

## BRIEF NOTES

### THE ANTI-JUDAIC BIAS OF THE WESTERN TEXT IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

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In AUSS 17 (1979): 203-208, I presented a brief discussion on how the Western text in Luke uses variant readings to develop a theological bias. The variants noted in that study magnified the role of Jesus as the Messianic King by changing the words in the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism and by borrowing the kingly line from Matthew's genealogy.

Further biases can be clearly seen in other variant readings throughout Luke. One that appears repeatedly is strongly anti-Judaic.

Eldon J. Epp comments as follows on the anti-Judaic bias in the Western text of Acts and in Codex Bezae (D) in particular. "These textual variants, like so many others in D, are small — there is, after all, a basic conservatism in all New Testament texts. These small variants, nevertheless, combine to reveal the calculated anti-Judaic sentiment from which they first sprang."<sup>1</sup> What is true in Acts is true in Luke.<sup>2</sup>

In the present brief note I shall call attention to instances of three ways in which this anti-Judaic bias is reflected by the Western text.

#### 1. *The Use of πονηρος*

After examining D's addition of the word *πονηρος* ("evil") at Acts 3:17, Epp says that D's use of this word not only sharpens the

<sup>1</sup>Eldon Jay Epp, *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis in Acts* (Cambridge, Eng., 1966), p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>George Edward Rice, *The Alterations of Luke's Tradition by the Textual Variants in Codex Bezae* (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1974), pp. 174-222.

contrast between the Jews and Christians, but confirms the disparity between what the Jews did in crucifying Jesus and what God did through Jesus' suffering and exaltation.<sup>3</sup>

The verse reads as follows:

## Acts 3:17

## Codex B

και νυν αδελφοι  
οιδα  
οτι  
κατα αγνοιαν  
επραξατε  
ωσπερ και οι αρχοντες υμων.

"And now brethren  
I know  
that  
you acted  
out of ignorance  
even as your rulers also."

+ ανδρες, D it<sup>hpw</sup>  
οιδα οτι] επισταμεθα οτι υμεις μεν, D. it<sup>hpw</sup>  
+ πονηραν, D it<sup>hpw</sup> syh<sup>m</sup>

## Codex D

και νυν ανδρες αδελφοι  
επισταμεθα  
οτι υμεις μεν  
κατα αγνοιαν  
επραξατε πονηρον  
ωσπερ και οι αρχοντες υμων.

"And now men brethren  
we know  
that (on the one hand)  
you did evil  
out of ignorance  
even as your rulers also."

First, the addition of *μεν* in the D-text contrasts the action of the Jews in v. 17 with the *δε* and God's action in v. 18. Second, the addition of *πονηρον* leaves no doubt as to how this action of the Jews is viewed. They are looked upon as being not without guilt because of their ignorance.<sup>4</sup>

The Western text uses *πονηρος* in a similar way in Luke. At Luke 23:41, the statement of the condemned criminal is altered.

## Luke 23:41

## Codex B

και ημεις μεν δικαιως  
αξια γαρ ων επραξαμεν  
απολαμβανομεν ουτος  
δε ουδεν ατοπον επραξεν

"And we justly  
for we did things  
worthy of what we  
are receiving but  
this man did nothing  
amiss."

ατοπον] πονηρον, D lat.

## Codex D

και ημεις μεν δικαιως  
αξια γαρ ων επραξαμεν  
απολαμβανομεν ουτος  
δε ουδεν πονηρον επραξεν

"And we justly  
for we did things  
worthy of what we  
are receiving but  
this man did nothing  
evil."

<sup>3</sup>Epp, p. 43-44.

<sup>4</sup>Epp, p. 44.

In Acts, the Western text points out that what the Jews did to Jesus was evil. In Luke, on the other hand, Jesus is presented as having done nothing evil. As Epp observes, "The contrast is vivid and effective."<sup>5</sup>

A second use of *πονηρος* in Luke strengthens the anti-Judaic sentiment developed by the Western text.

## Luke 5:21,22

## Codex B

21. και ηρξαντο διαλο-  
γιζεσθαι οι γραμματεις  
και οι φαρισαιοι  
  
λεγοντες τις εστιν ουτος  
ος λαλει βλασφημιας τις  
δυναται αμαρτιας αφειναι  
ει μη μονος ο θς

22. επιγνους δε ο ις  
τους διαλογισμους αυτων  
αποκριθεις ειπεν προς  
αυτους τι διαλογιζεσθε  
εν ταις καρδιαις υμων

21. "And the Scribes and  
Pharisees began to reason  
saying  
who is this who speaks  
blasphemies? Who is able  
to forgive sin except  
God alone?"

22. And Jesus knowing  
their reasoning answered  
and said to them  
why do you reason  
in your hearts?"

## Codex D

21. και ηρξαντο διαλο-  
γιζεσθαι οι γραμματεις  
και οι φαρισαιοι εν  
ταις καρδιαις αυτων  
λεγοντες τι ουτος  
λαλει βλασφημιας τις  
δυναται αμαρτιας αφειναι  
ει μη εις θς

22. επιγνους δε ο ιης  
τους διαλογισμους αυτων  
λεγει  
αυτοις τι διαλογιζεσθαι  
εν ταις καρδιαις υμων  
πονηρα

21. "And the Scribes and  
Pharisees began to reason  
in their hearts saying  
why does this man speak  
blasphemies? Who is able  
to forgive sin except  
one, God?"

22. And Jesus knowing  
their reasoning  
said also to them  
why do you reason  
evil in your hearts?"

v. 21

+ εν ταις καρδιαις αυτων post φαρισαιοι, D it  
τις εστιν ουτος ος] τι ουτος, D  
μονος] εις, C D

v. 22.

αποκριθεις ειπεν προς αυτους] λεγει αυτοις, D  
+ πονηρα post υμων, D

With the addition of *πονηρα* here, D harmonizes Luke's text with Matt 9:4. The harmonization again presents a striking contrast

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

between Jesus, who did no evil, and the religious leaders, who thought evil and did evil.

The Western text again harmonizes Luke with Matthew by using a cognate of *πονηρος* at Luke 20:23 and intensifies the encounter between Jesus and the Jews while bringing into sharper focus the anti-Judaic bias.

Luke 20:23

Codex B

κατανοησας δε αυτων  
την πανουργιαν ειπεν  
προς αυτους

“And when he  
perceived  
their craftiness  
he said to them.”

Codex D

επιγνους δε αυτων  
την πονηριαν ειπεν  
προς αυτους  
τι με πειραζετε

“And when he  
knew thoroughly  
their malice  
he said to them  
why do you tempt me?”

κατανοησας] επιγνους, D e cop<sup>m</sup> Tatian  
πανουργιαν] πονηριαν, C\* D it sy<sup>c</sup>  
+ τι με πειραζετε post αυτους, Byz D lat sy<sup>c</sup>

From the variants at Acts 3:17 and at Luke 23:41, 5:22, and 20:23, the Western text shows a strong anti-Judaic bias by its use of *πονηρος* and its cognate *πονηρια*.

## 2. *The Ministry of John the Baptist*

The ministry of John the Baptist provides another context for the anti-Judaic sentiment of the Western text. This sentiment surfaces in three identical variants in D. Before these variants can be appreciated, it is necessary to review briefly the attitude of the Jewish leaders toward John's ministry as it is presented by Luke.

In Luke's account, we are told that crowds of people came out to be baptized by him. As the crowds assembled John addressed them, “Generation of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?” (Luke 3:7). The words of censure that John addressed to the crowds in Luke are addressed to the religious leaders in Matthew, “And when he beheld many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism he said to them, generation of vipers who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?” (3:7).

From Luke's account one is left to conclude that the religious leaders did not seek repentance and baptism at John's hand. This conclusion is verified at Luke 7:29, "And the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him [John]."

Understanding that Luke presents the Jewish leaders as rejecting God's will for them by refusing John's ministry, the variants in D's text strengthens this rejection and thus emphasizes the anti-Judaic sentiment at Luke 3:10, 12, 14. In the normal tradition of Luke *οι οχλοι* ("multitude"), *τελώναι* ("publicans"), and *στρατευομενοι* ("soldiers") are presented as coming to John, under the conviction of his preaching, and asking him, *τι ποιησωμεν* ("What shall we do?").

To each group John gives appropriate counsel. In D's text, the question asked by each of the three groups is expanded to read, *τι ποιησωμεν ινα σωθωμεν* ("What shall we do that we might be saved?"). The rejection of God's will for the religious leaders now becomes a matter not only of rejecting John's ministry but of rejecting God's offer of salvation. Thus the religious leaders stand in sharp contrast to the general populace, even to the despised publicans, who sought salvation through John's ministry, and thus were obedient to God's will.

### 3. *The Man With the Withered Hand*

There are several intriguing changes in the next series of variants. Space forbids looking at them all here, even though some show an anti-Judaic bias. We will have to be content with examining three variants and leaving the rest for a future study.

Luke 6:9-11

Codex B

9. ειπεν δε  $\bar{\iota}\bar{\varsigma}$  προς αυτους  
επερωτω υμας ει εξεστι  
τω σαββατω αγαθοποιησαι  
η κακοποιησαι ψυχην  
σωσαι η απολεσαι

Codex D

9. ειπεν δε  $\bar{\iota}\bar{\eta}\bar{\varsigma}$  προς αυτους  
επερωτησω υμας ει εξεστιν  
τω σαββατω αγαθοποιησαι  
η κακοποιησαι ψυχην  
σωσαι η απολεσαι  
οι δε εσιωπων

10. και περιβλεψαμενος  
παντας αυτους  
  
ειπεν αυτω εκτεινον  
την χειρα σου  
ο δε εποιησεν και  
απεκατεσταθη η χειρ αυτου
10. και περιβλεψαμενος  
αυτους παντας  
εν οργη  
λεγει τω ανθρωπω εκταινον  
την χειρα σου  
και εξετεινεν και  
απεκατεσταθη η χειρ αυτου  
ως και η αλλη
- [5] και ελεγεν αυτοις  
οτι  $\overline{\kappa\varsigma}$  εστιν ο υιος του  
ανθρωπου και του  
σαββατου
11. αυτοι δε επλησθησαν  
ανοιας και διελαλουν  
προς αλληλους  
τι αν ποιησαιεν τῷ  $\overline{\iota\upsilon}$
11. αυτοι δε επλησθησαν  
ανοιας και διελογισοντο  
προς αλληλους  
πως απολεσωσιν αυτον.
9. "And Jesus said to them  
I will ask you if it is  
lawful to do good on the  
Sabbath or to do evil, to  
save life or destroy?"
9. "And Jesus said to them  
I will ask you if it is  
lawful to do good on the  
Sabbath or to do evil, to  
save life or destroy.  
And they were silent.
10. And when he had  
looked around upon  
them all  
he said to him  
Stretch out your hand  
and he did so  
and his hand was  
restored.
10. And when he had  
looked around upon  
them all in wrath  
he said to the man  
Stretch out your hand  
and he stretched it out  
and his hand was  
restored as the other.
- [5] And he said to them  
the Son of man is Lord  
also of the Sabbath.
11. And they were filled  
with anger and  
discussed with one  
another what they  
might do with Jesus."
11. And they were filled  
with anger and  
discussed with one  
another how they  
might destroy him."

v. 9

+ οι δε εσιωπων post απολεσαι, D al Tatian

v. 10

+ εν οργη post αυτους παντας, D Θ pm it Tatian

ειπεν αυτω] λεγει τῷ ανθρωπω, D

οδε εποιησεν] και εξετεινεν, 8<sup>a</sup> N . D pm

+ ως και η αλλη post αυτου, D al 1 131

v. 5

post v 10, D Marcion

v. 11

τι αν ποιησαιεν τῷ  $\overline{\iota\upsilon}$ ] πως απολεσωσιν αυτον, D

By adding *οι δε εσιωπων* ("and they were silent") to v. 9 and *εν οργη* ("in wrath") to v. 10, D harmonizes Luke with Mark and intensifies the confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders. D climaxes this intensified confrontation by a third harmonization with both Mark and Matthew; i.e., the leaders took counsel as to how they might destroy Jesus. By the first two harmonizations considered here, D increases the tension between Jesus and the leaders where Luke had softened the confrontation when compared with Mark. By the final harmonization with Matthew and Mark, D advances in point of time the plottings of the religious leaders to kill Jesus from 19:47 to 6:11 in Luke's tradition.

### 1. *Conclusion*

Through carefully placed variant readings, the Western text shows a decided anti-Judaic bias in Luke. This bias is seen more clearly in D than in other Western manuscripts, because D has a number of singular readings that are anti-Judaic in nature. In this study, the anti-Judaic biases are seen in: (1) the use of *πονηρος* ("evil") (2) adding *ινα σωθωμεν* ("that we might be saved") to the question *τι ποιησωμεν* ("what shall we do") asked of John by the crowds, the publicans, and the soldiers, but not by the leaders; and (3) three harmonizations that intensify a sabbath confrontation between Jesus and the leaders and in Luke's tradition throws forward by thirteen chapters the plottings of the leaders to kill Jesus.