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On the Cover: This is the first of four *Forum* covers interpreting common folklore symbols that depict the female life-cycle. The symbol for procreation on the cover of this issue corresponds to one type of story collected in *Ancient Quotes & Anecdotes* under the heading "Birth and Childhood" (Vernon K. Robbins, editor).

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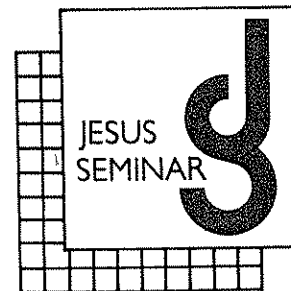
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The Crucifixion and the Speech of Jesus

Vernon K. Robbins

O. Introduction

This paper assesses the possible authenticity of the speech of Jesus in the five earliest extant Greek versions of Pilate's Question and the Crucifixion.¹ Comparison of these early versions reveals that the primary issue is the relation of the speech to the narration. The second issue is the relation of the speech to Old Testament scripture, and the third is internal argumentation in specific passion accounts. There is agreement in the accounts on certain actions, the presence of certain people around certain events, and a use of words from Psalm 22 (LXX: Psalm 21). There is an absence of agreement on the speech of anyone throughout all five versions. All the canonical versions, however, feature Pilate asking Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" and Jesus answering, "You say [so]."

The agreement among all five versions is as follows:

ὁ π[ε]ιλᾶτος	Pilate
παρέδωκεν	he handed over
σταυρός	cross
δι[μερι]pl.] . . . [βαλ]	they divid[ed] . . . cast[ing lots]
[γρα]: ὁ βασιλεὺς τ[gen.] I[α]	writ[ten]: the king of the J[e]w[s]/I[sr]a[el]
δύο . . . αὐτ[] . . . σταυρ[3 pl. act.]	two . . . [with] hi[m] . . . they cruci[fi]ed
ὄζο[]s	vinegar. ²

- 1 Matt 27:11–54; Mark 15:2–39; Luke 23:2–47; John 18:33–19:30; GPet 1:1–5:20. The analysis in this paper does not include the version in the Acts of Pilate, which is a later expansive account.
- 2 This "common" text presents the Greek words and letters (fragments of words) that exist in all five accounts. In other words, if all variations (or disagreements) among the versions are taken away, these words and fragments of words remain.

All accounts name Pilate as a person involved in the events that led to Jesus' crucifixion. Also, they say that someone delivered (παρέδωκεν) Jesus to people who crucified him. The canonical gospels say this person was Pilate, whereas the Gospel of Peter considers the person to be Herod.³ All the accounts say that at some point someone dressed Jesus in special attire⁴ and that at some point one or more individuals whipped⁵ or beat him.⁶ All the accounts use the noun σταυρός ("cross") and the verb σταυροῦν ("to crucify"), rather than the noun σκόλοψ ("pole") and the verb (ἀνα)σκολοπιζειν ("to stake up"), to describe the pole and the act of crucifixion.⁷ All the accounts use language from Psalm 22 to say that people divided Jesus' garments by casting lots.⁸ All the accounts agree that Jesus was crucified between two other people.⁹ Also, they agree that people offered vinegar (ὄξος) to Jesus while he was on the cross.¹⁰

1. The Relation of Speech to Narration

The agreements among the five accounts remind us that action is primary to speech.¹¹ There are three constituents in the tradition where more than one word persists through all the performances, and each constituent depicts action or the result of action—the dividing of Jesus' garments by casting lots, an inscription on Jesus' cross that includes the words "the King of the Jews/Israel," and being crucified with two other people:

δι[μ]ερι[pl.] . . . [βαλ]
 they divid[ed] . . . cast[ing lots]
 [γρα]: ὁ βασιλεὺς τ[gen.] I[α]
 writ[ten]: the king of the][e]w[s]/I[sr]a[e]l
 δύο . . . ἀντ[] . . . σταυρ[3 pl. act.]
 two . . . [with] hi[m] . . . they crucif[ified]

If an interpreter approaches this data with an angle of vision influenced by the rhetorical manuals entitled *Progymnasmata*,¹² this data shows

3 Cf. Matt 27:26; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:25; John 19:16; GPet 2:5b.

4 Matt 27:28; Mark 15:17; Luke 23:11; John 19:2; GPet 3:7.

5 Matt 27:26; Mark 15:15; John 19:1; GPet 3:9.

6 Luke 22:63; John 18:23.

7 See Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 24–27 for the variation in terminology in Greek texts.

8 Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:24; John 19:24; GPet 4:12.

9 Matt 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:33; John 19:18; GPet 4:10.

10 Matt 27:48; Mark 15:36; Luke 23:36; John 19:29; GPet 5:16.

11 See Robbins, "Pragmatic Relations," 35–63.

12 See Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*; Butts, "The 'Progymnasmata' of Theon."

very special dynamics at the base of the tradition. The overall story is supported by narrative (διήγημα or διήγησις), which potentially contains six elements: (1) one or more characters; (2) the act done by the character; (3) the place; (4) the time; (5) the manner of the activity; and (6) the reason for these things.¹³ But the three items that persist in multiple verbal form have the nature of a chreia of a particular kind—a passive action chreia. In this part of the tradition, Jesus is the object of action by other people and the action has a rhetorical quality that "aptly" characterizes Jesus' role in society.¹⁴ An example of a passive action chreia, attributed to Didymon the flute player, is as follows:

Didymon the flute-player, on being convicted of adultery, was hanged by his namesake.¹⁵

This chreia receives its "apt" and "well-aimed" quality from the pun in "by his namesake [δίδυμος]," since the slang meaning of δίδυμος ("twin" or "pair") is testicles.¹⁶ The chreia-like quality of the tradition about Jesus appears in two fundamental elements: (a) the crucifixion of Jesus between two others who are crucified; and (b) an inscription on his cross with the words "the King of the Jews/Israel." These two parts contain a deep irony, namely that a king is "enthroned" on a cross with men "aptly" positioned at his right and left hands. This biting irony speaks a "truth" for members inside the Christian tradition and a "jest" for those outside.

My hypothesis is that this "enthronement" of Jesus is the occasion for three basic developments in the tradition: (a) On one hand, the presence of "King" in the inscription was the occasion for the emergence of direct speech concerning "king" in events associated with the crucifixion. (b) In this narrational environment, Ps 22:18 (LXX: Ps 21:18) was used to interpret Jesus' "enthronement," and its effect was at least threefold: it interpreted the people who crucified Jesus as "wicked men" (LXX: Ps 21:16 has πονηρευομένων), it demonstrated the fulfillment of biblical prophecy by the people who crucified Jesus,¹⁷ and it emphasized the humiliation of Jesus as he hung "naked" on the cross. This step, which moved the tradition into the sphere of biblical prophecy, is present in all

13 See Butts, "The 'Progymnasmata' of Theon," 291; Theon V, 3–7.

14 A chreia is a concise statement or action with aptness attributed to some specific person or something analogous to a person. See Butts, "The 'Progymnasmata' of Theon," 186; Theon III, 2–3.

15 Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 312–13.

16 See Philodemus in the *Greek Anthology* 5.126.6 and LXX Deut 25:11 in Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 313.

17 See Denker, *Die theologiegeschichtliche Stellung*, 70, who observes that the earliest sources see the Jews, not Jesus and his fate, fulfilling the scripture.

five versions with fragments of more than one word in common. Matthew, Mark, and the Gospel of Peter place direct speech for Jesus' dying cry on the lips of Jesus in the form of the first verse of Psalm 22. The use of Psalm 22 also opened the way for use of many scriptural passages to exhibit prophetic fulfillment in the crucifixion. (c) Another development is visible in John and Luke, who both place teaching traditionally attributed to Jesus on the lips of Jesus. In the Lukan and Johannine accounts, we are on the way toward conventional accounts of death in Mediterranean culture.

2. The Inscription on the Cross and Speech about Kingship

When an account narrates action of Pilate prior to the crucifixion, the inscription placed on the cross gives content to Pilate's speech. In the four canonical accounts, Pilate's speech includes the question "Are you the King of the Jews?"¹⁸ The agreement of the wording of the question with the wording of the inscription¹⁹ suggests that the presence of the inscription gave rise to the presentation of the question. The variation in the inscription and direct speech containing "king" when it is attributed to Jews rather than Romans (including Pilate) supports this influence. When the text credits Jewish people with the crucifixion and the written inscription, it reads "King of Israel,"²⁰ and the direct speech of the Jews also uses this form.²¹ In contrast, if Pilate and the Roman soldiers are in charge of the inscription, they write "the King of the Jews," and their speech always uses this form.²² The only exception is John 19:21, where "the King of the Jews" is on the lips of Jews because they are responding to the Roman form of the inscription on the cross.

We should look more closely at John 19:19–21, since this verse exhibits the manner in which direct speech has developed from the inscription:

Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The chief priests of the Jews then said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but 'This man said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

Before our eyes we see the generation of direct speech for characters around Jesus, for Pilate, and for Jesus himself. The text attributes the

18 Matt 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:3; John 18:33.

19 Matt 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19.

20 GPet 4:11; see Crossan, "The Cross that Spoke," 7–8 for a discussion of the crucifixion of Jesus by Jews.

21 Matt 27:42; Mark 15:32; GPet 3:7.

22 Mark 15:9; John 18:39; Mark 15:12; Matt 27:29=Mark 15:18=John 19:3; Luke 23:37.

inscription on the cross to Pilate, and this attribution creates the setting for a conversation between the chief priests and Pilate.²³ The conversation transports Pilate's action into the speech of the chief priests who present an argument from the opposite: "Do not write 'the King of the Jews.'"²⁴ As the chief priests present their alternative, they transport the results of Pilate's action into the speech of Jesus: "write [instead] 'This man said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'" In the process of rhetorical composition, an action attributed to Pilate becomes a saying attributed to Jesus. In a similar manner, the authors generated statements about "the King of the Jews" and "the King of Israel" for the mouths of Romans and Jews associated with the crucifixion.

It is an ironic "truth" in the tradition, then, when Jesus is asked if he is the King of the Jews and he replies, "You say so (or: You say that I am a king)."²⁵ The tradition first associated the title *king* with an inscription on the cross of Jesus, then it put the title in direct speech of people around Jesus, then it depicted Jesus saying that they said he was a king, and finally in one gospel (John 19:21) direct speech is created for chief priests who put the statement "I am the King of the Jews" on the lips of Jesus.²⁶

As a result of the attribution of direct speech to Pilate in the form "Are you the King of the Jews?", the tradition attributed to Jesus the saying "You have said so." This response is uniform in Matt 27:11, Mark 15:2, Luke 23:3, and is the basis for elaboration in John 18:36–37. Because of the uniform nature of this tradition, it is tempting to associate it with an early stage of the tradition. In fact, the noncommittal or evasive posture by Jesus during the events preceding his crucifixion accords with other ambiguous or evasive responses by Jesus in early tradition.²⁷ On the other hand, the juxtaposition of the response to "Are you the King of the Jews?" is a development out of the inscription tradition. One could, perhaps, vote a pink for "You say so" if the question were not so explicitly formulated out of the inscription tradition. A way to vote for the style of the response without this explicit content would be to vote gray rather than black for Jesus' response, "You have said so."

23 See Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 101, where Theon's *Progymnasmata* says: "We expand the chreia whenever we enlarge upon the questions and responses in it, and upon whatever act or experience is in it."

24 See Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 177, where Hermogenes' *Progymnasmata* presents the argument from the opposite as the fourth step in "elaboration" of the chreia.

25 Matt 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:3; John 18:37; cf. John 18:34.

26 A similar situation exists in Matt 27:43, where a rationale after words from Ps 22:8 produces: "For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

27 See Mack, "Kingdom Sayings," 17–18.

3. Biblical Prophecy and Jesus' Dying Words

Every version of Jesus' crucifixion available to us contains wording from Ps 22:18 that refers to the dividing of Jesus' garments by casting lots. Also, every version depicts a person offering vinegar (*ὄξος*) to Jesus while he is hanging on the cross, and the base of this tradition appears to be the wording in Ps 69:21b:

καὶ εἰς τὴν δίψαν μου ἐπότισάν με ὄξος
and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.²⁸

As indicated above, the five early Greek versions do not attribute the same speech to Jesus while he is on the cross, though all accounts have Jesus speak at least once. In Matthew, Mark, and the Gospel of Peter, Jesus speaks only one articulate cry from the cross, and this is based on the first verse of Psalm 22:

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?²⁹

In these three versions, the dying Jesus speaks only one articulate sentence from the cross, and the tradition formulated this statement out of the psalm that provided data for expanding the crucifixion account in its earliest stages.

Neither Luke nor John features a dying word of Jesus based on Psalm 22. In each account, however, Jesus speaks out just before he dies, and in each instance the words are based on biblical passages. In Luke 23:46, Jesus cries out with a loud voice:

Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit,

a statement based on Ps 31:5:

Into thy hand I commit my spirit;
thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.³⁰

In John 19:28–30, Jesus speaks twice in a unit consciously composed to exhibit the fulfillment of scripture as Jesus speaks and dies:

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst." A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a

28 Moo, *The Old Testament*, 249–52, 275–80.

29 GPet 5:19 presents a free version of the verse, "My power, O power, thou hast forsaken me." In contrast, Mark 15:34 presents an Aramaic version and Matt 27:47 presents a Hebrew version of "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

30 Moo, *The Old Testament*, 280–1.

sponge full of vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

The statement "I thirst" (*διψῶ*), which the author says fulfills scripture, appears to have arisen from the statement in Ps 69:21b discussed above. Then, "It is finished" (*τετέλεσται*) is based on Job 19:25–27 (LXX):

For I know that he is eternal who is about to deliver me, and to raise up upon the earth my skin that endures these sufferings: for these things have been accomplished (*συντελέσθη*) to me of the Lord; which I am conscious of in myself, which mine eye has seen, and not another, but all have been fulfilled (*συντετέλεσται*) to me in my bosom.

In sum, our texts have formulated every extant version of Jesus' final words out of scripture passages that early Christians perceived to be fulfilled in Jesus' crucifixion and death. The versions in Matthew, Mark, and the Gospel of Peter moved from Ps 22:18 (the dividing of his garments) back to the first verse of Psalm 22 to find words to express Jesus' experience of abandonment. These versions focus on the death of Jesus as a moment of isolation from the powers of life as Jesus cries out that he has been forsaken by God himself. In contrast, the accounts in Luke and John focus on Jesus' submission to God's will in complete fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Luke used wording from Ps 31:5 to express Jesus' willingness to commit his spirit to God, and John used Ps 69:21 to depict Jesus' thirst and Job 19:25–27 to depict Jesus' assertion that all things were being fulfilled through him as he died. These majestic words attributed to Jesus are appropriately well-known in Christian piety, drama, and music, and they articulate the feelings and beliefs of early Christians about the dying Jesus. We can see, however, that these words result from weaving scenes of the dying Jesus out of threads from biblical prophecy.

4. Transporting Jesus' Teaching and Prayer Life to the Cross

In Matthew and Mark, Jesus says nothing beyond "You say so"³¹ and "My God, my God who hast thou forsaken me?"³² through the interrogation by Pilate, the torture, the mockery, and the crucifixion itself. In Peter, Jesus speaks only once: "My power, O power, thou hast forsaken me."³³ Thus, all of the additional sayings attributed to Jesus (which make "seven" last words) come to us from Luke or John.

31 Matt 27:11; Mark 15:2.

32 Ps 22:1; Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34.

33 Ps 22:1; GPet 5:19.

Jesus' speech in the Lukan account carries themes from Jesus' pre-passion teaching into the setting of his death. This begins with Luke 23:28-31:

Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!' Then they will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For, if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?

A recent analysis of this passage by Jerome Neyrey suggests that it is a prophetic oracle of judgment against the city/nation created by Luke himself.³⁴ It carries prophetic judgment from Luke 13:33-35; 19:41-44; and 21:20-24 into the setting of Jesus' death. The request by Jesus for the women to stop weeping for him has an interesting parallel in a chreia attributed to Epameinondas:

Stop weeping, friends, for I have left you two immortal daughters: two victories of our country over the Lacedaemonians, the one at Leuctra, who is older, and the younger, who is just now being born at Mantinea.³⁵

This element is only one aspect of the Lukan account that gives it narrative qualities similar to those of other Mediterranean death accounts.³⁶ Jesus' next statement occurs in Luke 22:34 when they hang him on the cross between two criminals:

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

As Charles Talbert has observed, this saying, which is omitted by many manuscripts, is Lukan in language and thought.³⁷ Regularly in Luke, Jesus addresses God in prayer as Father (Luke 10:21; 22:42; 23:46), and Jesus' prayer on the cross takes its special content from the prayer he taught his disciples in Luke 11:2-4:

Father, . . . forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us

Jesus is enacting an attribute that establishes his own integrity before God.

Next, in Luke 23:40-41 when one of the criminals rails against Jesus, the other criminal says to him:

34 Neyrey, "Jesus' Address," 82-84.

35 Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 103.

36 See Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 219-25.

37 Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 219-20.

Do you not fear God, since you are under *the same sentence of condemnation*? And *we indeed justly*; for we are receiving the due reward for our deeds; but *this man has done nothing wrong*.

Then, in Luke 23:42 he says:

Jesus, remember me *when you come into your kingdom*.

The content of this statement would appear to be clear from Jesus' discussion with the disciples prior to his prayer on the Mount of Olives. In this discussion in Luke 22:28-30, he tells the disciples

You are those who have continued with me in my trials; and I assign to you, *as my Father assigned to me, a Kingdom*, that you may . . . sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

We notice that God has assigned a kingdom to Jesus; also we notice the judicial nature of the discussion. If the disciples are to be judges, they must be free from guilt, and Jesus also must be free from guilt to participate in this activity. The reader knows that Jesus has no guilt, as a result of the claim by Pilate, the statement of one of the criminals hanging on a cross, and the confession of a centurion that Jesus is a righteous, innocent man (Luke 23:47) who has not done any crime, and certainly nothing worthy of death (Luke 23:14-15, 22, 41). The kingdom about which the criminal speaks in Luke 23:42 should be the kingdom about which Jesus spoke earlier to his disciples. When Jesus replies, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43), he changes the image to the garden or park a king would possess.³⁸ The term "paradise" occurs here and in 2 Cor 12:4 and Rev 2:7 in the New Testament. It is found nowhere else in canonical speech of Jesus. The saying is introduced with "Truly, I say to you," which occurs six times in Luke: three times paralleled by Mark (Mark 10:15=Luke 18:17; Mark 10:29=Luke 18:29; Mark 13:30=Luke 21:32) and three times in special material (Luke 4:24; 12:37; 23:43). This saying may well be an instance of a converted Gentile sharing the destiny of a martyr, a recurrent feature in martyr stories of later Judaism.³⁹ Clearly, Luke or his source has formulated it as Christians have been interested in the benefits designated to believers and converts who face a martyr death.

The last prayer of Jesus before he dies exhibits his submission to the will of God:

Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.

38 Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 221.

39 Jeremias, "paradeisos," 771.

This recasting of Ps 31:5 enacts the integrity of Jesus' prayer on the Mount of Olives in Luke 22:42:

Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.

Thus, the final words of Jesus on the cross complete the Lukan picture of Jesus as a model martyr in will, integrity, action, and prayer.

In contrast to the accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus enters into a series of repartees with Pilate during the interrogation in John 18:33–38. The expansion allows Jesus to reformulate the discussion about "the King of the Jews" into a thesis about coming into the world to bear witness to the truth. In this form, the scene contains the beginnings of an elaboration⁴⁰ as described by Hermogenes:

Pilate: "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus: "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?"

Pilate: "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?"

Jesus:

Chreia: "My kingship is not of this world."⁴¹

Opposite: "If my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world."⁴²

Pilate: "So you are a king?"

Jesus: "You say that I am a king."

Rationale: "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth."⁴³

Universal example and implicit exhortation: "Every one who is of the truth hears my voice."⁴⁴

Pilate: "What is truth?"

This discussion presents distinctive Johannine theology and has no parallels in other crucifixion tradition. Instead of responding with "You say

so," Jesus introduces the chreia-like "thesis": "My kingship is not of this world." A thesis like this, which is meant to be ambiguous, invites elaboration. The statement from the opposite provides initial positioning of the thesis statement, clarifying it through an exploration of one thing it does not mean. The next step is to present a rationale for the chreia, and here we get the real Johannine program. Jesus was begotten to come into the world⁴⁶ to bear witness to the truth.⁴⁷ The Johannine "argument" about who Jesus is appears most blatantly in the rationale. The final step in the Johannine unit preserves a chreia-like quality for the elaboration. Instead of ending with a statement from a specific example (like "Moses listened to the truth of God") and an exhortation (like "Therefore, listen to my voice"), the unit ends with a statement that exhorts everyone as it uses everyone as an example. This ending invites further repartee: "What is truth?", which secures a chreia-like quality for this Johannine theme. It is possible that the association of the Hellenistic king with truth has influenced this development in the Johannine portrayal.⁴⁸ Far in the background lies a discussion of the kingdom of God, and this discussion has been transformed into a discussion of earthly and heavenly kingdoms and kingship. A black vote will signify that speech about Kingdom of God has been transformed into significantly different discourse.

There are two more steps in Jesus' speech in the Johannine account. When Pilate asks Jesus where he is from and Jesus will say nothing more (John 19:9), Pilate says:

You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?

To this Jesus responds:

Rationale: You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above;

Conclusion: Therefore, he who delivered me to you has the greater sin.

With these words, Jesus presents the Johannine rationale for the arrest, trial, and death of Jesus. It would seem improbable that one whose kingship lies outside this world could be overpowered by people in this world. This is possible, according to the Johannine account, because God has given Pilate the power to do this. The process began when Judas

40 The term *elaboration* is being used in the sense it contains in Hermogenes' *Progymnasmata*; see Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 177.

41 See the chreia in Hermogenes' elaboration: Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 177.

42 See the statement from the opposite in Hermogenes' elaboration: Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 177.

43 See the rationale in Hermogenes' elaboration: Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 177.

44 See the statement from example in Hermogenes' elaboration: Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 177. Often in the gospels the statement concerns a universal example rather than a specific, known example.

46 John 3:17; 17:18.

47 1:7, 14, 17; 3:11; 8:13–18, 32; 14:6; 16:13; 17:17, 19.

48 See Dio Chrysostom 1.26; 3.13, 19; 4.15; cf. Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 109–11; Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher*, 190.

delivered Jesus to the soldiers and officers.⁴⁹ Therefore, Judas is probably the one implicated with the greater sin.⁵⁰

The remainder of the Johannine account presents two more scenes where Jesus speaks. Jesus' words to his mother, "Woman, behold your son," and to the disciple whom he loved, "Behold, your mother," present Jesus as a model of God's love to the world. In the sphere of rhetorical elaboration, this scene functions as a statement from example.⁵¹ Then, the scene of Jesus' death presents the fulfillment of scripture which grounds the rationale for the entire account. Hermogenes refers to citations like these as statements by an authority.⁵² The power of people on earth to kill Jesus whose kingship is not of this world is grounded in written authority which asserts that "For my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink"⁵³ and "all things have been completed to me of the Lord (in my bosom)."⁵⁴ The remainder of the story resides in the first part of the Job passage: "For I know that he is eternal who is about to deliver me, and to raise up upon the earth my skin that endures these sufferings."⁵⁵ The Johannine account continues with further fulfillment of written authority in the spirit of Jesus' final statement.⁵⁶ Jesus' words throughout the account elaborate for us, the reader, the Johannine understanding of the death of Jesus, the rationale for it, and its support in written authority.

5. Conclusion

My votes, therefore, would be as follows if I were allowed to vote in this way. I recommend a gray vote for Jesus' words: "You have said so,"⁵⁷ because they exhibit a style of evasiveness characteristic of Jesus but emerge in a scene created out of the inscription tradition. I recommend a black vote for Jesus' elaboration of the Johannine understanding of kingdom and kingship, because language and teaching of Jesus lie only faintly in the background. I recommend a red vote for Jesus' death on a cross among others on crosses. I recommend a gray vote for Jesus' death on a cross between two criminals, because this emerges from a perception of Jesus' death as a mock enthronement between appropriately positioned men on his right and left hands. I recommend a red vote for a

charge against Jesus as a revolutionary, but I recommend a gray vote for the inscription on the cross, because its wording interprets Jesus' death as a mock enthronement. Finally, I recommend a black vote for the speech of Jesus during the crucifixion, because all of it emerges from scriptural fulfillment and varies from account to account.

In sum, all versions of Jesus' dying moments supply direct speech from scriptural quotation. Ps 22:1 appears at an early stage of the tradition, as would be natural from the presence of Ps 22:18 (the dividing of his garments) in all five versions. This speech itself, however, was interpretive, with specific interest in bringing the depiction of Jesus' ironic enthronement into the sphere of biblical prophecy. When the accounts were designed to exhibit Jesus' attributes of righteousness, Ps 22:1 was too harsh a cry of abandonment and despair. The Lukan and Johannine accounts replace Ps 22:1 with quotations from Ps 31:5 and Job 19:25-27 (LXX) respectively, where the cry expresses confidence that God will redeem him.

If the reader is alarmed that we cannot be certain of any of the exact speech of Jesus during his final hours, he or she should rather be amazed that we have such a persistent approach at the base of the tradition. Only a few other people in antiquity, like Socrates and some of the Roman emperors, have as many accounts of their deaths with as many persistent items. The variation in the accounts of Jesus' death, on the other hand, exhibit a vigorous environment of interpretation in which Jesus' death is being told intertextually with Jewish scripture. The persistence with which the early Christians pursued this intertextual program is a testimony to their deep indebtedness to Jewish thought and belief. The strength and majesty of these accounts witness to the importance of establishing an intertextual relationship with one's past in every age.

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50 Barrett, *St. John*, 452.

51 Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 177.

52 Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 177.

53 Ps 69:21b.

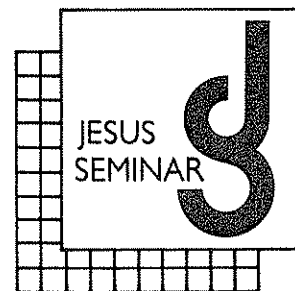
54 Job 19:25-27 [LXX].

55 Job 19:25-26 [LXX].

56 John 19:31-37.

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Seeing Is Not Believing

THE HISTORY OF A BEATITUDE
IN THE JESUS TRADITION

Ron Cameron

O. Introduction

The Gospel of John climaxes¹ in 20:29 with a saying attributed to Jesus that blesses those who have not seen (specifically the risen, but also the earthly Jesus) and yet have believed:

Jesus said to him (Thomas),
"Is it because you have seen me that you have believed?
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Although there are no synoptic parallels to this saying (commonly called a "macarism" or a "beatitude," from the Greek or Latin root meaning "blessed," vs 29b), variants do occur, embedded in extended sections of discourse and dialogue, in the Apocryphon of James (ApJas 8:3c) and the *Epistula apostolorum* (*Ep. apost.* 29 [40]).² The purpose of this paper is to examine the way(s) in which each of these texts used the beatitude, in order to identify the object of faith and sight. Since I have dealt more technically with certain aspects of this particular saying elsewhere,³ the analysis that follows will seek to extend that discussion and will recapitulate my previous arguments only where necessary. Because this saying

1 According to Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 443, John 20:29 "is the true climax of the gospel; the rest, however true and however moving, is mere postscript."

2 All references to my translation of the Apocryphon of James are cited in accordance with the chapter and verse numbering scheme that is printed in Crossan, *Sayings Parallels* (nos. 237 and 493), and in volume two of *New Gospel Parallels*. The page and line numbers of the Coptic text of this saying are 12.40-13.1 (Attridge, *Nag Hammadi Codex I*, 46). An English translation of the *Epistula apostolorum* is available by Duensing and Taylor in *New Testament Apocrypha*, 189-227; and reprinted in *The Other Gospels*, 131-62.

3 *Sayings Traditions in the Apocryphon of James*, 44-54.