is just playing his foreordained role, and yet woe to him! The Last Supper is the moment at which the twin foci of the story of the walk to Emmaus coalesce, and so the moment which that story repeats. It is the moment at which the Christ takes upon himself God's will, so that necessity is transfigured into destiny. Perhaps the direction in which Luke points can best be expressed by a quotation from Cornelius Ernst:

> What we have above all to understand, in Jesus in the first place and then in ourselves, is that God's destiny for man involves a passage, an ascent, an entry into the depths of God's purpose and so its fulfilment. Human freedom is only properly appreciated in the dimension of destiny in which it is truly exercised. In the course of our daily lives choices arise for our freedom; but the fundamental sense of these choices can only be assessed when they are evaluated in terms of our ultimate destiny. Indeed, the crucial choices are those in which our destiny makes some new sense precisely in virtue of the choice. For destiny is not a fate imposed upon us by some alien and inscrutable power. Destiny is the summons and invitation of the God of love, that we should respond to him in loving and creative consent.[8]

The thrice-told story of Paul's conversion, which dominates Acts, shows what it means to consent to destiny. Ananias says to him, "The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Just One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:14-16). The word for "appointed" – *proecheirisatose* – comes from a word which means "ready at hand". The convert, like the Christ, is at hand, ready to be handed over.

But this still leaves unanswered the question as to why it is a *death* that is necessary, and in what sense Luke understood that death to be saving. Why is it that freedom and destiny should coincide in the breaking of bread, the free appropriation of a death on the cross? I would tentatively suggest that the answer may lie in Luke's theology of Jesus as the innocent man, the man who does not deserve to die. Luke has rewritten Mark's passion narrative so that three times Pilate declares that Jesus has done nothing deserving of death (23:15, 20, 22). Even Herod finds Jesus to be innocent. The repentant thief on the cross declares that, "This man has



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done nothing wrong" (23:41), and when Jesus dies the centurion cries out not "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39), but "Certainly this man was innocent" (23:47). That Luke thought of this death of the innocent man as more than a miscarriage of justice is suggested by Peter's Pentecost sermon: "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it" (Acts 2:23f). Jesus rises from the dead both because God raises him, and because death could not hold him. Is Luke suggesting that the truly innocent man is the man who had no *necessity* to die? He had done nothing deserving of death, and so death had no hold of him. Luke stresses his innocence, since he is the only one who is therefore under no necessity of dying. To free us from death it is necessary that the innocent one die, and die freely. In that sense, then, for Luke, it is a death for us, the death of a free man, recognised in the breaking of bread.

1 "Un grand jeu d'inclusions dans 'les pèlerins d'Emmaüs'," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, Vol 99/1, pp 62 - 76.
2 For a discussion of the textual evidence, see I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, Exeter, 1978, p 888.
3 Eugene A. LaVerdiere, S.S.S., William G. Thompson, "New Testament Communities in Transition: a Study of Matthew and Luke", *Theological Studies*, Vol 37/4, 1977, p 583.
4 Joseph A Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I - IX*, New York, 1982, p 292.
5 cf. J. A. Grassi, "Emmaus Revisited", in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol 26/4, 1964, pp 463 - 467.
6 H. J. Holtzmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte. Hand-Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, Vol 1, part 2, 3rd edition, Tübingen/Leipzig 1901, p 35, quoted by E. Haenchen, in *The Acts of the Apostles*, Oxford, 1971, p 180.
7 For a discussion of this proverb, cf I. H. Marshall, *Acts*, Leicester, 1981, p 395.
8 Cornelius Ernst O.P. *The Theology of Grace*, Dublin and Cork, 1974, p 81.



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