SCRIPTURE ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

James E. Harding
University of Otago

I

What might it mean for Christians to read and interpret the scriptures of Israel in the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? This is the fundamental question of theological hermeneutics, and all other questions in the field of (Christian) theological exegesis of Scripture must be addressed in light of it.[1] In contrast with some of the many other existing approaches to biblical exegesis, engaging with this question is not principally a matter of the proper application of methodological rigour, though this is of course a *sine qua non* of sound exegesis, but rather demands a certain kind of spiritual discipline, and entails a particular understanding of the place of Scripture in the context of Christian teaching as a whole.[2] Indeed, disciplined exegesis is the foundation of all genuine Christian teaching, and those embarking on the quest to understand what it means to read Scripture in avowedly and unashamedly Christian terms could do far worse than devote their time to the patient reading of St Augustine's fundamental *De Doctrina Christiana*.[3] They could do still worse than meditate deeply on the Lukan narrative of the risen Jesus expounding what the scriptures of Israel have to say about the Anointed to the two travellers *en route* to Emmaus, and later in Jerusalem, opening the mind of the disciples to understand the scriptures.[4]

Although this essay is ultimately concerned with the possibility of a Christian reading of the scriptures of Israel, it will engage primarily with Luke 24:44–49, in which the risen Jesus opens the minds of the gathered disciples to understand the scriptures (Luke 24:45).[5] It does not, however, seek to offer

---

[1] Since I will shortly argue that the theological appropriation of the Scriptures needs always to attend intelligently to their likeliest original meaning, I am not intending to distinguish artificially between "exegesis" and "hermeneutics," a distinction that, in my view, is of questionable heuristic value.

[2] Although I have a number of misgivings about certain aspects of his approach to Scripture that I do not propose to explore in detail here, though the general character of these misgivings may well become clear in the course of what follows, I have in mind at this point the late John B. Webster's works "The Dogmatic Location of the Canon," in *Word and Church: Essays in Christian Dogmatics*, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark International, 2006), 9–46, and *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch*, Current Issues in Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[3] Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. and trans. R. P. H. Green, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[4] While I will be following the Greek text of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), my wording of this gloss on Luke 24:13–35, 36–49 is influenced by that of David Bentley Hart's arresting *The New Testament: A Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

[5] The Greek of Luke 24:45 reads *tote dienoixen autōn ton noun tou sunienai tas graphas*, "then he opened their mind[s] to understand the scriptures." I take the singular *nous* to be distributive (thus e.g. NRSV). It is thus analogous to the distributive singular of *kardia*, "heart" in Luke 24:32, 38, which is here synonymous with *nous* (thus, e.g., I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 905). In all probability, the distributive singular in this case reflects semitic syntax (James Hope Moulton, Wilbert Francis Howard, and Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek,* vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), 24 (§2) (= MH); cf. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and ed. R. W. Funk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 77 (§140) (= BDF)).

any new insights into matters such as which scriptures in particular the risen Jesus in the Lukan resurrection narrative expects his hearers to understand anew,[6] and certainly does not intend to contribute in any direct way to the study of the appropriation of the scriptures in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, on which much ink has been spilt already. Rather, its aim is to understand a little better how the role of the risen Jesus as inspired interpreter of the scriptures might best be understood in light of certain aspects of the literature of late Second Temple Judaism, and to use that renewed understanding to inform contemporary Christian exegesis.

The reason for beginning with Luke 24:44–49 is that it is here above all that we get at least a provisional answer to the question, "Do we need the New Testament?"[7] It is here, moreover, that we encounter the most succinct expression in the Greek New Testament of what it must have meant for some of the earliest followers of Jesus to encounter the scriptures of Israel in the unexpected light of the crucified and risen one. One might wonder whether it is worth dwelling yet again on such a familiar passage, and while it is tempting to fend this anticipated objection off with the pious retort that such is the richness of the Lukan narratives of the encounters of the risen Jesus with his startled disciples that there are always depths to them that have yet to be fully plumbed, this will not quite suffice (even though it may nonetheless be true), and a richer and more nuanced response is needed that resists the seductions of glib piety and the temptation to find in the scriptures what we are already predisposed to find there. *Ne nos inducas in tentationem*.

There is a different, more explicitly historical reason for looking again at Luke 24:44–49. The reason is that there are number of important facets of what might best be termed the "literary imagination of Jewish antiquity"[8] that are reflected in this passage, which may be at least slightly obscured as a result of the way the canon functions to cut off subsequent readers and hearers of the Gospels from the imaginative assumptions that would have been natural to their authors and earliest readers and hearers. A genuinely robust approach to theological hermeneutics must pay more than lip service to the importance of historical-critical exegesis, for a number of reasons, of which two will have to suffice for now. The first has to do with the prevailing intellectual climate in general, the second with the specific issue of what it might mean to read the scriptures of Israel with an avowedly Christian lens, given the many and various ways in which much early Christian discourse severed subsequent Christian exegesis

[6] This is, of course, complicated by the fact that neither the Jewish scriptures, nor any other known Jewish texts of the Second Temple period, unambiguously anticipate a dying and rising Messiah. The scriptures are here placed in the service of Lukan Christology. Thus, e.g., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 28A (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1581 (cf. pp. 1565-1566, on Luke 24:26).

[7] I am alluding, of course, to John Goldingay's provocatively entitled *Do We Need the New Testament? Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015). Goldingay opens this book by immediately answering in the affirmative (p. 7), his deeper concern being to allow the scriptures of Israel nonetheless to speak for themselves, and for Christians to learn to hear their distinctive voices afresh, a concern with which I am in wholehearted agreement. See now Goldingay's rendering of Israel's scriptures, *The First Testament: A New Translation* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), which—not entirely unlike Bentley Hart's rendering of the Greek New Testament—goes to significant lengths to reproduce in translation the distinctive cadences of the original.

[8] The recent book that, more than any other, has served to bring this phenomenon into focus is Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

from its Jewish roots, in the process contributing to the long and tragic history of Christian anti-Judaism, whose recent effects are only too well known.

There is a distinct temptation, in the current intellectual climate, to engage in putatively robust intellectual debate not only purely within the confines of one's own particular discipline, which is largely unavoidable if one happens not to be a polymath, but purely under the terms of one's own particular epistemic framework. Now there is an obvious sense in which all thought proceeds on the basis of certain tacit presuppositions, all scholarship adheres to—and indeed should adhere to—an agreed set of contingent and in principle alterable disciplinary norms, methods, and procedures, and all critical reflection is in some way and to some degree shaped and determined by whatever brute facts happen to condition our existence. The risk, however, is that this may lead to a non-falsifiable, wholly self-referential discourse,[9] that is not only hermetically sealed against incursions from beyond the pale, but which meets any criticism with a facile and thoughtless *tu quoque*, to the effect that since we all unavoidably approach our objects of study with presuppositions and commitments, mine are just as valid as yours, and your objections merely reflect your own blindness to the commitments and presuppositions that you yourself bring to the discussion. It will not do simply to retreat to one's particular commitment,[10] perhaps on the banal and in the end misleading grounds that we *all* have commitments that condition and determine the paths our thinking takes, without taking the risk of engagement with intellectual approaches that might call our most cherished assumptions into question. Such a retreat ought to be judged both intellectually and morally indolent, which is in no way to imply that an intellectual stance is possible that is wholly objective, unadulterated by subjectivity, and free from the tyranny of its own unexamined assumptions.

To be sure, in the case of Christian theological exegesis, there is a basic commitment, a decision for the risen Christ, grounded in a movement of faith prompted and inspired by the Holy Spirit, that should indeed form and direct the work of exegesis, the vocation and purpose of which is the edification of the Church. Yet this commitment needs to be held with a twofold humility of mind that is both humble and repentant before the Throne of Grace, and wise to its own tendency to claim a degree of epistemic certainty in the face of all objections that is not only unwarranted, but in fact impious. The poet of the book of Job understood this clearly. The theme of knowledge is at the heart of this most

[9] The recent and already notorious "Sokal squared" affair was apparently designed to expose just such a rot at the heart of what its perpetrators pejoratively termed "Grievance Studies" (see Helen Pluckrose, James A. Lindsay, and Peter Boghossian, "Academic Grievance Studies and the Corruption of Scholarship," *Areo Magazine* (October 2, 2018), https://areomagazine.com/2018/10/02/academic-grievance-studies-and-the-corruption-of-scholarship/, accessed October 15, 2018). There are many and various problems with what these scholars did, and I for one have serious misgivings about it (I am not alone), but it should at least serve as a reminder—to practitioners of theological exegesis not least—of the moral and intellectual dangers of retreating into the false security of a self-referential discourse.

[10] William Warren Bartley's *The Retreat to Commitment,* 2nd ed. (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1984) still repays careful reflection.

unsettling work,[11] as indeed is the very possibility of theology, of authentic speech before God.[12] That is essentially what Job 42:7–9 is about, pointing to the paradox at the heart of the poem that it is precisely those who dare to speak piously in God's defence, in the face of all objections to the integrity of their position, who are most at risk of God's righteous judgement (Job 13:7–9). Job's peculiar priesthood consists in intercession on their behalf, to secure forgiveness from the very God in whose defence they had falsely, albeit honestly, believed themselves to be speaking.

Patient, and appropriately self-critical,[13] attention to the historical exegesis of the biblical texts may, in fact, be a genuine exercise in humility on the part of one who dares to think and speak theologically (let alone claim to be a theologian).[14] There is, moreover, a morally weighty argument in favour of recognizing historical-critical exegesis as a fundamental and inalienable component of theological exegesis, and it is not simply that the proper construal of the *sensus litteralis* of the scriptures is foundational for anything else that might be said about them, true though this surely is. It is that we can grapple with the biblical texts in the contexts in which they first emerged, without the sometimes distorting lens of the traditions through which they have been transmitted, and thereby correct some of the misconceptions that have been fostered and perpetuated by their reception and effect, including, indeed perhaps particularly, within the traditions of the Church.

Perhaps one of the most obvious areas in which this is the case is in the reconstruction of the Jewish context of the earliest Christian writings, which can not only act as a corrective against Christian misunderstandings of first-century Judaism, which have played their part in the egregious history of Christian anti-Judaism far beyond what the authors of the earliest Christian texts could have intended or anticipated, but should serve as a basis for renewed engagement between Jewish and Christian scholars today.[15] In the case of particularly troublesome texts such as Matt 27:24–26 and John 8:41–47, an

[11] See e.g. James E. Harding, "Divine Knowledge in the Book of Job and 4QInstruction," in *Far from Minimal: Celebrating the Work and Influence of Philip R. Davies*, ed. D. Burns and J. W. Rogerson, LHBOTS 484 (London: T&T Clark International, 2012), 173–192.

[12] James E. Harding, "The Book of Job as Metaprophecy," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 39 (2010): 523–547.

[13] I have in mind at this point the "chastened historical criticism" advocated by John Barton and John Muddiman (see the "General Introduction," in *The Oxford Bible Commentary,* ed. J. Barton and J. Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1–5, and Barton's more extensive discussion in his *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007)), but also the proposal advanced by W. John Lyons ("Hope for a Troubled Discipline? Contributions to New Testament Studies from Reception History," *JSNT* 33 (2010): 207–220), for reconceptualising historical criticism in terms of reception history (as the allusions to the reception and effect of the biblical texts in the next paragraph should make clear), notwithstanding the constructive criticisms levelled by Jonathan Morgan ("Visitors, Gatekeepers and Receptionists: Reflections on the Shape of Biblical Studies and the Role of Reception History," in *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice,* ed. E. England and W. J. Lyons, Scriptural Traces 6, LHBOTS 615 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 61–76).

[14] It is not clear to me that one could seriously claim *oneself* to be a theologian without hubris. Stephen Freeman has reflected thoughtfully on this from within the Russian Orthodox tradition: see his "I Am Not a Theologian" (*Glory to God for All Things*, May 9, 2008 (https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/glory2godforallthings/2008/05/09/i-am-not-a-theologian/, accessed October 24, 2018)).

[15] The annotations, in-text essays, and more extensive essays in the two editions of *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. A.-J. Levine and M. Z. Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011 and 2017) are collectively a fine example of the kind of scholarship I am thinking of, the essays by Amy-Jill Levine ("Bearing False Witness: Common Errors Made About Early Judaism," 759–763 in the 2017 edition) and Ed Kessler ("The New Testament and Jewish-Christian Relations," 763–767 in the 2017 edition) in particular summarising *in nuce* both what is

historical appreciation of these texts, chastened by an awareness of the effects of their reception and effect, may prompt a faithfully critical reading against the grain.[16] There should be no reason to suppose that adopting a certain kind of hermeneutic of suspicion could not be an act of faithfulness rather than of arrogance and impiety.

There are at least three things that need to be held in creative tension in approaching the task of Christian theological exegesis, and it is a genuine tension, in which there is not always necessarily an accessible or satisfactory answer to be had that brings resolution and closure. One whose vocation entails daring to think and speak theologically, however, is obligated to engage in this work, even though she or he is in no way obligated to complete it.[17] First, patient attention needs to be paid to the biblical texts in their original languages and in their ancient contexts,[18] insofar as these can be reconstructed, focusing particularly on what is distinctive about the texts in question in comparison with other, putatively analogous texts. Second, given that the Church in its wisdom discerned the need for a canon of Scripture, notwithstanding either the manifest diversity of early Christian literature on the one hand or the historically distorting and at times morally problematic effects of the canon on the other,[19] attention needs to be paid to what the texts in question have in common with other works in the scriptures of

problematic in the New Testament and certain prominent strands of the Christian tradition of interpretation, and what is at stake in terms of modern dialogue between Jews and Christians.

[16] I owe the notion of reading against the grain above all to feminist exegesis, which has proved to be a particularly insightful and morally significant development in modern biblical criticism. Outside the Biblical Studies guild, the notion of resistant reading is associated particularly with Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), who wrote of the way that American literature has "immasculated" female readers, compelling them to identify with a male perspective that is assumed to be universal (Judith Plaskow's fundamental work *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), begins by levelling a broadly comparable criticism at the canonical texts of the Jewish tradition). Perhaps the most important entry into this vital field now is the recent attempt by Esther Fuchs to offer, through a series of interconnected essays, a critical survey of feminist criticism hitherto, and a "map for feminist biblical studies" for the future (*Feminist Theory and the Bible: Interrogating the Sources,* Feminist Studies and Sacred Texts (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), here p. 10). A few years ago I ventured an attempt at a resistant reading of the prophetic marriage metaphor in Deutero-Isaiah ("In the Name of Love: Resisting Reader and Abusive Redeemer in Deutero-Isaiah," *The Bible & Critical Theory* 2 no. 2 (2006): 14.1–14.15), the theological implications of which are still unclear to me.

[17] At the risk of appropriating, perhaps inaccurately, a tradition that properly belongs to another, the words of the third generation tanna, Rabbi Tarfon, come to mind: "You are not obligated to complete the work, but nor are you free to be excused from it" (*lo alekha hammelakhah ligmor velo attah ben khorin libbatel mimmennah*) (*m. Avot* 2:16). Transliterations from Hebrew and Aramaic follow SBL General-Purpose Style, and pronunciation conventions for modern Hebrew, rather than a hypothetical reconstruction of authentic ancient pronunciation.

[18] Patient attention to the study of the biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) is, it seems to me, a *sine qua non* of genuinely responsible engagement with the biblical texts, and the fact that their intensive study is these days often not only no longer a requirement for pastoral ministry, but no longer an essential element in many Theology programmes in universities and theological colleges, is a matter of the most serious concern.

[19] The key primary sources, with thorough analysis, are conveniently collected in the valuable recent work by Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). The potentially de-historicizing effect of the fact of the canon (or *canons*, given the differences between the various Christian churches on which works, precisely, belong) needs to be tempered by an awareness of the materiality of early Christian literary culture. On this, see most recently Brent Nongbri, *God's Library: The Archaeology of the Earliest Christian Manuscripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018). Nongbri levels a mild criticism (*God's Library*, 12–13) at Larry Hurtado (of whose work he is generally appreciative) for succumbing to the risk of decontextualizing the early Christian manuscript evidence by drawing on canonical categories to organize it (in reference to Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artefacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006)).

Israel and the Church, even if such commonalities cannot always be easily explained in strictly historical terms.[20] Third, and most fundamentally, the task of Christian theological exegesis needs to be approached in the context of prayerful spiritual discipline, alert to the manifold ways in which these strange, ancient documents mediate a divine word that confronts us ever anew with that decision from which, in all honesty, we might prefer to escape.

II

What are we to make of the comment in Luke 24:45 that the risen Jesus "opened their mind(s) to understand the scriptures" (*diēnoixen autōn ton noun tou sunienai tas graphas*)?[21] This comment not only echoes the previous pericope (Luke 24:13–35), in which the risen Lord exasperatedly addresses the unperceiving travellers as "foolish and slow of heart in believing all the prophets have spoken" (*ō anoētoi kai bradeis tē kardia tou pisteuein epi pasin hois elalēsan hoi prophētai*)[22] and interprets for them the things concerning himself in all the scriptures (*diermēneusen autois en pasais tais graphais ta peri heautou*), prompting them later to recall that their hearts had been burning within them as he was speaking to them on the road, when he opened up the scriptures to them (*ouchi hē kardia hēmōn kaiomenē ēn en hēmin hōs elalei hēmin en tē hodō hōs diēnoigen hēmin tas graphas*), but also seems to echo certain passages in the Jewish literature of the late Second Temple period concerned with the revelation of divine insight, particularly in the apocalyptic literature, in addition to texts from Qumran and the rabbinic literature to do with prayer. It also resonates with the wider context of Luke-Acts, and with the wider corpus of the New Testament as a whole, insofar as it suggests that genuinely Christian discernment, which is grounded in the exegesis of sacred Scripture, takes place only by means of the working of God upon our minds.

There are two main points to be noted. First of all, the idiom used here by Luke, to "open the mind" (*dianoigein ton noun*), reflects an idiom occasionally attested in Jewish texts from the late Second Temple period written in Hebrew and Greek, and attested later in the Hebrew language of prayer in connection with understanding the Torah. That idiom is "to open the heart," in Hebrew *pathakh lev*, in which *lev* corresponds to the modern English "mind" more than to "heart," referring, in line with

[20] An approach to historical-critical exegesis that over-emphasizes the distinctiveness of the biblical writings at the expense of what they share in common is problematic on both historical and theological grounds. Grant Macaskill's profound work *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), one of the most important works of recent scholarship to navigate the difficult relationship between historical and theological engagement with the writings of the New Testament, evidences a particularly acute awareness of this.

[21] What follows is a revised form of two related but slightly different papers presented at the New Zealand Association of Theological Schools combined conference at Carey Baptist College, Auckland, June 28-30, 2016, and the Wisdom in Israel and in ANE Wisdom Literature section, European Association of Biblical Studies annual conference, Berlin, August 7–11, 2017. It is a privilege to be able to offer this revision in honour of the Rev Dr Tim Meadowcroft, and I have tried to relate what I have to offer to two of his interests, the book of Daniel and the theological exegesis of Scripture. I have not sought to be original—in theological discourse genuine originality should in any case occasion suspicion—and must apologize for not providing exhaustive references for every point that has been anticipated by other, wiser, and more knowledgeable, scholars than I. I can only dare hope that at least some of what I have written may open up a fresh angle on old traditions.

[22] On the use of the genitive of the articular infinitive, characteristic of Lukan style, see BDF §400 (8) (pp. 206–207); MH 3.141–142 (note that *tou pisteuein* is not attested in Codex Bezae).

Hebrew idiom, to the faculty of understanding. Second, the role the risen Jesus embodies in relation to the scriptures here recalls both apocalyptic texts such as Daniel, in which an angelic figure bestows understanding on a human recipient of the revelation of heavenly mysteries, and some of the exegetical texts from Qumran, chiefly the *pesher* to Habakkuk, in which a uniquely inspired human teacher enables an elect group to understand prophecies that had not been understood even by the prophet upon whom they had originally been bestowed. With the exception of Daniel, and conceivably also early Palestinian Jewish prayer texts that might be plausibly but provisionally reconstructed from the evidence of 2 Maccabees, the later rabbinic literature, and the rabbinic liturgy, it is improbable that Luke is directly dependent on these traditions, but the Lukan resurrection narrative nonetheless shares particular religious ideas in common with them.

The language of "opening" (*dianoigein*) is used at a number of points in the Lukan resurrection narrative. Here, this verb is related to both the recognition of the Lord Jesus following his resurrection, and the formerly hidden meaning of Israel's scriptures, which had borne veiled witness to the crucifixion and resurrection of the Anointed. Thus, whereas in Luke 24:16 the disciples on the road to Emmaus had failed to recognize their mysterious companion as the Lord because their eyes were restrained from recognizing him (*hoi de ophthalmoi autōn ekratounto tou mē epignōnai auton*), in Luke 24:31–32, their eyes "were opened" (*diēnoichthēsan*) so that they recognised him when he broke and shared bread with them, and they recall how their hearts had been burning within them as he "was opening" (*diēnoigen*) the scriptures to them on the road, explaining how, according to Moses and the Prophets, it was necessary for the Anointed to suffer and only then to enter into his Glory (*doxa*). The same verb, *dianoigein*, is later used in the Acts of the Apostles, where we read that the Lord opened (*diēnoixen*) the heart (*kardia*) of Lydia to attend to what was said by Paul on the Sabbath in a place of prayer (*proseuchē*) somewhere just outside Philippi (Acts 16:14), leading to her baptism, and the baptism of her household. This same verb is then used to indicate Paul's oral exposition of the meaning of the scriptures in the synagogue of Thessalonica, that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and rise from the dead (Acts 17:3). In this passage there is no direct object to the verb *dianoigein*, perhaps suggesting that this verb has already become, in effect, a technical verb referring to the exposition of the scriptures, perhaps anticipating the later rabbinic use of the Hebrew verb *pathakh* in a broadly comparable sense.[23] This usage of *dianoigein* is unique to Luke-Acts among the writings of the New Testament.[24] In the context of the whole of the narrative of Luke-

[23] I say *anticipating*, because there is no clear evidence to suggest that Luke is dependent on an already existing Jewish use of *pathakh* in this sense (as C. K. Barrett points out in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2; ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 810–811), even though, as I am arguing here, Luke probably *is* directly or indirectly dependent on an existing Jewish idiom *pathakh lev*, "open the heart."

[24] Its only use in the NT outside Luke-Acts is in Mark 7:34, where *dianoichthēti* is the Greek gloss of *ephphatha*, probably to be construed as the Aramaic *ithpeel* (or possibly *ithpaal*) of √*ptkh*, "be opened," in light of S. Morag, "Ἐφφαθά: Mark VII. 34: Certainly Hebrew, not Aramaic?," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 17 (1972): 198–202, who concludes, based on evidence drawn from Samaritan Aramaic, that the command Mark attributes to Jesus here is at least as likely to be Aramaic (√*ptkh* in the *ithpeel* stem) as Hebrew (Morag's analysis is followed by, e.g., Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1:1-8:36,* WBC 34A (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 395–396). Morag was responding to an earlier article by Isaac Rabinowitz ("Ἐφφαθά: Mark VII. 34: Certainly Hebrew, not Aramaic," *JSS* 16 (1971): 151–156), which had attempted in no uncertain terms to demolish Matthew Black's earlier defence of *ephphatha* as a

Acts, Acts 16:4 and 17:3, and by extension Acts 28:23, link the apostolic mission back to the resurrection narrative, in which the risen Jesus not only is the first to interpret the scriptures thus, but entrusts the same task—that is, the proclamation of the christological truth in the scriptures once veiled but now revealed—to the apostles who will bear witness to him at his command. It is an illustration of the familiar way that Luke 24:44–49 anticipates *in nuce* the entire unfolding of the apostolic mission, organically rooted in the things that Jesus began to do and to teach (*ērxato ho Iēsous poiein te kai didaskein*)[25] in his earthly ministry.

The use of *dianoigein* both for the recognition of Jesus, where it is the *eyes* (*ophthalmoi*) of the disciples that are opened, and for the exposition of the scriptures, where it is their hearts or *minds* (*nous*) that are opened so that the scriptures may be rightly understood, highlights the inseparability between the recognition of the identity of the risen Jesus, and the full understanding of the scriptures as referring, in a formerly veiled manner, to him. The disciples could not discern this prior to the resurrection, and it was both the fact of the resurrection, and the consequence of their encounter with the risen one, that healed their lack of understanding. Both the risen Jesus (Luke 24:25–27, 45–47) and later Paul (Acts 28:23), make the nature of the identity of the Anointed into the very meaning of the scriptures, which is clear to all those whose *hearts* (*kardia*, sing.) are not closed to understanding. Not only does this foreground the deep interconnection between the mission of Jesus and the apostolic mission, but it grounds the understanding of those who accepted the proclamation of Jesus and Paul itself in the scriptures, for not only the crucifixion and resurrection of the Anointed, but also the truth that some would fail to understand that this is what the scriptures had long foretold, belongs to the unfolding of scriptural prophecy. Acts culminates, after all, with Paul's identification of Isa 6:9-10 with the rejection of his proclamation by some in the synagogue at Rome: "the hearts of this people have become dull" (*epachunthē gar hē kardia tou laou toutou*).

The nouns *kardia*, "heart" and *nous*, "mind," of course, are essentially synonymous here, as is widely recognised. They each denote the organ of intellection. The noun *nous* is used only in Luke 24:45 in the Gospels and Acts, though it is hardly uncommon elsewhere in the New Testament,[26] and the verb *noein* is certainly used in the Gospels.[27] It is far more prominent in the writings of Philo of Alexandria,

---

transliteration of an Aramaic reflexive verb with assimilation of *t* in pronunciation ("*EΦΦAΘA* (Mk 7.34), [*TA*] *ΠAΣXA* (Mt. 26.18W), [*TA*] *ΣABBATA* (passim), [*TA*] *⊿IL⊿PAXMA* (Mt. 17.24bis)," in *Mélanges bibliques en hommage au R. P. Béda Rigaux*, ed. A. Deschamps and A. de Halleux (Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 57–62 (57–60)). Black, in turn, was responding to an earlier iteration of Rabinowitz's argument, in "'Be Opened' = Ἐφφαθά (Mark 7 34): Did Jesus Speak Hebrew?," *ZNW* 53 (1962): 229–238 (see also John A. Emerton, "*Maranatha* and *Ephphatha*," *JTS* 18 (1967): 427–431). Rabinowitz's argument was that *ephphatha* ought to be read instead as a transliteration of a Hebrew *niphal* form of √*ptkh*. Rabinowitz's construal of this form remains possible (as Emerton explicitly, and Morag tacitly, admitted).

[25] Acts 1:1. The organic connection between the apostolic mission and the pre-resurrection work of Jesus is somewhat obscured by the translation of Acts 1:1 in the NRSV, in which Luke refers to all that "Jesus did and taught from the beginning."

[26] Rom 1:28; 7:23, 25; 11:34; 12:2; 14:5; 1 Cor 1:10; 2:16; 14:14, 15, 19; Eph 4:17, 23; Phil 4:7; Col 2:18; 1 Thess 2:2; 1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 3:8; Tit 1:15; Rev 13:18; 17:9.

[27] In the Gospels, see Matt 15:17; 16:9, 11; 24:15; Mark 7:18; 8:17; 13:14; John 12:40 (= Isa 6:10, where the dative *tē kardia* [1QIsa^a = *blbbw*] indicates the instrument with which God's people will fail to understand) (note: the LXX

along with its approximate synonym *dianoia*, and will become a very important term of Christian anthropology in the Patristic period.[28] In contrast, the noun *kardia* is much more commonly used in the Gospels and Acts, in line with the tendency of the Greek scriptures to render Heb. *lev* and *levav* with Gk. *kardia*. The correspondence between *kardia* and *nous* is clear from the way the constituent pericopae of the Lukan resurrection narrative are interrelated, and by the close similarity between Luke 24:45 and Acts 16:14. In Luke 24:25, the disciples have failed to understand the words of the prophets because they are "mindless and slow of *heart* (*kardia*) to believe," in 24:32 it is the "hearts" (*kardia*, sing.) of the disciples that were burning as the risen Jesus was opening the scriptures to them, and in 24:38 it is in their "heart" (*kardia*) that doubts (*dialogismoi*) are rising up. Then in Acts 16:14, the Lord "opened [Lydia's] heart to attend" (*diēnoixen tēn kardian prosechein*) to what Paul was saying, just as the risen Jesus had "opened [the disciples'] minds to understand" (*diēnoixen ton noun tou sunienai*) the scriptures. The variation in vocabulary reflects good narrative style better than would the slavish reproduction of identical words and phrases, the sense being essentially the same in each case.

At least part of the background to this lies in the Greek text of Isa 6:9–10, quoted by Paul in the synagogue in Rome at the end of Acts to those who turn their back on his exposition of the scriptures (Acts 28:23–28). There, it is because of a hardness of "heart" (*kardia*) that their ancestors had failed to "understand" (*sunienai*) the message conveyed by the prophet. Moreover, Isaiah was not speaking with his own, independent voice, but rather with that of the Holy Spirit, which meant, strongly echoing Luke 24:44–49, that the meaning of the prophecy would not become clear until Paul's audience in the synagogue in Rome divided over whether or not to accept the Gospel he was proclaiming to them. This passage from Isaiah has, of course, already been cited by Luke's Jesus in the context of the explanation of the parable of the sower (Luke 8:10; par. Matt 13:14–15; Mark 4:12), where again *kardia* denotes the organ of intellection (Luke 8:12, 15; par. Matt 13:19).

The suggestion that the early Christian appropriation of Isa 6:9-10 is fundamental to understanding Luke 24:44–49 and Acts 28:23–28 is hardly novel, but it is important not to be misled by the canonical context into supposing that this exhausts the intertextual resonance of these passages. To be sure, Isa 6:9–10 is of paramount significance because it belongs to the pattern of prophecy and fulfilment to which both Luke 24:44–49 and Acts 28:23–28 allude, and it is explicitly quoted in the latter passage. Isaiah evokes the notion of the hardening of the heart as a figure for the constitutional inability of the people of God to perceive the truth of things. Equal attention needs to be paid, however, to the converse, that is, the *opening* of the heart to perceive faithfully that which is true. It should at least be considered that, in addition to Isa 6:9-10, the Lukan narrative is also evoking the living language of prayer of the Jewish communities of the late Second Temple period. The evidence for this is primarily to be

---

of Isa 6:10, and the other quotations of this passage in the NT, have *sunienai* rather than *noein*). In the Epistles, see Rom 1:20; Eph 3:4; 1 Tim 1:7; 2 Tim 2:7; Heb 11:3.

[28] On the intellect in the writings of the Church Fathers, see A. N. Williams, *The Divine Sense: The Intellect in Patristic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). More work needs to be done on the relationship between the patristic understanding of the intellect and the understanding(s) of the intellect in the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

found in 2 Maccabees and the Qumran scrolls,[29] and secondarily—though no less significantly—in prayers preserved in the Jewish liturgy and the Babylonian Talmud (their relatively late date notwithstanding). A cursory survey only will be offered here, but a more thorough and penetrating study of the echoes of Jewish prayer throughout the Lukan narrative is a *desideratum*.

In the first letter cited in 2 Maccabees from the Jews of Jerusalem and Judaea to their fellow Jews in the Egyptian diaspora, the epistolographer expresses the wish that God would give his addressees a "heart" (*kardia*) to "revere" (*sebesthai*) him, and to do his will (*ta thelēmata*, pl.) "with a great heart" (*kardia megalē*) and "with a willing soul" (*psuchē boulomenē*). He further expresses the wish that God would "open your heart to his law and to the commandments" (*dianoixai tēn kardian hymōn en tō nomō autou kai en tois prostagmasi*). There are strong echoes here of passages in the Jewish scriptures, particularly those that preserve the language of prayer. In Ps 102:7 (LXX) (= Ps 103:7 in the MT), for example, the psalmist blesses the Lord, "who made known his ways to Moses, and his will (*ta thelēmata*, pl.)[30] to the sons of Israel." Obedience to the commandments in the Jewish scriptures is chiefly a matter of the "heart" (usually Heb. *lev* or *levav* and Gk. *kardia*), which is, of course, what is in mind in Deut 6:4–9,[31] where Israel is commanded to love (*ahav*) YHWH by observing the commandments. In Ezek 11:19–20, the Lord will replace the stone heart of the returning exiles with a fleshly heart (Heb. *lev basar* and Gk. *kardia sarkinē*) in order to walk in his commandments, a motif that is shared by passages later in Ezekiel, and of course in Jeremiah. In Jer 38:31–34 (LXX) (= Jer 31:31-34 in the MT), YHWH will put his laws into the minds" of the returning exiles (*epi tēn dianoian*, where the Heb. reads *beqirbam*, "within them"), and write them "upon their hearts" (*epi kardias autōn*, where the Heb. reads *al libbam*, sing., "upon their heart(s)"). In Ezek 36:26–27, obedience to the commandments results from the divine gift of a new heart (Heb. *lev* and Gk. *kardia*) and spirit (Heb. *ruakh* and Gk. *pneuma*), and from YHWH placing his own spirit (Heb. *ruakh* and Gk. *pneuma*) within the returning exiles. Importantly, these passages make the transformation of the heart a divine gift, the gracious initiative of God in redeeming his exiled people.

The work of the Chronicler echoes this use of the language of the "heart" in connection with obedience.[32] David commands Solomon to serve his ancestral god "with a whole heart and a willing soul" (*belev shalem uvenefesh khafetsah*) in 1 Chron 28:9 (Gk. *en kardia teleia kai psuchē thelousē*), a passage that may well be reflected in the Greek *kardia megalē kai psuchē boulomenē* in 2 Macc 1:3.[33] David prays in 1 Chron 29:19 that YHWH would give his son Solomon a whole heart (Heb. *levav shalem* but Gk. *kardia*

[29] Second Maccabees is not uncommonly cited by commentators on Luke and Acts (and *vice versa*). See e.g. Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 403 n. 24, Pervo suggesting 2 Macc 1:4 as the source for the idiom; Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 26. What is less in evidence among Lukan scholars, however, is close attention to the further intertextual resonances suggested by 2 Macc 1:4, to which commentators on the latter have helpfully pointed (see further below).

[30] The MT of Ps 103:7 reads *alilotav*, "his deeds."

[31] For a most compelling Christian theological account of Deut 6:4-9, see R. W. L. Moberly, *Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 7–40.

[32] 1 Chron 22:19; 28:9; 29:9, 17, 18; 2 Chron 6:14, 37, 38; 11:16; 12:14; 15:12, 15, 17; 16:9; 19:3, 9; 20:33; 22:9; 25:2; 29:34; 30:19; 31:21; 34:31; 36:13.

[33] 1 Chron 28:9 is cited in connection with 2 Macc 1:3 in Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 26.

agathē, "good heart") to observe his laws, statutes, and commandments. In his benediction in 1 Chron 29:10–19, David beseeches God to make the heart of the people firm towards him (*vehakhen levavam elekha*, "and strengthen their heart(s) towards you"), and to give Solomon a whole heart (Heb. *lev shalem* and Gk. *kardia agathē*) to observe and do the commandments.[34] In 2 Chron 17:6 we read that the heart (Heb. *lev* and Gk. *kardia*) of King Jehoshaphat of Judah was exalted in the ways of YHWH, which meant walking in his commandments (2 Chron 17:4). The phrase "a whole heart" (*lev shalem*) in reference to piety occurs only in Chronicles (1 Chron 28:9; 29:9) and Isaiah (38:3) in the Hebrew scriptures, but is attested thereafter at Qumran, where it occurs in the Damascus Document and, notably, the Thanksgiving Hymns. In CD I, 10, when God appraises (*byn* qal) the deeds of the nascent community, he recognises that they have sought him "with a whole heart" (*blb shlm*) and raises up for them a righteous teacher to direct them "in the way of his heart" (*bdrk lbw*) (CD I, 11). In the Thanksgiving Hymns, in a long prayer of blessing beginning at 1QH^a VII, 21 and probably continuing to 1QH^a VIII, 40 or 41,[35] the hymnist claims to serve the Lord "in truth and (with) a whole heart" (*b'mt wblb shlm*) (1QH^a VIII, 25). This strongly echoes the language of Chronicles, but elsewhere at Qumran there are more obvious echoes of the language of Deut 6:4–9, whether as a work of Scripture or as part of the living tradition of prayer.[36] In CD XV, 9–10, for example, the covenant entails returning to the Torah "with all one's heart and soul" (*bkl lb w[b]k[l] npsh*), a phrase repeated in CD XV, 12, and in 1QH^a VII, 23 the hymnist claims to have purified himself from iniquity with all his heart and soul (*bkwl lb wbkwl npsh*).

What we do not find in the Hebrew scriptures is the language of "opening" the heart or mind. The conceptual foundations of the opening of the heart can, nevertheless, perhaps be traced back to Deut 30:6. The unblocking of a stubborn heart (cf. Isa 6:9–10) is a work God will perform for an exiled and repentant Israel, drawing them back to obey His commandments. It may go back further still, to Hos 13:8aβ, where God is imagined as a bear robbed of its young, who will "rip open the casing of their hearts" (Heb. *eqra segor libbam* and Gk. *diarrēxō sunkleismon kardias autōn*),[37] because his people have forgotten him. In Ps 119:18, we do find the language of opening (Heb. *glh* and Gk. *apokaluptein*) the eyes in connection with the commandments (*gal enay vabbitah / niflaot mittoratekha*, "open my eyes so that I may behold wonders from your Teaching"), but not yet the opening of the heart or mind.[38] Second

[34] The Septuagint uses *prostagmata* in 1 Chron 29:19 and 2 Chron 34:31 to translate *khuqqim* (cf. 2 Macc 1:4, where *prostagmata* is collocated with *nomos*).

[35] Hartmut Stegemann, "The Number of Psalms in *1QHodayot*^{a} and Some of their Sections," in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. E. G. Chazon, STDJ 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 191–234 (215); Hartmut Stegemann and Eileen Schuller, *Qumran Cave 1.III: 1QHodayot*^{a} *with Incorporation of 1QHodayot*^{b} *and 4QHodayot*$^{a\text{-}f}$, DJD 40 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2009), 99–100, 110–111. 1QH^a VIII, 26 begins *brwk 'th*, "Blessed are you …," but this probably begins a new sub-section rather than an entire new prayer of blessing (thus Stegemann, "The Number of Psalms in *1QHodayot*^{a}," 215, 230–231).

[36] Cf. also Ps 119:2, 10, 34, 58, 69, 145. Psalm 119, of course, is replete with echoes of Deut 6:4–9. For the heart as the locus of obedience, see Ps 119:80, in which the psalmist prays that his heart might be perfect in God's statutes (*yehi libbi tamim bekhuqqekha*). For a recent Christian theological account of Ps 119, see Rebecca Eaton Burgess, "A Christian Reading of Psalm 119: An Exploration of Torah as God's Self-Revelation using a Trinitarian Hermeneutic" (PhD diss., University of Otago, 2017).

[37] Following the NJPS translation.

[38] Jonathan Goldstein has suggested that the idiom found in 2 Macc 1:4 has been transferred to the heart from the eyes (citing Ps 119:18) and ears, but also raises the possibility that it could have been extrapolated from Hos 13:6–

Maccabees 1:4 aside, we initially find the language of opening the heart or mind in some of the prayer texts from Qumran, specifically the hymn with which the cave 1 copy of the Rule of the Community closes, and, again, in the Thanksgiving Hymns. In each case it is God who opens the heart, and the result is the acquisition of divine insight.

So in 1QS XI, 15–16, a hymnist, presumably a *maskil*, blesses "My God, who opens the heart of your servant to knowledge" (*brwk 'th 'ly hpwtkh ld'h lb 'bdkh*). The form of this line of the blessing is, of course, reminiscent of the benedictions of the *Amidah*, particularly *barukh attah adonay khonen haddaat*, "Blessed are you, O Lord, who graciously grants knowledge." Very similar to 1QS XI, 15–16 is a passage from the Thanksgiving Hymns in which the hymnist addresses God as one who has opened his heart to divine insight (*['th ']ly ptkhth lbby lbyntkh*) (1QH^a XXII, 31).[39] This precise idiom does not occur again in the extant fragments of the Thanksgiving Hymns, or in the extant scrolls from Qumran as a corpus, but broadly similar idioms do. In 1QH^a XVIII, 33 the hymnist says that his heart has been opened to the eternal fountain (*lbby nptkh lmqwr 'wlm*), and here we should take the niphal verb *nptkh*, "is opened" as a divine passive and the eternal fountain as the fountain of knowledge referred to elsewhere in this work (see 1QH^a X, 19–20; XX, 32; XXIII, 16). The hymnist in 1QH^a X, 19–20, by virtue of this bestowal of divine insight, is in turn able to open the fountain of knowledge to others who are graced with the ability to understand, because God has placed understanding in his heart (*bynh smth blbbw lptwkh mqwr d't lkwl mbynym*).

In 1QH^a XX, 36–37, the hymnist asks, "How could I understand unless you had given me insight? What could I sp[ea]k if You had not opened my heart?" (*w'ykh 'byn ky' 'm hskltny wmh 'd[br] blw' glyth lby*) (cf. XVIII, 8–9). A few lines later (XXI, 6–7), he says, "for to one of uncircumcised ear the matter is uncovered, and the heart [of stone perceives w]onders" (*ky' l'rl 'wzn nptkh dbr wlb [h'bn ytbwnn bn]pl'wt*).[40] A little later in the same hymn (XXI, 10), he continues, "You have opened a heart of dust to be attentive …" (*wtglh lb 'pr lhšmr*). In 1QH^a XXIV, 28–29, God has "opened my heart [to] the wonder of Your mysteries" (*[l]pl' rzykh glyth lby*).[41] Finally, based on a comparison with these passages and the fragmentary parallel in 4QH^b, the editors have proposed that 1QH^a XV, 40–41 should read, "[And yo]u, my God, [have made my foot firm on the path of your heart, you have opened my ear to rumours of your wonders, and my heart to understand] your truth" (*[w't]h 'ly [kwnnth rgly bdrk lbkh wlšmw'wt pl'kh glyth 'wzny wlby lhbyn] b'mtk*).[42]

In the case of 2 Maccabees, the idiom "open the heart" echoes not only the Hebrew of these Qumran texts, but more closely an idiom known from the rabbinic language of prayer. In the first of the prefixed letters with which 2 Maccabees opens (2 Macc 1:1–10a), the noun *kardia* appears three times as

8 (*II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 41A (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 143). In respect of opening the ear, in Job 33:16a Elihu claims that God "opens the ear(s) of human beings" (Heb. *yigleh ozen anashim*), which in the LXX turns into *anakaluptei noun anthrōpōn*, "he opens the *mind(s)* of human beings."

[39] Here, to "open the mind" (*ptkh lbb*) is parallel with "uncover the ear" (*glh 'zn*).

[40] For the reconstruction, see Stegemann, Schuller, and Newsom, *Qumran Cave 1.III*, 261, 264.

[41] For the reconstruction *[l]pl'* in 1QH^a XXIV, 28, see Stegemann, Schuller, and Newsom, *Qumran Cave 1.III*, 283, 287.

[42] Stegemann, Schuller, and Newsom, *Qumran Cave 1.III*, 199, 213.

the Jews in Jerusalem and Judaea express the wish that God would give their Egyptian brothers a heart to worship him (*dōē hymin kardian pasin eis to sebesthai auton*) and do his will with a whole heart and a willing soul (*poiein ta thelēmata kardia megalē kai psychē boulomenē*), and that he would open their hearts to his Law and to the commandments (*dianoixai tēn kardian hymōn en tō nomō autou kai en tois prostagmasi*). Assuming that the letter is indeed authentic, it would date from either 143/142 BCE (2 Macc 1:7), or from 125/124 BCE (2 Macc 1:10), depending on a number of rather complicated issues that cannot be entered into here. What does seem to be clear is that the language of the letter is replete with idioms attested in texts that came to be regarded as scriptural, and that unlike the main body of the narrative that follows, which claims to be an *epitome* of a much larger work in Greek by Jason of Cyrene, the letter is almost certainly a translation from an Aramaic or Hebrew original.[43] What is also clear is that even if the original was in Aramaic, the letter strongly echoes the Hebrew language of prayer known from later liturgical texts.

In 1940, Charles C. Torrey offered a retroversion of the two prefixed letters from Greek into Aramaic, to illustrate his view that the Greek text was a largely faithful translation from an already slightly corrupt Aramaic original. In 2 Macc 1:4, Torrey retroverted the Greek *dianoixai tēn kardian hymōn en tō nomō autou kai en tois prostagmasi* to the hypothetical Aramaic *nyptkh lbbkwn [lmkhkm] b'wryth wbqymwhy wlhshlmh*,[44] which he then translated, "may he give you a heart [*to understand*] his law and his statutes *and to fulfil them*."[45] His rationale for reconstructing a missing verb, the *peal* infinitive *lmkhkm*, is because in his view there needed to be a way of accounting for the Greek preposition *en* in the translation. The disappearance of the verb was, according to Torrey, to be explained by virtue of the fact that *lbbkwn* and *lmkhkm* would have looked similar enough in the cursive script to provoke an instance of scribal parablepsis.[46] It is by no means clear that a verb has gone missing here, because as we shall see in a moment the Greek preposition *en* in fact reflects a very literal rendering of an idiom attested in Hebrew prayer, but I do think it noteworthy that Torrey should have reached for a verb of intellection to fill in the gap he perceived in the text: God is invoked to open the hearts of his people precisely so that they will *understand* his Law.

It is almost certainly the case that the language of 2 Macc 1:4 is best explained as an allusion to an ancient prayer akin to the blessing which still forms part of the *Qedushah Desidra*,[47] or the prayer of Mar bar Ravina cited in the Talmud Bavli (*b. Ber.* 17a),[48] both of which contain the same idiom of opening the heart *to the Law*. The prayer of Mar bar Ravina contains the plea "open my heart to your Law, and let my soul pursue your commandments" (*petakh libbi betoratekha uvemitsvotekha tirdof nafshi*). The prayer is

[43] Opinions vary as to which is the more likely. Goldstein leaves open the question of whether the letter was originally *written* in Hebrew (Aramaic he regards as less likely, though the letter does reflect the conventions of Aramaic epistolography), or merely *thought* in Hebrew or Aramaic (*II Maccabees*, 139).
[44] Charles C. Torrey, "The Letters Prefixed to Second Maccabees," *JAOS* 60 (1940): 141.
[45] Torrey, "The Letters Prefixed to Second Maccabees," 146-147.
[46] Torrey, "The Letters Prefixed to Second Maccabees," 141 n. 14.
[47] Cited in connection with 2 Macc 1:4 in Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 142, 143.
[48] *The Koren Siddur with Introduction, Translation and Commentary by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks* (Jerusalem: Koren Publishers, 2013), 135. The *Qedushah Desidra* is cited in connection with 2 Macc 1:4 in Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 143; Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 137; Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 26.

drenched in the language of Scripture. The preposition *b* surely indicates the grammatical object of the verbs "open" (*ptkh*) and "pursue" (*rdp*), which presumably means that there is no need to posit any missing verb in the original of the first prefixed letter in 2 Maccabees, any more than we need to posit a missing verb in this rabbinic prayer. In the form attested in the Babylonian Talmud, this prayer cites the closing invocation from Psalm 19, further illustrating the conceptual background to the connection between the heart and a devotional piety grounded in Torah observance: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart find favour before you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer" (*yihyu leratson imre fi vehegyon libbi lefanekha adonay tsuri vegoali*). The Gemara a little later cites a saying which it attributes to the fourth generation tanna R. Meir: "Study with all your heart and with all your soul to know my ways and to be diligent at the doors of my Law. Guard my Law in your heart and let reverence for me be before your eyes" (*gemor bekhol levavekha uvekhol nafshekha ladaat et darki velishqod al daltey torati netsor torati belibbekha veneged eynekha tihyeh yirati*). In the liturgy, the *Qedushah Desidra* appears in the context of a prayer beginning "A redeemer will come to Zion" (quoting Isa 59:20), which reflects the ancient custom of studying the Prophets after prayer.[49] It contains the plea, "May he open our hearts to His Law, and put into our hearts love and reverence for him, that we may do his will and serve him with a whole heart" (*hu yiftakh libbenu betorato veyasem belibbenu ahavato veyirato velaasot retsono uleovdo belevav shalem*).[50] Here the opening of the heart to the Law is a prayer for God to inspire obedience to his commandments. Now it must be stressed that we do not have direct textual evidence that this prayer existed at the time of the letter quoted at the beginning of 2 Maccabees, but the fact that the Qumran scrolls attest the idiom of "opening the heart" in the context of prayer, and that 2 Macc 1:3–4 explicitly connects this idiom with obedience to the Law,[51] strongly suggests that some form of it did exist, and that it was already familiar from the context of the reading and study of the scriptures. If this is the case, then given that the Gospel of Luke concludes with a reference to those who had been with Jesus "blessing God" (*eulogountes ton theon*) in the Temple (Luke 24:53), that is, to their prayer, and given that when Luke tells us that the Lord opened Lydia's heart to attend to what was said by Paul (Acts 16:14) it is at a place of prayer (*proseuchē*), it seems at least plausible that Luke is drawing on precisely the familiar Jewish language of prayer.

The use of *nous* rather than *kardia* in Luke 24:45 still needs to be accounted for. Certainly, as suggested above, the author's desire for stylistic variation would be an obvious explanation, but the language of Luke 24:45 surely also reflects the fact that *nous* was a known translation equivalent for *lev*

---

[49] *The Koren Siddur*, 174-175. The *Qedushah Desidra* is alluded to in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Sot.* 49a), where, justified by a wordplay between the Aramaic noun *sidra*, "order" and its Hebrew cognate *sedarim*, "orders" in Job 10:22, it is said that the world continues to exist because of the recitation of this prayer. The noun *sidra* could be used to denote a section of Scripture (Jastrow 959a).

[50] I am citing this prayer from the text of the modern Ashkenazic liturgy (*The Koren Siddur*, 177).

[51] The absence of a verb of intellection probably does not reflect a corruption of a lost Aramaic original (*pace* Torrey), but rather the fact that 2 Macc 1:3–4 may be concerned with *obedience to* the Law as much as *understanding of* the Law. The grammatical similarity between 2 Macc 1:3–4 and the *Qedushah Desidra* is noteworthy, and even though the prayer absorbed later elements as it evolved, reflecting in particular its connection with the practice of discoursing about Scripture in Aramaic, its petition for the opening of the heart to the Law is itself surely ancient. The jussive *yiftakh*, "may he open" corresponds to the aorist optative *dianoixai*, the distributive singular *libbenu*, "our heart(s)" corresponds to *tēn kardian hymōn*, "your heart(s)," and the preposition *b* before *torato*, "to his Law" corresponds to the preposition *en* before *tō nomō autou*.

and *levav*, attested very occasionally in the Greek scriptures.[52] It is a considerably less frequent translation equivalent for *lev* and *levav* and than is *kardia*, but the fact that it is used at all confirms both that in at least some contexts there was a recognised functional equivalence between *kardia* and *nous*.[53] In Exod 7:22–23, *lev* is used twice to refer to the heart of Pharaoh, but the translator chooses *kardia* for the first instance and *nous* for the second. Similarly, in Josh 14:7–8, *levav* is used to refer to the mind of Caleb (in the MT, which reads *kaasher im levavi*, but of *Moses* in the LXX, which reads *kata ton noun autou*)[54] and then *lev* to refer to the heart of the people of Israel, but *nous* is used in the first instance and *kardia* in the second, though in this case it is said that Caleb's companions caused the heart of the people to "melt" (Heb. *mss* hiphil, but Gk. *metastēnai*, "alter"), which is perhaps more appropriately predicated of the heart than the mind. In Isa 10:7 there are two instances of *levav*, but the first is represented by *psuchē* and the second by *nous*.

In Luke 24:45, the consequence of the risen Jesus opening the mind of the disciples is that they understand, and the object of their understanding is a corpus of revelatory literature that would, without an interpreter, be impossible to comprehend correctly. Although there is no evidence at all that any of the authors of the Gospels were acquainted directly with the *pesharim* from Qumran, it is worth noting that the closest analogy to the role of Jesus as scriptural interpreter is precisely in the Qumran *pesharim*, specifically in 1QpHab VII, 1-5, where the ancient prophecies of Habakkuk are understood to be cryptic, even to the prophet himself, until a divinely inspired interpreter appears to reveal their hidden meaning. This inspired interpreter is the equally cryptically named "righteous teacher" (*mwrh htsdq*). The analogy is suggestive, but admittedly imprecise. While the meaning of the scriptures is cryptic in both cases, in the Habakkuk *pesher* their meaning concerns the events that would come upon the elect community in the last generation, whereas in the Gospel of Luke the meaning of the scriptures is related to the identity of the Anointed, who is also the inspired interpreter himself. So the *meaning* of the scriptures is different in each case, but an inspired interpreter is nonetheless necessary in both contexts for the meaning of the scriptures to be properly understood.

A final point concerns a similarity between Luke 24:44–49 and the book of Daniel. Both Luke-Acts and the Qumran scrolls are related, in different ways and to different degrees, to the literature and thought of Jewish apocalyptic. There is considerably more to be said about this, but for now one similarity between Luke 24:44–49 and Daniel will have to suffice. Luke 24:44–45 shares with the book of Daniel both the idea of the heart or mind as the organ of understanding, and the idea that the meaning of Scripture is opaque until an authoritative, inspired interpreter comes along to make the meaning clear, and to bestow understanding. In Daniel, this takes place, notably, in response to an act of prayer (Dan 9:4–19). In Dan 9:2, the "scrolls" (*sefarim*) are pondered by Daniel so that he can understand the hidden meaning behind the seventy-year prophecy of Jeremiah. The meaning is opaque until he has offered a

[52] See Exod 7:23; Josh 14:7; Job 7:17; Isa 10:7, 12; 41:22.
[53] For a very clear example in the NT of this functional equivalence, see Eph 4:17–19, in which *nous*, *dianoia*, and *kardia* are used together.
[54] Presumably resulting originally from the well-known difficulty of distinguishing *w* and *y* in the square script.

prayer of repentance, which notably concerns Israel's failure to observe Torah, as if their hearts had hitherto been closed to it. Then the *angelus interpres* Gabriel descends in order to grant Daniel understanding (*lehaskilekha vinah*) (Dan 9:22). In the following chapter, we read that Daniel's prayer and fasting lead to an unnamed *angelus interpres* being sent to Daniel to make him understand (*lahavinekha*) what is going to happen to his people in the latter days (Dan 10:14). The angel is responding to Daniel setting his mind to understand and to humble himself before his God (*natatta et libbekha lehavin ulehitannot lifney elohekha*) (Dan 10:12). In the Old Greek, the translator renders this *edōkas to prosōpon sou dianoēthēnai kai tapeinōthēnai enantion kuriou tou theou*, "you gave your face to understand and to be humbled before the Lord your God." In the translation attributed to Theodotion, the angel says to Daniel *edōkas tēn kardian sou tou sunienai kai kakōthēnai enantion tou theou sou*, "you gave your heart to understand and to be abased before your God." Inasmuch as the Lukan infancy narrative recalls aspects of the language and thought of the apocalypses of Daniel 7–12, so too does the Lukan resurrection narrative, and it is, broadly speaking, in relation to this conceptual world that Luke 24:44–49 makes the most obvious sense.

III

A few brief words ought to be offered in conclusion. To read Luke 24:44–49 is to be reminded that theological exegesis, construed truthfully, is not an exercise of unsanctified human reason, but a prayerful exercise of discernment that comes to us as a gift of God, as a bestowal of divine insight. A patient engagement with the ancient literary environment of the narrative helps us to see, furthermore, that this notion is grounded in a Jewish apocalyptic pattern of thought—this is, in fact, the primary sense in which "apocalyptic was … the mother of all Christian theology"[55]—and more than likely in the lived experience of Jewish prayer. Thoughtful attention to the literary environment of Jewish Palestine in the late Second Temple period should not only enrich our apprehension of Luke 24:44–49, but remind us of the extent to which this narrative is fundamentally the product of a distinctively Jewish movement.

Theological exegesis is, moreover, inseparable from a robust Christian anthropology. It entails the recognition that, left to its own devices, the human heart and mind—thus, the faculty of understanding—has suffered the *sclērōsis* consequent upon human sin, and must be redeemed and transfigured, so that the Christian may read with the mind of Christ.[56] This means that faithful exegesis

[55] This essay may be read, in a sense, as a confessional footnote to the corrective response by Florentino García Martínez to this highly problematic claim of Ernst Käsemann: "Die Apokalyptik ist—da man die Predigt Jesu nicht eigentlich als Theologie bezeichnen kann—die Mutter aller christlichen Theologie gewesen" ("Die Anfänger christlichen Theologie," *ZTK* 57 (1960): 180). García Martínez was able to revisit, and critique, Käsemann's argument in light of the intensive research that has been done in recent decades towards a more precise understanding of Jewish apocalyptic literature, and in light of the full publication of the Qumran scrolls. Both of these developments in scholarship have necessitated a wholesale reconsideration of the nature of first-century CE Palestinian Judaism and of the earliest Christian movement within it. See García Martínez, "Is Jewish Apocalyptic the Mother of Christian Theology?," in *Qumranica Minora I: Qumran Origins and Apocalypticism,* vol. 1, STDJ 63 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 129–151.

[56] See esp. Rom 7:23, 25; 11:34 (= Isa 40:13, where Heb. *ruakh yhvh* = Gk. *noun kuriou*); 12:2; 1 Cor 2:16 (= Isa 40:13); Eph 4:23–24; Rev 13:18 (!); 17:9. Contrast Rom 1:28; Eph 4:17–18; Col 2:18; 1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 3:8; Tit 1:15.

presumes the practice of spiritual discipline. Perhaps few claims could be more counter-cultural in the contemporary academic environment than that genuinely faithful exegesis, in the Christian sense, is inseparable from the rediscovery of the importance of *askēsis*. Equally, this entails an epistemic humility that recognizes that no matter how faithfully we might happen to discern the will of God in Scripture, we are tempted to err, and, most seriously, to err in claiming that God is unequivocally on our side.[57] To seek to read Scripture in the light of the resurrection of the Anointed is, in part, to recognize just how much we share with the earliest disciples, who not only failed to recognize their Lord on the road, but whose hearts had been closed to apprehending him in the scriptures.

[57] For this risk, compare Luke 24:44–49 with *Barn.* 10:12, which shares much with the older text, and would scarcely be difficult to reconcile with the thought of Acts 28:23–28: "[H]ow could they know or understand (*noēsai ē sunienai*) these things? We, however, speak as those who know (*noēsantes*) the commandments in an upright way, as the Lord wished. For this reason he circumcised our hearing and our hearts, that we may understand these things (*perietemen tas akoas hēmōn kai tas kardias, hina suniōmen tauta*)" (*The Apostolic Fathers II*, Loeb Classical Library 25, ed. and trans, B. D. Ehrman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 50-51). The *Epistle of Barnabas*, like Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, belongs to the deeply problematic *Adversus Judaeos* tradition, but it was nonetheless transmitted by Christian scribes, and cannot be easily disentangled from the early Christian appropriation of the Jewish scriptures that was formed within, and between the lines of, the writings of the New Testament. A morally sound approach to Christian theological exegesis needs to face squarely the often horrifying consequences of sincere Christian attempts to read the Jewish scriptures in the light of Christ, and to hold them (and ourselves) to account.