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### A Narrative Critical Approach to the Gospel of Peter with a Focus on its Christology

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A NARRATIVE CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE  
*Gospel of Peter*  
WITH A FOCUS ON ITS CHRISTOLOGY

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Seminar Paper Submitted to the Faculty of  
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology,  
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

By

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 7/17/02  
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## CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	1	
Date and Provenance of the Gospel of Peter	3	
The Scholarly Discussion Regarding the Relation Between the Gospel of Peter and the Canonical Gospels	4	
CHAPTER I. DEFINITION OF THE TEXT		6
CHAPTER II. SETTINGS	11	
Spatial Setting	11	
Temporal Setting	13	
Social Setting	15	
Summary	21	
CHAPTER III. EVENTS	22	
Episodic Approach	22	
Organic Approach to the Plot		28
Summary	29	
CHAPTER IV. CHARACTERS	31	
The Lord	31	
Religious Leaders	33	
God	34	
The Disciples	35	
The Jewish People	36	
Minor Characters	37	
Summary	38	
CONCLUSION	39	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	43	

## INTRODUCTION

“The *whole* creation was amazed, marvelling and saying, ‘What new mystery, then, is this? The Judge is judged, and holds his peace; the Invisible One is seen, and is not ashamed; the Incomprehensible is laid hold upon, and is not indignant; the Illimitable is circumscribed, and doth not resist; the Impassible suffereth, and doth not avenge; the Immortal dieth, and answereth not a word; the Celestial is laid in the grave, and endureth! What new mystery is this?’” (Melito of Sardis, *Discourse on the Soul and Body*).<sup>1</sup>

The absolute centrality of the Scriptures’ Christological affirmations always was mysteriously combined with its scandal. The *μωρία* of the personal identity between God with the lowest man is the paradoxical *δύναμις θεοῦ* for redemption of the relation between God and men. Any heresy ultimately is the human impossibility to accept this mystery, core of the Gospel.

Docetism was perhaps the earliest attempt to avoid the scandalous Biblical Christology by introducing the element of the apparentness (*δοκεῖν*). Yamuchi says that Docetism is not a heresy in its own right, it rather is an attitude toward the reality of the Christological scandal that infected a number of heresies.<sup>2</sup> Each Docetic movement applied the relativizing principle of the apparentness to different realities of the Biblical Christology in order to save the impassibility of the Lord’s divinity. The most extreme (Marcion, Mani, Saturninus) considered Christ as a phantom without any physical body at all. Others (Valentinians) held that he did have a body but a heavenly one, of a totally different substance that was not subject to our physical limitations. Finally, others (Valentinians, Basilides, Cerinthus, Ebionites, Ophites, Carpocrates) accepted Jesus’ corporality but denied his identity with the divine Christ, who either stood with Jesus all the time yet without suffering, or adopted him at the Baptism until before the passion, when the divinity either abandoned the human Jesus or exchanged his form with that of Simon of Cyrene, so that it was the latter who suffered and died in his stead.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., *The Twelve Patriarchs, Excerpts and Epistles, The Clementina, Apocrypha, Decretals, Memoirs of Edessa and Syrian Documents, Remains of the First Ages*, vol. 8 of *The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325: Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. A. Cleveland Coxe (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995), 756. We will follow S. Schwertner’s abbreviation system for modern works and journals and G. Lampe’s for ancient works. S. Schwertner, ed., *Theologische Realenzyklopädie: Abkürzungsverzeichnis* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994). G. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), xi-xlv.

<sup>2</sup> E. Yamuchi, “The Crucifixion and Docetism Christology,” in *CTQ* vol. 46 no. 1 (1982): 1-20. J. Finegan, *Hidden Records of the Life of Jesus: An Introduction to the New Testament Apocrypha, and to Some of the Areas Through Which they were Transmitted, Namely, Jewish, Egyptian, and Gnostic Christianity, Together with the Earlier Gospel-Type Records in the Apocrypha, in Greek and Latin Texts, Translations and Explanations* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969), 46-106.

<sup>3</sup> G. Riley, *I Was Thought to Be What I Am Not: Docetic Jesus and the Johannine Tradition* (n.p.: The Institute For Antiquity and Christianity – The Claremont Graduate School, 1994). G. Lüdemann, *Heretics: The Other Side of Early Christianity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 15-22. Finegan, *Hidden Records*, 87-103. J. Carmody and T. Clarke, eds.,

The interest of our work is the Christology of the apocryphal literature. However, the limits imposed by a seminar paper force us to narrow our focus rather strongly. We will attempt to define the Christology of a single apocryphal Gospel, by applying narrative criticism. We consider that the fact that the text came to us in a narrative form implies a particular way of uttering its Christology and asks for a treatment adequate to its literary form. There are both reasons and reservations with respect to this method's appropriateness. They are reflected in the three assumptions with which Stamps characterizes narrative criticism: a) The text in its final form is an end in itself. It is not seen as a source to recover the events and persons associated with the original writing. b) The text is to be interpreted with reference to the *implied author-narrator and reader* and not to the real ones. c) The whole text is considered as a connected and unified whole. The principal weakness of the method is its non-historical nature. However, it is now more acceptable that scholarly work pays attention to the meaning of the text itself and to the organic and purposeful nature of the document.<sup>4</sup> We follow the method described by Powell in *What is Narrative Criticism?*, with some minor additions taken from rhetorical and discourse criticism, which imposes on our work an inductive movement from bottom (close reading of the text) to top (definition of what the text is about). After reaching this point we will focus specifically on the Christology of the text.<sup>5</sup>

For this task we have chosen the Gospel of Peter (hereafter: GP) which, though considered by some scholars as historically unimportant (Zahn, Vanagay, Harris, Rodríguez Ruiz, et al), belongs to the first group of apocryphal writings that, according to Schneemelcher, were "composed contemporaneously with the writings which were later canonized" and thus "were in rivalry with the texts received into the canon."<sup>6</sup>

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*Christ and His Mission: Christology and Soteriology*, vol. 3 of *Sources of Christian Theology*, ed. P. Palmer (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1966), 1-7. Hippolytus' *Haer.* 6-8. *ANFa* 5: 74-124. Irenaeus' *Haer.* *ANFa* 1: 350-530. Clement's *Str.* 6-7. *ANFa* 2: 480-557. I. Saliba, "The Bishop of Antioch and the Heretics: A Study of a Primitive Christology," in *EvQ* 54 (1982): 65-76. R. Norris, ed., *The Christological Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980). E. Yamuchi, *Docetic Christology and Gnosticism* (Saint Louis: Concordia EduMedia Programs – Concordia Seminary, 1987), sound cassette.

<sup>4</sup> See H. Combrink, "The Rhetoric of Sacred Scriptures," in *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference*, eds. S. Porter and T. Olbricht (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 102-123.

<sup>5</sup> M. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). D. Stamps, "Rhetorical and Narratological Criticism," in *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament* (hereafter: *HENT*), 219-239. B. Pearson, "New Testament Literary Criticism," in *HENT*, 241-266. P. Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994). J. Reed, "Discourse Analysis," in *HENT*, 189-217. D. Catchpole, "Source, Form and Redaction Criticism on the New Testament," in *HENT*, 167-188.

<sup>6</sup> The second group (late second-century) appeared when the canon was being defined, and its intention usually was to set different material over against the Orthodox literature. The third group (from third-century onward) appeared after the definition of the canon, and its major interest was not to supplant the Church's writings, but to fill in the gaps of the Biblical narrative. W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* (hereafter: *NTA*) (Westminster: James Clarke & Co – John Knox Press, 1991), 1: 51. A. McGiffert, "The Gospel of Peter," in *PASCH* 6 (1894): 101-130. B. Johnson, "The Gospel of Peter: Between Apocalypse and Romance," in *SP* vol. 16 no. 2 (1985): 170-174.



## Date and Provenance of GP

The first historical reference to GP is the extract of the letter that Serapion, bishop of Antioch (A.D. 190-210), wrote to the congregation at Rhossus recorded in HE 6.12. This letter indisputably connects GP to the docetic heresy, and is the key to dating GP before the end of the second-century.<sup>7</sup> Scholars agree that the place of origin was Syria. Eusebius himself makes two important comments in the context of the canonical discussion. First, he denies that GP may have any link to the apostolic tradition (HE 3.3). Second, he describes it as not being even among the spurious writings (ἐν νόθοις), but simply as an absurd and impious work (ἄτοπα πάντη καὶ δυσσεβῆ) (HE 3.25.25-35). The trustworthiness of Origen's and Theodoret's references to GP is discussed by McGiffert, Finegan, Schneemelcher, et al.<sup>8</sup>

Scholars find possible connections with GP in the writings of Justin Martyr (110-165), Cyril of Jerusalem (fourth century), Melito of Sardis (c. 165), the Manichaean (late third century), as well as in the following documents: Old Latin Codex Bobiensis (k) (copied from a second-century MS?), the Acts of John (before 200?), Ephrem's Syriac Commentary on the Diatessaron (third century), *Barn.* (around 100?), *Didasc. Apost.* (third century), *Ascens. Is.* (before 100?), and others. If some of these references or connections are real, GP may have been written in the early second-century.<sup>9</sup>

GP is identified with the the fragmentary seventh/eighth-century vellum MS found in the tomb of a Christian monk by the *French Archaeological Mission at Cairo* in Akhmîm, Upper Egypt,

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<sup>7</sup> J. Harris argues that GP was a public lessonbook, which would imply that it was old enough as to be accepted in a liturgical context. See J. Harris, *A Popular Account of the Newly-Rediscovered Gospel of Peter* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), 33.

<sup>8</sup> Origen himself, in his *Comm. in Matt.* is uncertain when he says that some people base their idea that Jesus' brothers were sons of a previous marriage of Joseph either on GP or on the *Protoev.* NTA 1:430. Theodoret says that οἱ δὲ Ναζωραῖοι Ἰουδαῖοί εἰσιν τὸν Χριστὸν τιμῶντες ὡς ἀνθρώπον δίκαιον καὶ τῷ καλουμένῳ κατὰ Πέτρον εὐαγγελίῳ κεκρημένοι. (HE, 11.2). A. McGiffert, "The Gospel of Peter," 106. This reference is interesting because of its connection with GP 28 (ἴδετε ὅτι ὁπόσον δίκαιός ἐστιν) and with the description that Epiphanius makes of the gospel used by the Ebionites, whom Epiphanius confuses with the Ναζωραῖοι. According to Epiphanius, this apocryphal gospel denied the virginal birth of Jesus as well as Christ's humanity, and displayed a clear antagonism toward the temple. Finegan, *Hidden Records*, 56-57, 170-173.

<sup>9</sup> J. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), 192-94, 374. McGiffert, "The Gospel of Peter," 107-119. P. Head, "On the Christology of the Gospel of Peter," in *VigChr* 46 (1992): 209-224. NTA 1:401-410. W. Petersen, "An Important Unnoticed Diatessaronic Reading in Turfan Fragment M-18," in *Text and Testimony: Essays on New Testament and Apocryphal Literature in Honour of A. F. J. Klijn*, ed. T. Baarda (Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. Kok, 1988), 187-192. B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 102. B. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 73. ANFa 8: 775-781. J. Robinson and J. Rhodes, *The Gospel According to Peter, and the Revelation of Peter*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: C. J. Clay and Sons, Cambridge University Press Warehouse, 1892), 23.

in the winter of 1886/87. This was the first time modern scholars had access to the text.<sup>10</sup> In 1972, Browne published POx 2949, two small scraps of the late second/early third century that correspond to GP 3-5.<sup>11</sup> This MS is very important because it testifies to GP's presence in Egypt at the end of the second century, and it also evidences the impressive development that the text went through from the second to the ninth century.<sup>12</sup> In spite of this problem, the only possibility of working on GP that we have depends on the Akhmîm MS. Papyrus Egerton 2 and POx 4009 are also related to GP by some scholars.<sup>13</sup>

### The Scholarly Discussion Regarding the Relation Between GP and the Canonical Gospels

Immediately after the publication of the Akhmîm's GP in 1892, Zahn led the group (Robinson, Vaganay and Mara) that argued for GP's dependency upon the canonical gospels, while Harnack led the opposite group (Denker, Gardner-Smith) that denied any connection between GP and the other gospels.<sup>14</sup> The difficulty here is that GP's text is not identical enough to identify any

<sup>10</sup> J. Robinson divided the text in 14 chs. and Harnack in 60 vss. Robinson, *The Gospel According to Peter*. A. Harnack, "Bruchstücke Des Evangeliums Und Der Apokalypse Des Petrus," in *TU* vol. 9 no. 2 (1893). J. Harris, *A Popular Account of the Newly-Rediscovered Gospel of Peter* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), 15-16. For pictures of the MS, see O. Gebhardt, *Das Evangelium Und Die Apokalypse Des Petrus: Die Neuentdeckten Bruchstücke* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1983), Plates (Lichtdruck-Tafeln) II and X.

<sup>11</sup> These are the 8 only lines (5-13) of POx 2949 that D. Lührmann could reconstrue as compared with the Akhmîm's GP 3-5: line 5 Π'Ιωσήφ, ὁ φίλος Π[ε]ιλάτου (GP 3 ὁ φίλος Πειλάτου καί); line 6 ἵς ὅτι ἐκέλευσεν (GP 3 εἰδὼς ὅτι σταυρίσκειν); line 7 ἐλθὼν πρὸς Πειλάτον (GP 3 ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν Πειλάτου); line 8 ἵτο σώμα εἰς ταφήν (GP 3 τὸ σώμα τοῦ κυρίου πρὸς ταφήν); line 9 Ἡρώδη ἠτήσατο (GP 4 πρὸς Ἡρώδη ἤτησεν); line 10 ἵηται εἰπὼν (GP 5 ἔφη?); line 11 ἵηται (GP 5 ἠτήκει); line 12 ἵαυτὸν (GP 5 αὐτὸν ἠτήκει? αὐτὸν ἐθάπτομεν?); line 13 ἵτι αἶ (GP 5 ἐπεί? γάρ?). D. Lührmann, "POx 2949: EvPt 3-5 in der Handschrift des 2./3. Jahrhunderts," in *ZNW* 72 (1981): 216-226. G. Browne, et. al., eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 41 (London: The British Academy by the Egypt Exploration Society, 1972), 15-16.

<sup>12</sup> This means that we are not working exactly on the same text originally written (which weakens any narrative, form, source or redactional analysis of GP) and known by Serapion (which, together with the fragmentariness, makes impossible to see and judge the exact heretical elements that Serapion found in the document). Usually the dimension of this problem is not seriously considered by the scholars. See J. Treat, "The Two Manuscripts Witnesses to the Gospel of Peter," in *Society of Biblical Literature: 1990 Seminar Papers*, ed. D. Lull (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 391-399.

<sup>13</sup> This scrap of a third-century MS contains a dialogue between Jesus and Peter very similar to that of 2 Clem. 5 (λέγει γὰρ ὁ κύριος· ἔσθε ὡς ἀρνία ἐν μέσῳ λύκων· ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος αὐτῷ λέγει· ἐὰν οὖν διασπαράξωσιν οἱ λύκοι τὰ ἀρνία; εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ Πέτρῳ· μὴ φοβεῖσθωσαν τὰ ἀρνία τοῖς λύκοις μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν αὐτά. καὶ ὑμεῖς μὴ φοβεῖσθε τοὺς ἀποκτενόντας ὑμᾶς καὶ μηδὲν ὑμῖν δυναμένους ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ φοβεῖσθε τὸν μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ὑμᾶς ἔχοντα ἐξουσίαν ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, τοῦ βαλεῖν εἰς γέενναν πυρός). This is Lührmann's reconstruction of POx 4009: ἵθ' ἑρισμός· [γίνου δὲ ἀκέ]ραιος ὡς αἱ [περιστεραὶ καὶ] φρόνιμοις ὡς οἱ ὄφεις; ἔσθε ὡς ἀρνία ἀνά μέσον λύκων. [εἶπον πρὸς αὐτόν· ἐὰν οὐ[ν] σπαρᾶξθῶ]μεν; [ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς] λέγει μοι· οἱ [λύκοι σπαρᾶ]ξαντες τὸ [ἀρνίον οὐ]κέτι αὐτῷ οὐδὲν δύνανται ποιῆσαι. δι[ὸ] ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν· [μὴ] φοβ[εῖσθε ἀπὸ τ]ῶν ἀποκτενόντων ὑμᾶς καὶ [μετὰ τὸ ἀποκτείναι] μηκέ[τι] ποιῆσαι δυναμένων [μηδέν]... J. Lightfoot, *S. Clement of Rome: The Two Epistles to the Corinthians, A Revised Text with Introduction and Notes* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1869), 193-194. R. Coles, M. Halam, and P. Parson, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 60 (London: The British Academy by the Egypt Exploration Society, 1994), 1-5. D. Lührmann, "POx 4009: Ein neues Fragment des Petrusvangeliums?," in *NT* vol. 35 no. 4 (1993): 390-410. Regarding Egerton 2, see J. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 150. David D. Wright, "Papyrus Egerton 2 (The Unknown Gospel): Part of the Gospel of Peter?," in *The Second Century: A Journal of Early Christian Studies* vol. 5 no. 1 (Spring 1985/1986): 129-150.

<sup>14</sup> D. Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Petrus: Das kürzlich gesundene Fragment seines Textes* (Erlangen: U. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachs, 1893). Robinson, *The Gospel According to Peter*. L. Vaganay, *L'Évangile de Pierre*, ed. J. Gabalda et Fils. (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1930). M. Rodríguez Ruiz, "El Evangelio de Pedro: ¿Un Desafío a los Evangelios Canónicos?," in *EstB* 46 (1988): 497-526. Head, "Christology," 209-217. W. Haase, ed., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms in Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, pt. 2 vol. 25 no. 5 of *Principat* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1988) 3939-40.



direct dependency beyond discussion, but it is not different enough to rule out the possibility of dependency.<sup>15</sup> Based upon the work of Denker, Koester and Crossan proposed different theories that affirmed that the canonical gospels used the early tradition which is still preserved in GP, while, at the same time, the GP that we know assimilated Orthodox features from the canonical texts.<sup>16</sup>

After Brown and some other scholars confronted Koester's and Crossan's theories, the two most convincing ideas are that GP depends on the canonical gospels and that the differences with the latter are due either to conscious departure from the canonical narrative or to the problem of scriptural memory.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Most important parallels with the canonical gospels: a) In the common account of the elder's fear lest the disciples steal the body is an identical 9-word sequence GP 30 and Mt 27.64 (ἡμέρας, μήποτε ἐλθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ κλέψωσιν αὐτόν καί); b) GP 1 and Mt 27.24 (washing of hands); c) GP 33 (καὶ ἐπέχρισαν ἐπὶ τὰ σφραγίδας) and Mt 27.66 (ἠσφαλίσαυτο τὸν τάφον σφραγίσαντες τὸν λίθον); d) GP 53 (τίς δὲ ἀποκυλίσει ἡμῖν καὶ τὸν λίθον τὸν τεθέντα ἐπὶ τῆς θύρας τοῦ μνημείου) and Mk 16.3 (τίς ἀποκυλίσει ἡμῖν τὸν λίθον ἐκ τῆς θύρας τοῦ μνημείου); e) GP 37, 55 and Mk 16.5 use νεανίσκος for the angel; f) GP 36 and Lk 24.4 mention δύο ἄνδρες; g) GP 10 (καὶ ἐσταύρωσαν ἀνὰ μέσον αὐτῶν τὸν κύριον) and Jn 19.18 (μέσον δὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν); h) GP 14 and Jn 19.33-37 mention the unbroken legs; i) GP 24 (καὶ εἰσήγαγεν εἰς ἴδιον τάφον καλούμενον κήπον Ἰωσήφ) and Jn 19.41 (καὶ ἐν τῷ κήπῳ μνημεῖον καινόν); j) GP 60 and Jn 21.1-14 (disciples go back to the sea).

Most important contradictions with canonical gospels: a) Joseph asks for the body of Jesus before the execution (GP 3); b) It is the Jews who rush, mock, crucify and take Jesus down from the cross (GP 5-21); c) It is Herod who commands Jesus' execution (GP 2, 5); d) there is no appearance of the risen Lord (at least before his ascension) (GP 39-40); those who go back to the sea with Peter are not the same as those in Jn 21.2 (GP 60); e) The Friday on which Jesus is crucified is the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (GP 5 πρὸ μιᾶς τῶν ἁζύμων), while in the synoptics he dies on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (the day that comes after the lamb is sacrificed and that begins with the eating of the lamb).

Most important unique material of GP: a) Withdrawal of the nails (21); b) Repentance of the Jewish people (25-27); c) Heavenly voice in the epiphanic episode of the resurrection (35, 41); d) The stone rolls away by its own (37); e) Angels support the risen Lord (39); f) Cross coming out of the tomb and answering the heavenly question (40-42); g) Discussion between Pilate and the Jewish elders (45-49). See Head, "Christology," 209-211. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 104-110. Harris, *Popular Account*, 35-70.

<sup>16</sup> Denker argued that GP used just the OT, the exegetical and the oral traditions. Then, Koester proposed that the early Christians just knew that Jesus died "according to the Scriptures," so, using the OT references to the vindicated righteous they construed the narrative. Koester considers GP as belonging to the same tradition-level as the sources used by the canonical gospels. Even further, Crossan argued that GP preserves the only source (*Cross Gospel*) upon which any other passion narrative was built. GP's author wanted to save it from its disappearance in the midst of the canonizing struggle by adding to it canonical and officially accepted elements (burial under friends; presence of the apostles; and dialogue between the angel and the women). Rodríguez Ruiz, "Evangelio de Pedro," 504. Koester, "Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels," in *HThR* 73 (1980): 105-130. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 216-240. J. Green, "The Gospel of Peter: Source for a Pre-Canonical Passion Narrative?," in *ZNW* 78 (1987): 293-301. A. Dewey, "Time to Murder and Create: Visions and Revisions in the Gospel of Peter," in *Semeia* 49 (1990): 101-127. J. Crossan, "Thoughts on Two Extracanonical Gospels," in *Semeia* 49 (1990): 156-168. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*.

<sup>17</sup> Brown points out the relativity of the problems of a) "scriptural memory" (non-scholar early Christians way of quotation Scriptures), b) redaction criticism and c) better-flowing narrative. Brown, "The Gospel of Peter and Canonical Gospel Priority," 321-343. A. Kirk, "Examining Priorities: Another Look at the Gospel of Peter's Relationship to the New Testament Gospels," in *NTS* 40 (1994): 572-595. Green, "The Gospel of Peter: Source for a Pre-Canonical Passion Narrative?," in *ZNW* 78 (1987): 293-301. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 151. For an indirect refutation of Koester's theory of passion narrative as Midrash, see Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability*, 45-53.

## CHAPTER I. DEFINITION OF THE TEXT

Even though the Akhmîm MS is the only witness for GP, the evident mistakes that the text presents made the editors reconstruct the text in different ways. For our definition of the text we will consider the following editions: Gebhardt, Harnack, Robinson, Vaganay and Zahn. We will follow Gebhardt's footnoted descriptions of the codex.<sup>1</sup>

I 1 τ[ων] δὲ Ἰουδαίων οὐδεὶς ἐνίψατο τὰς χεῖρας οὐδὲ Ἡρώδης οὐδέ [τις]<sup>2</sup> [τ]ῶν κριτῶν αὐτοῦ. κ[αί μὴ]  
 βουληθέντων νίψασθαι<sup>3</sup> ἀνέσ[τη] Πειλάτος<sup>4</sup> 2 καὶ τότε κελεύει Ἡρώδης ὁ βασιλεὺς παρ[αλη]μφθῆναι τὸν  
 κύριον εἰπὼν αὐτοῖς ὅτι ὅσα ἐκέλευσα ὑμῖν ποιῆσαι αὐτῷ ποιήσατε. II 3 Ἦκει<sup>5</sup> δὲ ἐκεῖ Ἰωσήφ ὁ φίλος  
 Πειλάτου καὶ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ εἰδὼς ὅτι σταυρίσκειν<sup>6</sup> αὐτὸν μέλλουσιν ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν Πειλάτον καὶ ἤτησε  
 τὸ σῶμα τοῦ κυρίου πρὸς ταφήν. 4 καὶ ὁ Πειλάτος πέμψας πρὸς Ἡρώδη ἤτησεν αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα. 5 καὶ ὁ  
 Ἡρώδης ἔφη· ἀδελφὲ Πειλάτε, εἰ καὶ μὴ τις αὐτὸν ἤτήκει, ἡμεῖς αὐτὸν ἐθάπτομεν -ἐπεὶ καὶ σάββατον  
 ἐπιφύσκει, γέγραπται γὰρ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, ἥλιον μὴ δύναι ἐπὶ πεφονευμένῳ-. καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν τῷ λαῷ<sup>7</sup>  
 πρὸ μιᾶς τῶν ἁζύμων, τῆς ἑορτῆς αὐτῶν.  
 III 6 Οἱ δὲ λαβόντες τὸν κύριον ὄθουν αὐτὸν<sup>8</sup> τρέχοντες καὶ ἔλεγον· σύρωμεν<sup>9</sup> τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ,  
 ἔξουσίαν αὐτοῦ ἐσχηκότες. 7 καὶ πορφύραν αὐτὸν περιέβαλον<sup>10</sup> καὶ ἐκάθισαν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ καθέδραν κρίσεως  
 λέγοντες· δικαίως κρίνε, βασιλεῦ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. 8 καὶ τις αὐτῶν ἐνεγκὼν στέφανον ἀκάνθινον ἔθηκεν ἐπὶ  
 τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ κυρίου 9 καὶ ἕτεροι ἐστώτες ἐνέπτυν αὐτοῦ ταῖς ὄψεσι, καὶ ἄλλοι τὰς σιαγόνας αὐτοῦ  
 ἐράπισαν, ἕτεροι καλάμῳ ἔνυσσον αὐτόν, καὶ τινες αὐτὸν ἐμάστιζον λέγοντες· ταύτη τῇ τιμῇ ἐτιμήσαμεν

<sup>1</sup> Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*, 42-47. Harnack, "Bruchstücke." Robinson, *The Gospel According to Peter*, 83-88. Vaganay, *Évangile*, 202-338. Zahn, *Evangelium*, 7-11. The first of the numbers that underline the Greek text (e.g. 5.1) indicates the number of paragraph, the second (e.g. 1.3) numbers each sentence within a paragraph, and if there are more numbers (e.g. 1.12.2), it is indication of the hypotactical position of each clause in relation to the sentence's main clause, that is the one that has just two numbers (e.g. 1.10).

<sup>2</sup> οὐδ' εἷς in Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Vaganay, *L'Évangile* and Robinson, *Gospel*. Text in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*; Zahn, *Evangelium*.

<sup>3</sup> καὶ μὴ βουληθέντων αὐτῶν νίψασθαι in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*. καὶ τινων βουληθέντων νίψασθαι in Zahn, *Evangelium*. Text in Harnack, "Bruchstücke."

<sup>4</sup> Πειλάτης in the codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>5</sup> Ἰσθήκει in Vaganay, *L'Évangile*. Text supported by the codex and the rest of the editors.

<sup>6</sup> σταυρώσαι in Blass (quoted in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*, 42). σταυρώσειν in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*. Text supported by the codex and the rest of the editors.

<sup>7</sup> καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτόν τῷ λαῷ is omitted in Zahn, *Evangelium*; Harnack, "Bruchstücke." Text supported by the codex and rest of the editors.

<sup>8</sup> αὐτῶν in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>9</sup> σύρωμεν in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*. αἴρωμεν in Zahn, *Evangelium*. ἄρωμεν in Harris and σταυρώμεν in Bennett, both quoted by Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*. Text in Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Vaganay, *L'Évangile* and Robinson, *Gospel*.

<sup>10</sup> περιέβαλλον in codex; Harnack, "Bruchstücke" and Vaganay, *L'Évangile*. Text in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*; Zahn, *Evangelium* and Robinson, *Gospel*.



τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.

IV 10 Καὶ ἤνεγκον δύο κακούργους καὶ ἐσταύρωσαν ἀνὰ μέσον αὐτῶν τὸν κύριον, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐσιώπα ὡς

μηδὲνα πόνου<sup>11</sup> ἔχων. 11 καὶ ὅτε ὠρθωσαν<sup>12</sup> τὸν σταυρόν,<sup>13</sup> ἐπέγραψαν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ

Ἰσραὴλ. 12 καὶ τεθεικότες τὰ ἐνδύματα ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ διμερίσαντο καὶ λαχμὸν ἔβαλον ἐπ' αὐτοῖς.

13 εἷς δὲ τις τῶν κακούργων ἐκείνων ὠνειδίσειν<sup>14</sup> αὐτοὺς λέγων· ἡμεῖς διὰ τὰ κακὰ ἃ ἐποιήσαμεν οὕτω

πεπόνθαμεν, οὗτος<sup>15</sup> δὲ σωτὴρ γενόμενος τῶν ἀνθρώπων τί ἠδίκησεν ὑμᾶς; 14 καὶ ἀγανακτήσαντες ἐπ' αὐτῷ

ἐκέλευσαν ἵνα μὴ σκελοκοπηθῆ ὅπως βασανιζόμενος ἀποθάνοι.<sup>16</sup>

V 15 Ἦν δὲ μεσημβρία καὶ σκότος κατέσχε πᾶσαν τὴν Ἰουδαίαν καὶ ἔθορυβοῦντο καὶ ἠγωνίων, μήποτε ὁ

ἥλιος ἔδω,<sup>17</sup> ἐπειδὴ ἔτι ἔζη. γέγραπται<sup>18</sup> αὐτοῖς· ἥλιον μὴ δῦναι ἐπὶ πεφονευμένῳ.<sup>19</sup> 16 καὶ τις αὐτῶν

εἶπεν· ποτίσατε αὐτὸν χολὴν μετὰ ὄξους, καὶ κεράσαντες ἐπότισαν 17 καὶ ἐπλήρωσαν πάντα καὶ ἐτελείωσαν

κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῶν τὰ ἁμαρτήματα. 18 περιήρχοντο δὲ πολλοὶ μετὰ λύχνων νομίζοντες ὅτι νύξ ἐστιν

ἐπέσαν τε.<sup>20</sup>

19 καὶ ὁ κύριος ἀνεβόησε λέγων· ἡ δύναμίς μου, ἡ δύναμις,<sup>21</sup> κατέλειψάς με. καὶ εἰπὼν ἀνελήφθη. 20 καὶ

αὐτῆς τῆς ὥρας<sup>22</sup> διεράγη τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Ἱερουσαλὴμ εἰς δύο.

VI 21 Καὶ τότε ἀπέσπασαν τοὺς ἥλους ἀπὸ τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἔθηκαν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἡ γῆ

πᾶσα ἐσεισθή καὶ φόβος μέγας ἐγένετο<sup>23</sup> 22 τότε ἥλιος ἔλαμψε καὶ εὐρέθη ὥρα ἐνάτη. 23 ἐχάρησαν δὲ οἱ

Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ δεδώκασιν τῷ Ἰωσήφ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἵνα<sup>24</sup> αὐτὸ θάψῃ, ἐπειδὴ θεασάμενος ἦν ὅσα ἀγαθὰ

ἐποίησεν. 24 λαβῶν δὲ τὸν κύριον ἔλουσε καὶ εἴλησε σινδόνι<sup>25</sup> καὶ εἰσήγαγεν εἰς ἴδιον τάφον καλούμενον

κῆπον Ἰωσήφ.

<sup>11</sup> μηδὲν πόνου in codex Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Vaganay, *L'Évangile* and Robinson, *Gospel*. μηδὲν πόνου in Zahn, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*.

<sup>12</sup> ἔωρθώσαν in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>13</sup> σταυρῶν in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>14</sup> ὠνειδίσειν in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>15</sup> οὕτως in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>16</sup> ἀποθάνῃ in Harnack, "Bruchstücke." Text supported by the codex and the rest of the editors.

<sup>17</sup> ἔδω in Robinson, *Gospel*.

<sup>18</sup> γάρ is added by all the editors.

<sup>19</sup> πεφονευμένῳ in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>20</sup> The codex somewhat corrupted. According to Gebhardt the reconstruction renders ἐπέσαντο. ἀνεπαύσαντο in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*. καὶ ἐπέσαντο in Harnack, "Bruchstücke" and Vaganay, *L'Évangile*. ἀνεπέσαντο in Lods (quoted in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*, 43); Text in Zahn, *Evangelium* and Robinson, *Gospel*.

Crossan attempts an explanation for this difficult text saying: "In a swiftly moving cursive script, he [the scribe] had originally written νύξεστιν... ('it was night'), that is, he began, by error, to repeat the ἐστιν ('was') and got as far as ἐσ... before realizing the mistake. He immediately superimposed the word ἐπέσαντο ('they stumbled') upon the uncompleted ἐστ... [sic]." Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 219.

<sup>21</sup> μου is added in Harnack, "Bruchstücke" and Vaganay, *L'Évangile*. Text supported by the codex and the rest of the editors.

<sup>22</sup> αὐτῆς ὥρας in codex. αὐτῆς ὥρας in Robinson, *Gospel* and Vaganay, *L'Évangile*. Text in Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*; and Zahn, *Evangelium*.

<sup>23</sup> ἐγένετο in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>24</sup> ἵνι in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>25</sup> εἴλησε σινδόνι in codex. ἐνείλησε σινδόνι in Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*; and Zahn, *Evangelium*. Text in Robinson, *Gospel* and Vaganay, *L'Évangile*. In this instance we are changing the wrong spelling of σινδόνι and leaving the improper verb εἰλ(έ)ω.



VII 25 Τότε οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς,<sup>26</sup> ἰδόντες<sup>27</sup> οἶον κακὸν ἑαυτοῖς ἐποίησαν,  
| 5.1 | 5.1.1 | 5.1.1.1 |  
ἤρξαντο κόπτεσθαι καὶ λέγειν· οὐαὶ ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἡμῶν· ἤγγισεν ἡ κρίσις καὶ τὸ τέλος Ἱερουσαλήμ.  
| 5.1 | 5.2 | 5.2.1 | 5.2.2 |  
26 ἐγὼ δὲ μετὰ τῶν ἐταίρων μου ἐλυπούμην καὶ τετραωμένοι κατὰ διάνοιαν ἐκρυβόμεθα· ἐζητούμεθα γὰρ ὑπ’  
| 5.3 | 5.4.1 | 5.4 | 5.5 |  
αὐτῶν ὡς κακοῦργοι καὶ ὡς τὸν ναὸν θέλοντες ἐμπρῆσαι. 27 ἐπὶ δὲ τούτοις πᾶσιν ἐνηστεύομεν καὶ  
| 5.5 | 5.5.1 | 5.5.2 | 5.6 | 5.7 |  
ἐκαθεζόμεθα πενθοῦντες καὶ κλαίοντες νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἕως τοῦ σαββάτου.  
| 5.7 | 5.7.1 | 5.7.2 | 5.7.2.1 |  
VIII 28 Συναχθέντες δὲ οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ πρεσβύτεροι πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ὁ  
| 6.1.1 | 6.1.2 | 6.1.2.1 |  
λαὸς ἅπας γογγύζει καὶ κόπτεται τὰ στήθη λέγοντες ὅτι εἰ τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα τὰ μέγιστα σημεῖα  
| 6.1.2.1 | 6.1.2.2 | 6.1.2.2.1 | 6.1.2.2.1.1 | 6.1.2.2.1.1 |  
γέγονεν, ἴδετε ὅτι ὅπως<sup>28</sup> δίκαιός ἐστιν, 29 ἐφοβήθησαν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ ἦλθον πρὸς Πειλᾶτον  
| 6.1.2.2.1.1 | 6.1.2.2.1.2 | 6.1 | 6.2 |  
δεόμενοι αὐτοῦ καὶ λέγοντες· 30 παράδος ἡμῖν στρατιώτας ἵνα φυλάξωσι<sup>29</sup> τὸ μνημα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τρεῖς  
| 6.2.1 | 6.2.2 | 6.2.2.1 | 6.2.2.1.1 |  
ἡμέρας], μήποτε ἐλθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ κλέψωσιν αὐτόν καὶ ὑπολάβῃ ὁ λαὸς ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη  
| 6.2.2.1.1 | 6.2.2.1.1.1 | 6.2.2.1.1.1 | 6.2.2.1.1.1 | 6.2.2.1.1.2 | 6.2.2.1.1.2.1 |  
καὶ ποιήσωσιν ἡμῖν κακὰ. 31 ὁ δὲ Πειλᾶτος παραδέδωκεν αὐτοῖς Πετρῶνιον τὸν κεντυρίωνα μετὰ  
| 6.2.2.1.1.3 | 6.3 |  
στρατιωτῶν<sup>30</sup> φυλάσσειν τὸν τάφον. καὶ σὺν αὐτοῖς ἦλθον πρεσβύτεροι καὶ γραμματεῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μνημα,  
| 6.3 | 6.3.1 | 6.4 |  
32 καὶ κυλίσαντες λίθον μέγαν κατὰ<sup>31</sup> τοῦ κεντυρίωνος καὶ τῶν στρατιωτῶν, ὁμοῦ<sup>32</sup> πάντες οἱ ὄντες ἐκεῖ  
| 6.5.1 |  
ἔθηκαν ἐπὶ τῇ θύρᾳ τοῦ μνηματος, 33 καὶ ἐπέχρισαν<sup>33</sup> ἐπτὰ σφραγίδας καὶ σκηνὴν ἐκεῖ πήξαντες ἐφύλαξαν.  
| 6.5 | 6.6 | 6.7.1 | 6.7 |  
IX 34 Πρωίας δὲ ἐπιφώσκοντος τοῦ σαββάτου ἦλθεν ὄχλος ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ τῆς περιχώρου ἵνα ἴδωσι  
| 6.8.1 | 6.8 | 6.8.2 |  
τὸ μνημα<sup>34</sup> ἐσφραγισμένον.  
| 6.8.2 | 6.8.2.1 |  
35 τῇ δὲ νικτὶ ἣ ἐπέφωσκεν ἡ κυριακὴ φυλασσόντων τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἀνὰ δύο δύο κατὰ φρουρὰν μεγάλην  
| 7.1 | 7.1.1 | 7.1.2 | 7.1 |  
φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ 36 καὶ εἶδον ἀνοιχθέντας<sup>35</sup> τοὺς οὐρα[ν]οὺς καὶ δύο ἄνδρας κατελθόντας  
| 7.1 | 7.2 | 7.2.1 | 7.2.2 |  
ἐκεῖθεν<sup>36</sup> πολὺ φέγγος ἔχοντας καὶ ἐπιστάντας<sup>37</sup> τῷ τάφῳ. 37 ὁ δὲ λίθος<sup>38</sup> ἐκεῖνος ὁ βεβλημένος ἐπὶ τῇ θύρᾳ  
| 7.2.2 | 7.2.3 | 7.2.4 | 7.3 |  
ἄφ’ ἑαυτοῦ κυλισθεὶς ἐπεχώρησε<sup>39</sup> παρὰ μέρος, καὶ ὁ τάφος ἠνοίγη<sup>40</sup> καὶ ἀμφότεροι οἱ νεανίσκοι εἰσῆλθον.  
| 7.3.1 | 7.3 | 7.4 | 7.5 |  
X 38 Ἰδόντες οὖν οἱ στρατιῶται ἐκεῖνοι ἐξύπνισαν τὸν κεντυρίωνα καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους· παρῆσαν γὰρ  
| 7.6.1 | 7.6 | 7.7 |

<sup>26</sup> οἱερεῖοι in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>27</sup> γνόντες in Vaganay, *L'Évangile*. Text supported by the codex and the rest of the editors.

<sup>28</sup> ὅτι πόσον in codex; Vaganay, *L'Évangile* and Robinson, *Gospel*. ὁπόσον in Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*; and Zahn, *Evangelium*.

<sup>29</sup> φυλάξω in codex. φυλάξωμεν in Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*. Text in Zahn, *Evangelium*; Vaganay, *L'Évangile* and Robinson, *Gospel*.

<sup>30</sup> στρατιωτῶν in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>31</sup> μετὰ in all the editors. Text in codex.

<sup>32</sup> ὁμοῖ in Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" and Robinson, *Gospel*. Text in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*; Zahn, *Evangelium*; Vaganay, *L'Évangile* and codex.

<sup>33</sup> ἐπέχρισαν in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>34</sup> μνημεῖον in Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Vaganay, *L'Évangile* and Robinson, *Gospel*. Text in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse* and Zahn, *Evangelium*.

<sup>35</sup> ἀνοιχθέντες in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>36</sup> ἐκεῖθε in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>37</sup> ἐγγισάντας in Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" and Vaganay, *L'Évangile*. Text in Robinson, *Gospel*; Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse* and Zahn, *Evangelium*.

<sup>38</sup> λείθος in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>39</sup> ὑπεχώρησε in *Gospel* and Zahn, *Evangelium*. Text supported by the codex and the rest of the editors.

<sup>40</sup> ἐνοίγη in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

καὶ αὐτοὶ φυλάσσοντες. **39** καὶ ἐξηγουμένων αὐτῶν ἃ εἶδον, πάλιν ὁρῶσιν ἐξεληθόντας<sup>41</sup> ἀπὸ τοῦ τάφου  
7.7 | 7.7.1 | 7.8.1 | 7.8.1.1 | 7.8 | 7.8.2  
τρεις ἄνδρας<sup>42</sup> καὶ τοὺς δύο τὸν ἕνα ὑπορθοῦντας καὶ σταυρὸν ἀκολουθοῦντα<sup>43</sup> αὐτοῖς, **40** καὶ τῶν μὲν δύο  
7.8.2 | 7.8.3 | 7.8.4 | 7.8.5  
τῆν κεφαλὴν χωροῦσαν μέχρι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, τοῦ δὲ χειραγωγουμένου<sup>44</sup> ὑπ' αὐτῶν ὑπερβαίνουσαν τοὺς  
7.8.5 | 7.8.5.1 | 7.8.6 | 7.8.6.1 | 7.8.6  
οὐρανοὺς. **41** καὶ φωνῆς<sup>45</sup> ἤκουον ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν λεγουσῆς· ἐκήρυξας τοῖς κοινωμένοις;<sup>46</sup> **42** καὶ ὑπακοὴ  
7.8.6 | 7.9 | 7.9.1 | 7.9.1.1 | 7.10  
ἤκούετο ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ ὅτι ναί.<sup>47</sup> **XI 43** Συνεσκέπτοντο οὖν ἀλλήλοις ἐκεῖνοι ἀπελθεῖν καὶ ἐμφανίσαι  
7.10 | 7.10.1 | 7.11 | 7.11.1 | 7.11.2  
ταῦτα τῷ Πειλάτῳ· **44** καὶ ἔτι διανοουμένων αὐτῶν φαίνονται πάλιν ἀνοιχθέντες οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἄνθρωπός  
7.11.2 | 7.12.1 | 7.12 | 7.12.2 | 7.12.3  
τις κατελθὼν<sup>48</sup> καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸ μνήμα. **45** ταῦτα ἰδόντες οἱ περὶ τὸν κεντυρίωνα<sup>49</sup> νυκτὸς ἔσπευσαν  
7.12.3 | 7.12.4 | 7.13.1 | 7.13  
πρὸς Πειλάτον, ἀφέντες τὸν τάφον ὃν ἐφύλασσον, καὶ ἐξηγήσαντο πάντα ἅπερ εἶδον ἀγωνιῶντες<sup>50</sup> μεγάλως  
7.13 | 7.13.2 | 7.13.2.1 | 7.14 | 7.14.1 | 7.14.2 |  
καὶ λέγοντες· ἀληθῶς υἱὸς ἦν θεοῦ. **46** ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πειλάτος ἔφη· ἐγὼ καθαρεύω τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ υἱοῦ  
7.14.3 | 7.14.3.1 | 7.15.1 | 7.15 | 7.15.2  
τοῦ θεοῦ, ὑμῖν<sup>51</sup> δὲ τοῦτο ἔδοξεν. **47** εἶτα προσελθόντες πάντες ἐδέοντο αὐτοῦ καὶ παρεκάλουν<sup>52</sup> κελεῦσαι τῷ  
7.15.2 | 7.15.3 | 7.16.1 | 7.16 | 7.17 | 7.17.1  
κεντυρίωνι<sup>53</sup> καὶ τοῖς στρατιώταις μηδὲν εἰπεῖν ἃ εἶδον.<sup>54</sup> **48** συμφέρει γάρ Π-φασίν- ἡμῖν ὀφλήσαι  
7.17.1 | 7.17.1.1 | 7.17.1.1.1 | 7.18.1 | 7.18 | 7.18.1.1  
μεγίστην ἀμαρτίαν ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἔμπεσεῖν εἰς χεῖρας τοῦ λαοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ  
7.18.1.1 | 7.18.1.2 | 7.18.1.3  
λιθασθῆναι. **49** ἐκέλευσεν οὖν ὁ Πειλάτος τῷ κεντυρίωνι<sup>55</sup> καὶ τοῖς στρατιώταις μηδὲν εἰπεῖν.  
7.18.1.3 | 7.19 | 7.19.1  
**XII 50** Ὁρθοῦ<sup>56</sup> δὲ τῆς κυριακῆς Μαριὰμ ἡ Μαγδαληνῆ,<sup>57</sup> μαθήτρια τοῦ κυρίου -<sup>58</sup>φοβουμένη διὰ τοὺς  
8.1.1 | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8.3.1 | 8.3.1.1  
Ἰουδαίους ἐπειδὴ ἐφλέγοντο ὑπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἐπὶ τῷ μνήματι τοῦ κυρίου ἃ εἰώθεσαν ποιεῖν αἱ  
8.3.1.1 | 8.3.1.1.1 | 8.3 | 8.3.2  
γυναῖκες ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀποθνήσκουσι καὶ τοῖς ἀγαπωμένοις αὐταῖς· **51** λαβοῦσα μεθ' ἑαυτῆς τὰς φίλας ἦλθε ἐπὶ  
8.3.2 | 8.3.2.1 | 8.3.2.2 | 8.1.2 | 8.1  
τὸ μνημεῖον ὅπου ἦν τεθεῖς. **52** καὶ ἐφοβοῦντο μὴ ἴδωσιν αὐτὰς οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ ἔλεγον· εἰ καὶ μὴ ἐν  
8.1 | 8.1.3 | 8.4 | 8.4.1 | 8.5 | 8.5.1.1

<sup>41</sup> ὁρᾶσιν ἐξεληθόντος in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>42</sup> ἄνδρες in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>43</sup> ἀκολουθοῦντα in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>44</sup> χειρατωτομένου in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>45</sup> φωνῆ in codex. Evidently this is not a case of *pendent nominative* since there is no pronoun (ἧς) taking φωνῆ's syntactical place. Cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 51-52 Thus, we consider this error either as an omission or a grammatical confusion of cases.

<sup>46</sup> κοιμωμένοις in all the editors. Text in codex.

<sup>47</sup> τι ναί in codex. τὸ ναί, in Swete (quoted in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*) and Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*. Text in Blass (quoted in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*); Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Vaganay, *L'Évangile*; Robinson, *Gospel* and Zahn, *Evangelium*.

<sup>48</sup> κατελθὼν in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>49</sup> κεντυρίωνα in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>50</sup> ἀγωνιῶντες in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>51</sup> ἡμῖν in codex. Text supported by all the editors. Even though the change that the editors and we are doing here is quite radical (and although the codex could be suggesting the idea that it seemed good both to Pilate and the Jews that latter bear with the responsibility of Jesus' death, while the former would remain clean in this respect), the contrasting structure of the sentence [a] both cola begin with each personal pronoun, b) the cola are linked with the adversative particle δέ and the codex's recurrent problem with vowels suggest the arrangement.

<sup>52</sup> καιπέρ ἐκάλουν in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>53</sup> κεντυρίων in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>54</sup> μηδὲν εἰπεῖν ἃ εἶδον in codex and Harnack, "Bruchstücke" and Robinson, *Gospel*. μηδὲν εἰπεῖν ὃν εἶδον in Blass (quoted in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*). Text in Vaganay, *L'Évangile*; Zahn, *Evangelium* and Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*. We see the same wrong use of cases in the previews (or same omission of ι) and next nn. (κεντυρίων for a dat.).

<sup>55</sup> τῶν κεντυρίων in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>56</sup> Ὁρθοῦ in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>57</sup> Μαγδαληνῆ (codex corrected) in all the editors.

<sup>58</sup> ἔτις added in Robinson, *Gospel*. Text supported by codex and the rest of the editors.



ἐκείνη τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἣ ἔσταυρώθη ἐδυνήθημεν κλαύσαι καὶ κόψασθαι,<sup>59</sup> καὶ<sup>60</sup> νῦν ἐπὶ τοῦ μνήματος αὐτοῦ  
 8.5.1.1 | 8.5.1.1.1 | 8.5.1.1 | 8.5.1.2 | 8.5.1  
 ποιήσωμεν ταῦτα. 53 τίς δὲ ἀποκυλίσει ἡμῖν καὶ τὸν λίθον τὸν τεθέντα ἐπὶ τῆς θύρας τοῦ μνημείου ἵνα  
 8.5.1 | 8.5.2 | 8.5.2.1  
 εἰσελθοῦσαι παρακαθεσθῶμεν αὐτῷ καὶ ποιήσωμεν τὰ ὀφειλόμενα;<sup>61</sup> 54 μέγας γὰρ ἦν ὁ λίθος καὶ φοβούμεθα  
 8.5.2.1.1 | 8.5.2.1 | 8.5.2.2 | 8.5.3 | 8.5.4  
 μή τις ἡμᾶς ἴδῃ. καὶ εἰ μὴ δυνάμεθα, κἂν ἐπὶ τῆς θύρας βάλωμεν ἃ φέρομεν εἰς μνημοσύνην αὐτοῦ  
 8.5.4.1 | 8.5.5.1 | 8.5.5 | 8.5.5.2  
 κλαύσωμεν καὶ κοψώμεθα<sup>62</sup> ἕως ἔλθωμεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον ἡμῶν. XIII 55 Καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι εὗρον τὸν τάφον  
 8.5.6 | 8.5.7 | 8.5.7.1 | 8.6.1 | 8.6  
 ἠνεωγμένον καὶ προσελθοῦσαι παρέκυψαν ἐκεῖ καὶ ὀρώσιν ἐκεῖ τινα νεανίσκον καθεζόμενον μέσῳ<sup>63</sup> τοῦ  
 8.6.2 | 8.7.1 | 8.7 | 8.8 | 8.8.1  
 τάφου ὠραῖον καὶ περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λαμπροτάτην, ὅστις ἔφη αὐταῖς 56 ὅτι τί<sup>64</sup> ἤλθατε; τίνα ζητεῖτε;  
 8.8.1 | 8.8 | 8.8.2 | 8.9 | 8.9.1 | 8.9.2  
 μή τὸν σταυρωθέντα ἐκείνον; ἀνέστη καὶ ἀπήλθεν· εἰ δὲ μὴ πιστεύετε<sup>65</sup> παρακύψατε καὶ ἴδετε<sup>66</sup> τὸν τόπον  
 8.9.3 | 8.9.4 | 8.9.5 | 8.9.6.1 | 8.9.6 | 8.9.7  
 ἔνθα ἔκειτο,<sup>67</sup> ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν· ἀνέστη γὰρ καὶ ἀπήλθεν ἐκεῖ ὅθεν ἀπεστάλη. 57 τότε αἱ γυναῖκες  
 8.9.7.1 | 8.9.7.2 | 8.9.8 | 8.9.9 | 8.9.9.1 | 8.10  
 φοβηθεῖσαι<sup>68</sup> ἔφυγον.  
 8.10.1 | 8.10  
 XIV 58 Ἦν δὲ τελευταία ἡμέρα τῶν ἁζύμων, καὶ πολλοὶ τινες ἐξήρχοντο ὑποστρέφοντες εἰς τοὺς οἴκους  
 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.2.1  
 αὐτῶν τῆς ἑορτῆς παυσαμένης.<sup>69</sup> 59 ἡμεῖς δὲ οἱ δώδεκα μαθηταὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἐκλαίομεν καὶ ἐλυπούμεθα καὶ  
 9.2.1 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.6  
 ἕκαστος λυπούμενος διὰ τὸ συμβᾶν ἀπηλλάγη εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. 60 ἐγὼ δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος καὶ Ἀνδρέας ὁ  
 9.6 | 9.6.1 | 9.6.1.1 | 9.6 | 9.7 | 9.8 | 9.9 | 9.10  
 ἀδελφός μου λαβόντες ἡμῶν τὰ λῖνα ἀπήλαμεν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν,<sup>70</sup> καὶ ἦν σὺν ἡμῖν Λευεὶς ὁ τοῦ  
 9.10 | 9.11.1 | 9.11 | 9.12 | 9.13  
 Ἀλφαίου, ὃν<sup>71</sup> κύριος...  
 9.13 | 9.13.1

<sup>59</sup> κόψασθαι in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>60</sup> κἂν in Blass (quoted in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*, 46); Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*; Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Vaganay, *L'Évangile*; Zahn, *Evangelium*. Text in Robinson, *Gospel* and codex.

<sup>61</sup> ὀφειλόμενα in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>62</sup> κλαύσωμεν καὶ κοψώμεθα in codex; Harnack "Bruchstücke" and Robinson, *Gospel*. Text in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*; Vaganay, *L'Évangile* and Zahn, *Evangelium*. We prefer the reconstruction since the codex displays some confusions between ο and ω and because of the consistent use of subjunctive that the author makes in the context.

<sup>63</sup> ἐν μέσῳ in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*; Vaganay, *L'Évangile*; Harnack, "Bruchstücke;" Zahn, *Evangelium*. Text in Robinson, *Gospel* and codex.

<sup>64</sup> αὐταὶ ὅτι in codex. αὐταὶ· τί in all the editors. It seems more probable the omission of one of τί's occurrences (either the interrogative pronoun or the end of ὅτι) because of homoioteleuton than the addition of an ο.

<sup>65</sup> πιστεύεται in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>66</sup> ἴδατε in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>67</sup> το is added in codex by a corrector.

<sup>68</sup> φοβηθεῖς in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>69</sup> παυσαμένης in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

<sup>70</sup> θάλασσαν in codex. Text supported by all the editors.

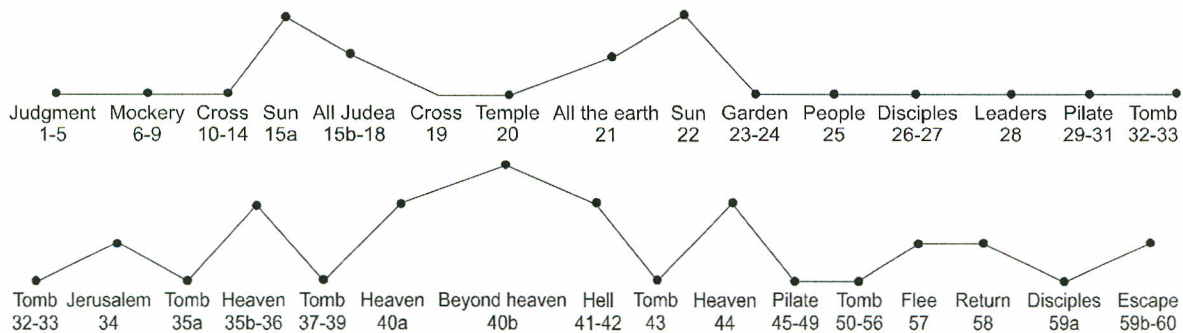
<sup>71</sup> ὃ added in Robinson, *Gospel*; Vaganay, *L'Évangile*; Zahn, *Evangelium*. Text in Gebhardt, *Evangelium und Apokalypse*; Harnack, "Bruchstücke" and codex.

## CHAPTER II. SETTINGS

We will begin by examining the narrative settings of GP. The significance of the other sections depends upon the light shed by the information provided by the settings.

### Spatial Setting

A most significant element is how the narrator develops the changes regarding the spatial dimensions throughout the plot, where the stage's lights focus our attention. There is a movement from narrower to broader that is done with certain pulse, broadening the stage, only to narrow it back, just to open it a bit wider. The following graph attempts to show these movements.



The limited or interior places serve as preparation for the events that happen in a wider stage. The former provide intimacy for planning (1-2, 28, 45-49) or hiding (26-27, 59a), the latter an open stage for the confrontation of the opposite parties as well as for the divine intervention.

This cosmic and divine intervention happens around the Lord's death and resurrection (21-22, 35-44). It is here where the stage becomes more inclusive and the progress to which we referred is clearly shown. The cosmic and heavenly elements that take part in the crucifixion (sun, Judea, earth) are surpassed by those related to the resurrection (hell, heaven and beyond heaven).

Both male (26-27, 59-60) and female disciples (50-57) pass through a similar development in their movement from interior to exterior, from company to solitude, from seclusion to a dispersion that signals freedom as well as risk. The *θάλασσα* (60), incarnation of the uncontrollable and unknown, is the obscure "return to home" that may bring new surprises.



The vocabulary used with reference to spatial movement or existence in general follows some interesting patterns. While the vertical movement of ascension is mainly related to the Lord's victory;<sup>1</sup> that of descent is connected on the one hand with the static human activities bound to the Lord's death,<sup>2</sup> and on the other hand with God/heaven's dynamic intervention against the leaders' plans.<sup>3</sup> Now, the horizontal movement of entering is linked to the Lord's death and tomb, as it happens with the prepositions for movement toward a goal. By opposition, those prepositions that convey the idea of source are intimately related to the heaven,<sup>4</sup> while the *going-out-* or *escaping-* verbs are mainly related to the resurrection.<sup>5</sup>

Some places and objects are remarkably pregnant with meaning. Most of GP's natural substances, artifacts and buildings are somehow related to the Lord's mockery, death and burial.<sup>6</sup> The OT entailment of ὁ κῆπος is that of the ideal and new Israel, the fertile bride from whom would grow renewed and eschatological life resembling the pristine παράδεισος.<sup>7</sup> In the same line, the most profane place (the tomb) and artefact (the cross) become the two earthly places of salvific implications, while the Temple is no longer mistakenly threatened by the disciples (26), but actually abandoned (20) and condemned (25) by God himself.<sup>8</sup> The stone works as the visitors' mediator with the tomb (34), and with the Lord himself (54). Its characteristics (μέγας and ἐσφραγισμένος) make it the key for a) witnessing the genuineness of the Lord's death (34), resurrection and divinity (45); and b) the religious leaders' confidence (29-33) and women's preoccupation (53-54).

<sup>1</sup> ὑπερβαίνω (40), χωρέω (40), ὑπορθόω (39), ἀνίστημι (30, 56 [x2]). Exceptions: ἀνίστημι (1), ὀρθόω (11), and ἀναλαμβάνω (19). In fact the connotation of the two latter is not at odds with the Lord's victory: both verbs seem to work ironically as types of the victorious ὑπορθόω and ὑπερβαίνω of 39-40.

<sup>2</sup> καθίζω (7), καθέζομαι (27, 55), παρακαθέζομαι (53), τίθημι (8, 12, 21, 32, 51, 53), κείμαι (56).

<sup>3</sup> κατέρχομαι (36, 44), πίπτω (18, 48), δύνω (5, 15 [x2]), ἀποστέλλω (56).

<sup>4</sup> ἀπό (39, 42), ἐκ (30, 41), ὅθεν (56), ἐκεῖθεν (36). Exceptions: ἀπό (21, 34).

<sup>5</sup> ἀπέρχομαι (43, 55, 56 [x2]), ἀφίημι (45), φεύγω (57), ἐξέρχομαι (39, 58), ὑποστρέφω (58), ἀπαλλάσσω (59). Exceptions: πέμπω (4), καταλείπω (19), ἀποσπάω (21).

<sup>6</sup> Substances and artifacts: λίθος (32, 37, 53, 54), (στέφανος) ἀκάνθινος (7), καλάμος (9), σταυρός (11, [39, 42]), ἥλοι (21), σφραγίς (33), λύχνος (17), καθέδρα (7), πορφύρα (7), τὰ ἐνδύματα (12), τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ (20), σινδών (24), ὄξος (16). Exceptions: στολή λαμπροτάτη (55), τὰ λίνα (60). Buildings: ὁ ναός (20, 26), ὁ τάφος (24, 31, 36, 37, 39, 45, 55 [x2]), τὸ μνήμα (30, 31, 32, 34, 44, 50, 52), τὸ μνημεῖον (51, 53), σκηνή (33), οἶκος (54, 58, 59).

<sup>7</sup> See Song 4.12 [κῆπος κεκλεισμένος πηγῆ ἐσφραγισμένη], 16; 5.1; 6.2, 11; Is 58.11; 61.11. The LXX text of Ez 36.35 translates קָרְנָא as κῆπος instead of παράδεισος (Gn 2.10).

<sup>8</sup> Josephus comments on the veil's depiction of the heavens (BJ 5.212.14), which creates a possible parallelism between its rendering at the moment of Jesus' ἀνελθῆναι and the stone's rolling apart at the moment of Jesus' resurrection and ascension. The abbreviation system that we are using for Josephus' works is that proposed by H. Liddell & R. Scott, comps., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), xxvii.

## Temporal Setting<sup>9</sup>

With respect to the chronological references to the mortal time, the different comprehension of the temporal center of gravity contrast the Jews' and the narrator's evaluative points of view. While the former regard the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan and the feast as a whole as the referential points (5, 58),<sup>10</sup> the latter affirms again the Lord's death and resurrection as the landmarks that bring the changes (21-22, 35, 50).<sup>11</sup>

In opposition to all the *locative* chronological references, there are two *duratives* fraught with the idea of preparation and expectation. One is the disciples' mourning during νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας (27). The other is the tomb's watch ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας (30). In the Midrash and the Rabbinical literature the third day is understood as the time at which God delivers the righteous from his distress.<sup>12</sup>

There is a change in the way mortal time is measured between death and resurrection narratives. The unit of time used for the cross is basically the hour which, together with expressions of simultaneity, marks the episode with strong urgency and tension (20-22).<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, time around the resurrection is measured with longer units such as a section of the day (35, 45, 50). Probably it is due to the preponderance that GP gives τῇ κυριακῇ, and because of the symbolism that each day's section embraces (e.g. νύξ, ὄρθρος).

This takes us to the typological comprehension of time that focuses on the *kind of time* in which an event happens. For this point it will be helpful to remember how a day was subdivided.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Just as Powell proposes it, in this section we will follow P. Ricoeur's distinction between *mortal* (measurable by calendars) and *monumental time* (that which transcends even history). Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 73-74.

<sup>10</sup> πρὸ μιᾶς τῶν ἀζύμων (5), τελευταία ἡμέρα τῶν ἀζύμων (58). Notice the strong emotions around the sunset (5, 15, 22).

<sup>11</sup> Death as the temporal landmark: ἐγγίζω (25), ὅτε (11), τότε (2, 21, 22, 25), μέλλω (3), ἄρχομαι (25), τέλος (25), τελέω (17), μεσημβρία (15), ἔτι (15), ὥρα (20, 22). Resurrection as landmark: ὄρθρος (50), ἔτι (44), ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας (30), πρωί (34), νύξ (35, 45). The death and its consequences for Israel's condemnation seem to be stressed even more strongly stressed.

<sup>12</sup> See Gn 22.4; 34.25; 40.20; 42.18; 1 Sam 30.1; Est 5.1; Hos 6.2; 1 Macc 7.16-17; 2 Macc 11.18. W. Craig, "The Historicity of the Empty Tomb of Jesus," in *NTS* 31 (1895): 39-67. Other possible bases for this reference are a prophecy that Jesus may have made in the lost section of GP (Cf. Mt 16.21; Mk 8.21; Lk 9.22; Jn 2.19), and the popular belief that the spirit of the dead stood near the corpse for three days. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 270.

<sup>13</sup> e.g. τότε (2, 21, 22, 25), ὅτε (11), μέλλω (3), αὐτῆς τῆς ὥρας (20). There is a combination of oppositions between the Jews and the son of God on the one hand and the Jews and heaven and law on the other. This heightens the tension and imposes the urgency. The express reason for hastening burial of the hung corpse is to avoid the defilement of the land. Some scholars (Brown and Merrill) propose that this defilement was caused by the mutilation and putrefaction of the corpse, while others (Fitzmyer and Kalland) argue that it was based on the inability of the community to wipe away the memory of the criminal and his punishment. J. Fitzmyer, "Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine, Qumran Literature, and the New Testament," in *CBQ* 40 (1978): 493-513. E. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, vol. 4 of *The New American Commentary*, ed. E. Clendenen (n.p.: Breadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 296-97. R. Brown, *The Message of Deuteronomy: Not by Bread Alone* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), 211. E. Kalland, *Deuteronomy-2 Samuel*, vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. F. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 135.

<sup>14</sup> Both focuses of the graph are not to be compared with each other but intend to display the different sections of a day and their entailment. Two comments are necessary, a) ὄρθρος is that part of the day right before or right during the appearance of light. b) Even though to say πρωί is to speak in terms of hours and not in terms of luminosity, it was mainly covered by



ἡμέρα / νυχθήμερον (24 hours)						
chronological focus	νύξ (12 hours of night)				ἡμέρα (12 hours of day)	
	1 <sup>st</sup> φυλακή (6PM-9PM)	2 <sup>nd</sup> φυλακή (9PM-12AM)	3 <sup>rd</sup> φυλακή (1AM-3AM)	4 <sup>th</sup> φυλακή (3AM-6AM) πρωΐ	μεσημβρία	ἐνάτη
light / darkness focus	Evening (light without sun) ὄψια ἢ ἑσπέρα		night (darkness) νύξ	dawn (light without sun) ἀγλή	day (light with sun) ἡμέρα	
			ὄρθρος			

The only time that a noon and afternoon work as temporal framework of an episode are those of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan around the death and burial of Jesus and the mounting guard in front of the tomb (15-33). This is the time of the most intense activity and weariness, the tense moment that ends in the definite divine abandonment and condemnation of Jerusalem (25). In opposition, any other event takes place at night or morning, sections of the *νυχθήμερον* that are meaningful because of the entailed contrast between darkness and light and the image of the irruption of light out of darkness.

Both in the crucifixion and the resurrection there is a divine opposition to the established situations represented by the contradictory breaking in of darkness at μεσημβρία (15) and πολὺ φέγγος during the night (36).<sup>15</sup>

The contrasting location that the narrator makes of each character in a particular temporal setting is certainly suggestive. There is an evident evolution from blindness to ἀναγνώρισις between those who, in spite of walking with lamps, fell down (18) and those who, though running without lamps, did not (45).<sup>16</sup> However, this evolution in the *plot of thought* makes them even more responsible for not changing at the level of *plot of character*: Knowing exactly what they had done, they confirm their overt opposition to God (48).<sup>17</sup> Now, the ὄρθρος in which the women approach the tomb (50), puts them in an ambiguous advantage with respect to the people recently mentioned. Ironically enough, these latter probably run to Pilate to confirm the Lord's resurrection and divinity

darkness. The chart is based on information provided by Liddell & Scott, *Lexicon*, BAGD and J. Louw and E. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 1: 650-54.

<sup>15</sup> The OT theological implications of *darkness at μεσημβρία* will be discussed in the section *Social Setting*.

<sup>16</sup> Culpepper stresses the importance of the cognitive change/discovery in the definition of ancient literature's plot. R. Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letter of John, of Interpreting Biblical Texts*, ed. C. Cousar (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 62-86.

<sup>17</sup> Donaldson makes an extremely helpful classification of three different kinds of plot: a) *Plot of fortune*: The character's situation changes with respect to the external environment. b) *Plot of character*: The character's situation changes with respect to his/her character ("testing plot"). c) *Plot of thought*: The character's situation changes with respect to his/her perception or state of mind. T. Donaldson, "The Mockers and the Son of God (Matthew 27. 37-44): Two Characters in Matthew's Story of Jesus," in *JSNT* 41 (1991): 3-18.

during the same section of the night (πρωί) in which, one day before (34), they were bringing ὄχλος to the tomb to confirm the Lord's defeat.

GP's *monumental* comprehension of time cannot be defined at this point. The ambiguity of the information provided by our fragmentary text moves between a cyclic and a progressive comprehension of time.<sup>18</sup> However, it is the strong possibility of a para- or a-historical monumental comprehension of reality what really keeps us from defining this point right now. This depends on the question that will be faced later regarding the stage in which salvation is won (cross-resurrection or the descent into Hell) and with respect to the role the historical events have in this regard. Are the historical events the means by which to enter into the salvific stage or are *they* the place in which salvation is won?

### Social Setting

*The washing of hands (1, 46):* Dt 21.1-9 prescribes that in case of a homicide with an unknown murderer, the γερουσία and κριταί of the nearest city had to a) kill a heifer, b) wash their hands over the animal and c) declare their innocence. The Psalter takes over this image to express either the disassociation from evildoers (Ps 25[26].4-5, 9) or the association with the suffering righteous (Ps 72[73].13) that qualified the psalmist to take part in the sanctuary's cult (Ps 23[24].4).<sup>19</sup>

*The trial (1-5):* Even though all the Talmudic authorities agree that 40 years before the destruction of the Temple (30 AD) Rome removed from the Jewish court the right of deciding capital

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<sup>18</sup> The latter seems to be more possible. The cyclic monumental time is suggested by the following elements: a) GP's thoroughly typological imagery. b) The cycle of the Lord's epic (56). c) The return to the creational fertility of the paradise signed by the κήπος (24). Now the progressive monumental time is indicated by these other elements: a) The definiteness and radicality of the break between God and the Jewish leaders (25). b) The assimilation of the cross to the identity of the risen Lord (39-42, 56). In Jewish exegesis the usual typological interpretation was possible on the basis of Yahweh's steadfast and coherent intervention in history that allowed to see the repetition of the divine patterns. D. Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1983), 26-27, 32.

<sup>19</sup> "The Mosaic Law expressly states that it is the duty of the commonwealth, or the state, to prevent the shedding of innocent blood. Should the state fail to do so, the guilt of blood attaches to the state." H. Goldin, *Hebrew Criminal Law and Procedure: Mishna: Sanhedrin-Kakkot* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1952), 22. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 98-101. Daniel's declaration of innocence (ἀθῶος ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος ταύτης) in the apocryphal story of Susana (Sus 46) may also belong to the same line of tradition. In a Jewish funeral the relatives and friends of the *onan* (the dead's closest relative) wash their hands when they leave the cemetery. Probably it symbolizes innocence with respect to that death. A. Bloch, *The Biblical and Historical Background of Jewish Customs and Ceremonies* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1980), 54-59.



cases, it is very possible that these laws had a considerable role in the condemnation of Jesus.<sup>20</sup> The Jewish were reluctant to condemn criminals to death. However, in certain cases (blasphemy, profanation of the Sabbath, murder, treason and others) it was necessary.<sup>21</sup> The Talmudic authorities agree with respect to the Mosaic methods of execution (stoning, burning and decapitation), while there was disagreement regarding a fourth method: either strangulation, impalement or crucifixion. At any rate, the λησστής/בידסל who was punished with this method was fraught with the same political connotations as in the case of the Roman law.<sup>22</sup>

It is clear that in our case it was not Pilate who condemned Jesus but Herod and οἱ κριταί, probably representatives of the Jewish court (1-5).<sup>23</sup> This does not cohere with the normal first-century legal procedures: a) The Roman governors were quite jealous regarding the capital punishment. b) The *forum delicti* was preponderant over the *forum domicilii*.<sup>24</sup> c) The authority to which a case was *remittere/ἀναπέμπειν* (remanded) always had higher position.

*Enthronement (6-9)*: Blinzler lists the following elements that form the evident parallel between the ironic mockery of Jesus and the Roman imperial homage: the hail, bending the knees, the kiss (that becomes spitting) and the enthronement itself.<sup>25</sup> Philo (*Flaccum* 32-39) describes the playful enthronement and mockery of the Egyptian lunatic Carabas.<sup>26</sup> The OT redirects the implications of this imagery having Yahweh as the enthroned and ironically asked for a righteous judgment in the context of Israel's unrighteousness (Jdg 2.6-3.6; Is 58.2). In Zec 3.1-6 Yahweh

<sup>20</sup> The Jewish criminal laws related with the capital punishment never ceased of being studied; on the other hand, the presence of Jews in our fragmentary trial and the interchangeability that the religious and the political titles (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ-ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ) display in the mockery suggest this possibility. Goldin, *Hebrew Criminal Law*, 26.

<sup>21</sup> The Talmud considers that this kind of punishment has three different characters: a) retributive (to eradicate the evil from the community); b) deterrent (to work as an example); c) expiatory (the blood of the criminal freed the nation from God's wrath). *Ibid.*, 19, 27-28. 4QpNah col. 64, lines 6-13 orders the crucifixion for a political traitor. See J. Fitzmyer, *To Advance the Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 133.

<sup>22</sup> The Tractate Sanhedrin 7.1 and the Talmud Gemara 46b propose strangulation. The Targum Ruth 1.17, the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and the Targum Neofiti 1 command crucifixion. The Targum Onkelos proposes impalement. E. Clarke, tra., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy*, vol. 5b of *The Aramaic Bible* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 59. B. Grossfeld, tra., *The Targum Onkelos to Deuteronomy*, vol. 9 of *The Aramaic Bible* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1988), 64. M. McNamara, tra., *Targum Neofiti 1: Deuteronomy*, vol. 5a of *The Aramaic Bible* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 105 n. 25. E. Bammel, "Crucifixion as a Punishment in Palestine," in *The Trial of Jesus*, ed. E. Bammel (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1970), 162-163. Goldin, *Hebrew Criminal Law*, 28-37, 137-138. The Roman causes for crucifixion were: desertion to the enemy, betrayal of secrets, rebellion, murder, prophecy about the welfare of the rulers, magic, serious cases of falsification of wills. M. Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 34.

<sup>23</sup> A. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 24-36. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 53.

<sup>24</sup> Heord the Great seems to have had the privilege of demanding the criminals that proceeded from his kingdom (JW 1.474). H. Hoehner, "Why did Pilate Hand Jesus Over to Antipas?," in *The Trial of Jesus*, ed. E. Bammel (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1970), 84-90.

<sup>25</sup> J. Blinzler, *The Trial of Jesus: The Jewish and Roman Proceedings Against Jesus Christ Described and Assessed from the Oldest Accounts* (Cork: The Mercier Press Ltd., 1959), 227.

commands a kind of enthronement of Joshua (through whom reconciliation would be brought), against Satan's accusations.

*The scapegoat (6-9)*: If there is an idea conveyed by the Yom Kippur's goats, it is that of the substitution. The idea regarding the sacrificed goat's role stood always the same: it was to attain the atonement for the sins of Israel (Lv. 10.15-16). It was the goat separated לְעִזָּאֵל which became object of ritual and conceptual expansions.<sup>27</sup> Within the Jewish tradition, it soon was understood as the representative of עִזָּאֵל himself, which, on its part, was identified as *the demon*.<sup>28</sup> These are some Talmudic additions to the ritual: a) Scarlet wool was put on the scapegoat's head or horns (Yoma 4:2). b) The animal was abused (probably νύσσειν) on its way. c) The scapegoat was taken to a mountain so that a wind from the Lord might knock it down and it might die.<sup>29</sup> In a very different direction Is 50.4-9; 52.13-53.12 and Zec 12.10; 13.7 probably project some of these elements on the servant (Is), on Yahweh's shepherd (Zec 13) and on Yahweh himself (Zec 12).<sup>30</sup> The Christian tradition (e.g. Barn. and Tertullian) identified both goats with Christ.<sup>31</sup>

*Crucifixion (10-21)*: The first historical references to the crucifixion in Herodotus and Ctesias mention it as a Persian practice. The Romans adopted this method of execution but limiting it almost without exception to the *peregrini* and the slaves (*supplicium servile*).<sup>32</sup> The extreme horror of the crucified's physical pains and moral shame led a large number of Christians to fall into Docetism and to non-Christians to despise the new sect as the lowest of all superstitions.<sup>33</sup> The cross was designed to weaken the breathing muscles in order to kill by a slow asphyxiation. However, the cause of death was often orthostatic collapse (failure of blood circulation) or the

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<sup>26</sup> *Philonis Alexandrini in Flaccum*, ed. H. Box (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 12-15.

<sup>27</sup> This ritual symbol spread out throughout the most variegated cultures as the paradigm of the person or animal victim of popular punishment. B. McLean, "On the Revision of Scapegoat Terminology," in *Numen* vol. 37 no. 2 (1990): 168-173.

<sup>28</sup> Several Jewish texts (e.g. Apocalypse of Abraham; 4QEn Giants<sup>a</sup> -Book of the Giants-) see עִזָּאֵל as the seducing demon upon whom Yahweh will put the curse of people's destiny when the former may be bound and thrown into the abyss (See Rev 20.1-10). L. Grabbe, "The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation," in *JSJ* vol. 18 no. 2 (1987): 152-167.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 159. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 119.

<sup>30</sup> The LXX changes the anthropomorphic and scandalous דָּקַר (pierce) of Zec 12.10 (יהבישו אלי את אֶשְׁרֵי־דָּקָרוֹ) into רָקַד/κατορχέομαι (dance, insult).

<sup>31</sup> It was probably possible on the bases of the LXX's euphemistic translations of עִזָּאֵל (ἀποπομπάιος: scapegoat (Lv 16.8, 10); ἄφεσις: forgiveness (Lv 16.26)). Barnabas takes into account some of the Talmudic additions in his typological interpretation (See Barn 5.13-14; 7.3-9).

<sup>32</sup> In 63 BC a senator that committed treason and was asked to be crucified. Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 22-23, 41, 52.

<sup>33</sup> Not until the third century Christians could stand and draw the image of the crucified Lord. Yamuchi, *Docetic Christology*, (sound cassette). Octavius Minucius Felix says "[T]o say that their ceremonies center on a man put to death for his crime and on the fatal wood of the cross is to assign to these abandoned wretched sanctuaries which are appropriate to them and the kind of worship they deserve." Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 3. Yamuchi, *The Crucifixion*, 4.



bloodshed produced by the previous flogging.<sup>34</sup> The corpse used to be left on the cross so that it was eaten by birds and dogs. Yet, when it was taken down, if the nails couldn't be easily withdrawn, the feet were amputated.<sup>35</sup> Hengel rejects any attempt to reconstruct a paradigmatic crucifixion since it was the event in which "the caprice and sadism of the executioners were given full rein."<sup>36</sup>

During the Hasmonean period crucifixion was the way Saducees and Pharisees combated each other, but Herod the Great stopped this practice.<sup>37</sup> Naturally crucifixion was identified with Dt 21.23's condemnation, what made it even more offensive for the Jews.<sup>38</sup>

*The burial (23-33, 50-54):* The ritual steps that the *onan* (the dead's nearest relative) had to follow for the burial were clearly prescribed: a) *Keriah*: Rendering of one's garments, reciting a benediction and dressing black garments. b) *Taharah*: Washing the body with perfumes and ointments. c) *Tacharichim*: Wrapping the body with a shroud of white linen. d) Carrying the body placed in a coffin out of town in procession while saying eulogies. e) Placing the body with some belongings in the tomb. f) Procuring a watchman not to disregard the body. g) When leaving the tomb, people consoled the *onan* and washed their hands. h) Friends prepared the *condolence meal*.<sup>39</sup>

The intense grieving was extended for a whole week (the *shiv'ah*), in which the *onan* could not bathe, be anointed, exchange greetings or leave home. The *Shloshim* was the first month of grieving in which the family could not leave town or partake any social gathering. After the *Shloshim* the family had a private ceremony in which the bones were placed in an ossuary.<sup>40</sup>

Eulogies were not permitted on Sabbath, holidays or the month of Nisan because of their festive nature. Condemned criminals were subjected to a two-fold shame: a) They were not placed

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<sup>34</sup> Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 163. Blinzler, *Trial of Jesus*, 259. Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 29-32.

<sup>35</sup> Fritzmyer, *To Advance the Gospel*, 128.

<sup>36</sup> Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 25. See *BJ* 5.449-51; *AJ* 13.380-83. For Dr. Haas' hypothesis regarding the way the man of Giva'at ha-Mivtar was crucified see Fritzmyer, *To Advance the Gospel*, 127-28.

<sup>37</sup> There happened two mass crucifixions in the first-century Palestine: a) In 7 AD during the revolt against the census and under Alexander Janneus and b) in 70 AD in the final destruction of the Temple as a way of persuading the governors to give up. Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 85.

<sup>38</sup> In case of a crucifixion the divine condemnation felt upon the crucified if he was guilty, but upon the crucifier if the former was innocent. Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, 59.

<sup>39</sup> Bloch, *Jewish Customs*, 49-59. B. McCane, "The Scandal of the Grave: Jesus' Humiliation Didn't End at the Cross," in *Christian History* issue 59, vol. 7, no. 3 (1998): 41. For plans of tombs see G. Avni and Z. Greenhut, "Architecture, Burial Customs and Chronology," in *The Akeldama Tombs: Three Burial Caves in the Kidron Valley, Jerusalem*, eds. G. Avni and Z. Greenhut (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1996), 1-39.

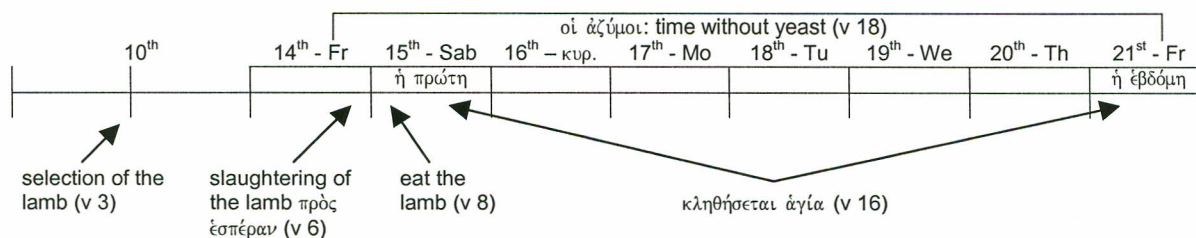
<sup>40</sup> McCane, "The Scandal of the Grave," 41.

in the family tomb until a secondary burial, and b) the family couldn't mourn publicly for they were suppose to express agreement with the court's verdict.<sup>41</sup>

*Mourning and fasting (25-27, 50-54):* Two kinds of memorial fasts were instituted after the destruction of the first Temple (586 BC): a) The *Supplicatory Fast* consisted in penitence through self-mortification (absence of food) in order to attain deliverance from an impending tragedy. b) The *Memorial Fast* sought to avoid the repetition of a past tragic event on account of the mourning.<sup>42</sup>

Certain OT prophecies foretold a time of Israel's mourning. These oracles were uttered always in the context of the divine condemnation of Israel's unrighteousness and predicted a sudden, miraculous and gloomy change from light into darkness, from feast into mourning.<sup>43</sup>

*The feast (5, 58):* Songs of Solomon 2.11-12 was a typical description of the festive atmosphere of Nisan. The Talmudic authorities even prohibited fasting during its first half.<sup>44</sup> The following time-line of the month of Nisan displays the procedures for this celebration according to Ex 12.<sup>45</sup>



The lamb was sacrificed on the eve of the 15<sup>th</sup> (that in GP is the *Shabbat Parashat ha-Chodesh*), and eaten at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup>. Its bones had not to be broken, an image that, together with that of the protected righteous of Ps 33.20, was applied to Jesus.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Bloch, *Jewish Customs*, 50, 120.

<sup>42</sup> Bloch, *Jewish Customs*, 309-311.

<sup>43</sup> The strong parallels between these texts and GP are so striking that it is very probable that the narrator has them in mind. a) Is 3.10-11 (see GP 6, 25, 48): εἰπόντες δῆσωμεν τὸν δίκαιον ὅτι δύσχητος ἡμῖν ἐστὶν τοῖνον τὰ γενήματα τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν φάγονται. οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνόμῳ ποιηρὰ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν αὐτοῦ συμβήσεται αὐτῷ. b) Ez 9 (Dereliction the brings destruction; see GP 17, 20, 25): ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐκδίκησις τῆς πόλεως ... καὶ δόξα θεοῦ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἀνέβη ἀπὸ τῶν χερουβὶν ἢ οὐσα ἐπ' αὐτῶν ... καὶ ἡ πόλις ἐπλήσθη ἀδικίας καὶ ἀκαθαρσίας. c) Am 8.8-10 (Judgment for lack of fear of Yahweh; see GP 15, 18, 21, 25-27): καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις οὐ ταραχθήσεται ἡ γῆ καὶ πενήσει πᾶς ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ... καὶ δύσεται ὁ ἥλιος μεσημβρίας ... καὶ μεταστρέψω τὰς ἑορτὰς ὑμῶν εἰς πένθος ... καὶ θήσομαι αὐτὸν ὡς πένθος ἀγαπητοῦ. d) Zec 12.10 (Yahweh's intervention brings grief; see GP 9, 25, 28, 50): καὶ ἐπιβλέψονται πρὸς με ἄνθ' ὧν κατωρχήσαντο καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτὸν κοπετὸν ὡς ἐπ' ἀγαπητὸν.

<sup>44</sup> Bloch, *Jewish Customs*, 211-15.

<sup>45</sup> Ex 12.1-20 and Nm 9.1-14 are the Mosaic regulations for this most important feast, the two-fold (Passover and οἱ άζύμοι) celebration of Israel's liberation from Egypt.



*Descent into Hell (41-42)*: The two NT texts that seem most clearly to refer to Christ's descent into Hell (Eph 4.8-9; 1 Pe 3.18-22) are still the subject of strong controversies.<sup>46</sup> The ecclesiological dimension that Paul gives to the gifts obtained/given by Christ's descent/ascension in his interpretation of Ps 67[68].18, centers in the realization and appropriation of Christ's victory of the historical and earthly Church over against any parallel liberation of spirits.<sup>47</sup> Now, the express typological connection that 1 Pe 3.21 makes between Noah's and Christian salvation suggests a) the small number of people that reach salvation and b) the exclusivity that the baptismal ἐπερώτησα (*stipulatio*, agreement) has as means of salvation.<sup>48</sup> In summary, the NT obscure reference to this event does not imply any evangelisation that parallels that of the Church and even less the historical event of the cross and resurrection.<sup>49</sup>

Either the NT references or the fathers' amplification of this article was enough basis for the introduction that the apocryphal literature made of the widespread pagan myth of the divine redeemer's descent into the kingdom of death to deliver the captives. These are the consequent principal distortions: a) The victory is in Hell and not on earth. b) Christ's weapon is either his irresistible presence or the revelation of his divine identity. c) Deliverance and resurrection happen together with Christ's. d) There is no commission to the disciples since earthly mission is unnecessary.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Eph 4 is understood by Harris III as referring to Pentecost. Grudem lists five different traditional interpretations of 1 Pe 3: a) Christ preached through Noah; b) Christ descended into Hell to give the spirits a new opportunity; c) Christ descended to proclaim his definite victory; d) Christ descended to release the penitent spirits; e) Christ descended to proclaim his victory over the fallen angels (Gn 6). See W. Harris III, *The Descent of Christ: Ephesians 4:7-11 and Traditional Hebrew Imagery* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996). W. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary, of The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, ed. Canon L. Morris (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 203-239. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 363

<sup>47</sup> The Psalm identifies Yahweh's victorious parade with the king's battles or –perhaps- Israel's return from the diaspora. Rabbinic exegesis always understood it as referring to Moses ascension to Sinai or heavens to receive the Torah. Harris III, *Ephesians 4:7-11*, 91-95.

<sup>48</sup> By opposition, this is the rejection of a) the opening of salvific opportunity to the multitude of spirits in prison and b) the salvific character of Jesus' preaching in Hell. L. Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter*, supplement Series 114 of JSNT, ed. S. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 158-164.

<sup>49</sup> The early fathers usually taught that Christ descended to preach the victory obtained on the earthly events. However, Clement, e.g., following the *Shep. Herm.*, says that Jesus (and the disciples at their time) preached to and baptized also unbelievers in Hell. Clement's *Str.* 6.6. *ANFa* 2: 490-91. Harris III, *Ephesians 4:7-11*, 1-2, 4-6. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 374-77.

## Summary

Any discussion of elements of the settings uncovers the fact that the text is fraught with meaning. At least three elements become clear from the analysis that we are concluding here. a) The *emphatic interest* that the implied narrator has with respect to the Lord's crucifixion as well as to his resurrection. The extension of the narrative's stage that comes to reach cosmic dimensions at the cross (15-18) and at the empty tomb (35-44), and the mobility of characters and their constant direction either around the cross or toward the tomb give proof of this. b) The temporal and - specially- the social setting evidence the heavily *theological content* with which the narrator regards both cross and resurrection, inasmuch as the gloomy completion of Israel's evil and condemnation and the bright eruption of the divine vindication of the righteous one(s). c) The imagery that the OT background and the light/darkness motif provide, clearly suggests the *judgment* against Israel that marks the narrator's evaluative point of view.

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<sup>50</sup> R. Hoffman, "Confluence in Early Christian and Gnostic Literature: The *Descensus Christi ad Inferos* (Acts of Pilate 17-27)," in *New Testament Backgrounds: A Sheffield Reader*, eds. C. Evans and S. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 296-311. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 364-72, 377-79.

### CHAPTER III. EVENTS

Since it is important to take into consideration both the episodocity of the gospel narrative and especially the organic comprehension of its plot, we will focus first on the literary characteristics of each paragraph to move then toward a more general appreciation of the narrative.<sup>1</sup>

#### Episodic Approach

*First paragraph (1-5): The judgment.* The unity of direction toward the Lord's execution with which the flow of this paragraph moves (manifested in the always-progressive *καί, τότε, ὅτι, πρὸς, ἔπειτα* and *γάρ*) is broken (*δέ*) just by Pilate's disassociation from the court (1) and the appearance of Joseph (3).<sup>2</sup> Beyond the unchangeability of destiny that is breathed here, Pilate and Joseph are assuming the role of the Deuteronomic *κριταί* and of the *onan* respectively; and in so doing, they are already opening the conflictive split between those who support and those who murder the righteous one.<sup>3</sup> Paradoxically, those who were responsible for doing away with the shedding of innocent blood by the capital punishment of the *ληστής*, are acting here exactly against that same responsibility.

The structural simplicity of the paragraph (made slightly complex by Herod's second speech (5a) displays this episode's preparatory and peripheral nature.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Shiner argues that the current tendency toward the holistic comprehension of the narrative reflects the single-episodic nature of the modern *drama*, while NT-narrative (like Greco-Roman *βίοι*) develops its unified plot throughout multiple semi-independent episodes. Thus, it is necessary to keep the tension. Shiner explains how NT-narrative builds a unified plot out of episodic units: a) Similar episodes are repeated to develop a point or a conflict. b) The order of the discrete sections suggests a coherent plot development. c) Discrete episodes are interwoven to extend narrative tension or to provide keys for interpretation. W. Shiner, "Creating Plot in Episodic Narratives: *The Life of Aesop* and the Gospel of Mark," in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative*, eds. R. Hock, J. Chance and J. Perkins (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 155-175. Stamp, "Rhetorical and Narratological Criticism," 225-26.

<sup>2</sup> We consider that the *δέ* with which the fragmentary text begins (together with Pilate's continual disassociation from the Jews and the execution of Jesus (see 4, 46)) suggests that Pilate did wash his hands.

<sup>3</sup> The way early Christian authors appropriated OT imagery seems to follow the traditional Rabbinic seven *middoth* (hermeneutical principles) attributed to Hillel. Two important principles were the typological interpretation on the bases of linguistic or thematic connections between the texts and the importance of the context for the interpretation and typological appropriation of a text. Moo, *Old Testament*, 27-28. C. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 44-53. If Pilate's perversion and blood-shedding character attributed by Josephus and by Philo are taken into account in GP, the dimensions of the Jews' evil grows by contrast: even such a tyrant as Pilate can be identified with the psalmist of Ps 23[24], 25[26] and 72[73] when seen against the background of the Jews. See *JW* 2.169-177; *JA* 18.55-62, 85-89. *Gaius* 302 in *Philonis Alexandrini: Legatio ad Gaium*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. E. Smallwood (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 128.

<sup>4</sup> The first paragraph (1-5) covers 117 words (10 % of the text) and is formed by 13 sentences (6 simple and 7 complex), with an average of 9 words per sentence. By *simple sentences* we mean those that are formed just by a single clause, while



*Second paragraph (6-9): The mockery.* The way the sentences are linked (always with *καί* with the exception of the asyndeton in sentence 2.8), the sparseness of both exclamatory speeches and narration, and the latter's iterativity (note the considerable use of *impf.*), successfully re-create the episode's intensity.<sup>5</sup>

The paragraph is structured in the following chiasmic way:

a) σύρωμεν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (6)

b) πορφύραν περιέβαλον (7a)

c) καθέδρα - δικαίως κρίνε, βασιλεῦ (7b)

b') στέφανον ἀκάνθινον - ἐνέπτυσον - ἐράπισαν - ἔνυσσον (8-9a)

a') ἐτιμήσαμεν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (9b).

His divine identity (a-a') and his incarnation of the scapegoat figure (b-b') are concealing the ironic reality that is happening on a different level. The Jews are absolutely right when they identify this "false king" and "blasphemous character" with the scapegoat. But they don't know that this scapegoat is not the *ἡγιασμένος*-mode but the *ἄφρονας*-mode (13). They don't know that they are receiving exactly what they are asking for: *δικαίαν κρίσιν* (c).

*Third paragraph (10-20): The Crucifixion.* The intensity provided by the numerous simple sentences continues here and is interrupted only by the complex rhetorical question of the evildoer. The last paragraph's harmonious attack against the Lord moved back (now *δέ* joins to the constant *καί*) to the confrontation between Jews on the one hand and evildoer, heaven, and Law on the other.<sup>6</sup> This is the pinnacle of the unrighteous attack against the righteous one and the beginning of God's vindication. The core of this episode is bracketed by parallel incidents: Silence (*ἔσιώπα*) (10) and cry (*ἀνεβόησε*) (19), lifting up (*ᾤρθωσαν*) (11) and being taken up (*ἀνελήφθη*) (19), and tearing apart (*διεμερίσαντο-διεράγη*) (12, 20), embrace the casting lots of 12 and the climactic confrontation

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*complex sentences* are those that have clauses in hypotactical position to a main clause. The former usually impose either simplicity or intensity to the narrative, while the latter may suggest certain pause and elaboration of ideas.

<sup>5</sup> The second paragraph (6-9) covers 76 words (6.5 % of the text) and is formed by 9 sentences (3 simple and 6 complex), with an average of 8.4 words per sentence. *Iterative narration* happens when several events (or a repeated event) is narrated just once. The other three relations between *frequency in discourse* and *frequency in story* proposed by Powell are a) *singular narration* (one-to-one relation), b) *repetitive narration* (one occurrence repeatedly mentioned) and c) *multiple-singular narration* (repeated events that are described with the same frequency in the narration). Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 39-40.

<sup>6</sup> The third paragraph (10-20) covers 169 words (14.4 % of the text) and is formed by 19 sentences (9 simple and 10 complex) with an average of 8.9 words per sentence.



of 15-18. Perhaps they form the main pair of the event.<sup>7</sup> Focusing only on these core incidents (15-18), the structure again works through a series of bracketing *inclusio*: Condemning σκότος that takes over at μεσεμβρία (15) and mistaken νόξ that betrays people's blindness (18); the disappearing ἥλιος (15) and the artificial λύχνοι's stubborn attempt to maintain any light (18); and the compromising δύνειν of the sun (15) together with the even more dramatic πίπτειν of people (18), all these pairs point to the centrality of the assassination of the Lord (16) and the completion of all the Jews' sins (17).<sup>8</sup>

This is the only single event that is referred to in *repetitive narration* throughout the whole narrative from 3 (ὅτι σταυρίσκειν αὐτὸν μέλλουσιν) to 59 (τὸ συμβάν). This event not only is the heart of the God-Jews and righteous-unrighteous conflict, but also it works as the root for any other plot movement. The crucifixion even stamps the event of the resurrection (39-42) and the identity of the resurrected-σταυρωθείς (56).

*Fourth paragraph (21-24): The burial.* The contrast between parties continues here (note how δέ confronts them). However, things become more distended as the cosmic (ἡ γῆ πάντα ἐσείσθη - ἥλιος ἔλαμψε) yields to the particular (ἴδιον τᾶφον), and the releasing (ἀπέσπασαν) to the enclosing (ἐἴλησε σινδόνι καὶ εἰσήγαγεν). The number of simple sentences together with the repetition of τότε depict the scene's urgency.<sup>9</sup> It is just the narrator who makes a *pause* for the complex explanation of purpose (ἵνα) and reason (ἐπειδὴ) for which Joseph receives the body.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The Jews' hardening of heart, their stubborn opposition even to the heavenly sign of darkness, and the assassination of the Lord are certainly the casting of their own lots inasmuch as the definition of their condemnation.

<sup>8</sup> Some interpretative comments are necessary here: As most of the commentators understand it (Crossan, Kirk, Vanagay, Zahn and Mara), the χολήν μετὰ ὄξους is probably a poison that hasten the Lord's death, rather than a sedative or a bitter drink. Crossan points out that GP is the only Christian text that maintains the order χολή-ὄξος of Ps 68[69].21 and the emphasis on the poison over against the bitterness. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 209-212. Kirk, "Examining Priorities," 572-95.

This hastening became necessary with the unexpected darkening of Judea right after the Jews commanded not to break the Lord's legs. Even though the referent of αὐτῶ in 14 is not clear at all, grammatically it could apply either to the Lord or to the evildoer, we prefer to identify it with the Lord because of the context (it may be part of the Lord's abuse catena and this explains the hurry of the next incident) and because this interpretation supports the symbolic connection with the Paschal lamb already suggested by the time of the Lord's slaughtering (it is not on the 13<sup>th</sup> but on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan). The other possibility, however, does not lack supporting significance: partaking in the Lord's sufferings wouldn't be a strange idea for GP at all.

<sup>9</sup> The fourth paragraph (21-24) covers 68 words (5.8 % of the text) and is formed by 11 sentences (7 simple and 3 complex) with an average of 6.2 words per sentence.

<sup>10</sup> Besides the narrative devices in relation to the *frequency* of discourse vs. story, Powell mentions five devices in relation to the *duration* of discourse vs. story: a) *summary* (discourse is shorter than the real event), b) *scene* (relatively equal duration), c) *stretch* (discourse is longer than the event), d) *ellipsis* (while event's time continues, the discourse's stops to be resumed later) and e) *pause* (the narrator takes time out to explain something while the event's time is waiting). Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 38-39.

*Fifth paragraph (25-27): Human reactions.*<sup>11</sup> The adversative beginning of 26 (δέ) introduces an important break in chronology (τότε (25) and ἕως τοῦ σαββάτου (27)) and in experience. While the narrator enters the first person of the hidden disciples, and these latter their extensive seclusion,<sup>12</sup> the discovery of eschatological and imminent dimensions (25) engenders a plot conflict in which the disciples are bypassed. The common ground of these two parallel stages, however, is the preponderance that the psychological distress is given over against the narrated events.<sup>13</sup>

*Sixth paragraph (28-34): The guard in the tomb.*<sup>14</sup> Only the tensive stage of the previous event is picked up here and the conflict steps further. The continuing reflection makes people realize about the Lord's righteousness (28), and transforms them into a threat for the Jewish leaders (30). The position that the main characters have in the text reflects how each of them presses the other to react and solve his/their conflict. The people surround the religious leaders and these surround Pilate.<sup>15</sup> The two δέ (31, 34) mark the apparent solution of the religious leaders' conflict (Pilate's provision of soldiers) and that of the people (confirmation that the Lord is dead). The reader is left there, in front of the tomb, with the expecting suspicion that the solution is just transient.

<sup>11</sup> The fifth paragraph (25-27) covers 69 words (5.8 % of the text) and is formed by 7 sentences (2 simple and 5 complex) with an average of 9.8 words per sentence.

<sup>12</sup> We are not taking τὸ σάββατον as referring to Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, but to either Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> (in which case σάββατον should be taken as "a week") or Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup>. We discard the 15<sup>th</sup> since a) the mourning time is referred to as longer than less than one day (νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας (27)), b) the position of the disciples' dispersion within the narrative (after the resurrection) (59-60), and c) the proximity between the τελευταία ἡμέρα τῶν ἀζύμων (Friday, 21<sup>st</sup>) and the time of the disciples' dispersion. This interpretation congrues with the customary keeping of the *shiv'ah*. Under this understanding of ἕως τοῦ σαββάτου the narrator is making a *proleptic anachrony* (in which the difference between discourse's time and event's happens in relation to its order) that proleptically introduces the anachrony in which the disciples' evaluative point of view will keep caught in the tragedy of the Lord's death (59).

<sup>13</sup> This is the introduction of the mode the narrative is going to follow until the end: the stress falls in the characters' the evaluative and perceptive point of view rather than in the external-narrated events themselves. This tends to make the paragraphs longer and the sentences more complex.

<sup>14</sup> The sixth paragraph (28-34) covers 147 words (12.5 % of the text) and is formed by 8 sentences (2 simple and 6 complex) with an average of 18.4 words per sentence. The linking devices (of both speech and narration) add complexity to the section and exemplify the emphasis on the evaluative (ὅτι (28b, 30), εἰ (28b), ἵνα (30, 34), μήποτε (30)) and perceptive (ὅτι (28a)) point of view of the characters.

<sup>15</sup> ὁ λαός (ὅσους δίκαιός ἐστιν) (28)

οἱ πρεσβύτεροι (ἐφοβήθησαν) (29)

ὁ λαός (ὑπολάβη ὅτι ἀνέστη) (30)

Πειλᾶτος (παραδέδωκεν) (31)

πρεσβύτεροι (ἔθηκαν-ἐπέχρισαν ἑπτὰ σφραγίδας-σκηνὴν πῆξαντες) (32-33)

ἄλλος (ἦλθεν ἵνα ἴδωσι τὸ μνημα) (34)

This evidences how distorted the structure of power is from the evaluative point of view of the elders: 1) ὁ λαός; 2) οἱ πρεσβύτεροι; 3) Πειλᾶτος. Pilate functions here as a guiltless instrument of the elders' plans that responded first to the letter of their law (5, 15, 23) and now to the people, instead of responding to God.



*Seventh paragraph (35-49): The epiphany.*<sup>16</sup> If up to this point the *plot of fortune* was still in process, here everything finds its ultimate definition and final verdict. The radical importance of this fact and the divine intervention mark again the narrative with a dramatic color of immediacy.<sup>17</sup>

There is a remarkable repetition of elements that surround the experience of witnessing the resurrection, ascension and heavenly reference to the descent into Hell of those *περὶ τὸν κεντυρίωνα*, experience that is in fact the episode's core.<sup>18</sup> The presence of the tent from which the witnesses are explicitly awakened and the two-chapter epiphany that allows all of those present (and not only the two men of the corresponding watch) to see the resurrected one are clever narratological movements that make the victorious vindication of the righteous one unquestionable, and the leaders' opposition to God absolutely conscious and blameful.<sup>19</sup> The nature of both resurrection-ascension and descent into Hell is so ambiguous that it cannot be clarified before an organic approach to the plot.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The seventh paragraph (35-49) covers 260 words (22.1 % of the text) and is formed by 19 sentences (2 simple and 17 complex), with an average of 13.6 words per sentence. Note that this is the longest episode of GP. The hypotactical position in which the epiphanic events (the resurrection and ascension themselves) are put is not suggestion of a hierarchical evaluation of their importance, but of its intimacy with the witnesses' perceptive point of view. P. Cotterell and M. Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1989), 199.

<sup>17</sup> The discursive devices cohere with this two-fold nature of the paragraph: a) *Definitiveness of the episode*: Note the contrast made between Jesus and the angels (μέν-δέ) (40) and between Pilate and the Jewish leaders (ἐγώ-ὑμεῖς-δέ) (46). Note also the conclusive tone of certain sentences connoted by οὖν (43, 49) and γάρ (38, 48) (there is no conditional or purpose clause), and of all the speeches with the exception of the heavenly rhetorical question. b) *Dramatic tone*: Note the 19 occurrences of καί and the presence of καὶ ἔτι (44), πάλιν (39, 44) and an asyndeton (45).

<sup>18</sup> a) νύξ (35)

b) φυλάσσειν (35)

c) φωνή ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ (35)

d) ἀνοιχθέντας τοὺς οὐρανοὺς (36)

e) κατέρχομαι-εἰσέρχομαι (36b-37)

f) ἐξεγέομαι (39)

g) witnessing the resurrection-ascension-heavenly dialogue (39-42)

c') φωνή ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ (41)

d') ἀνοιχθέντας τοὺς οὐρανοὺς (44)

e') κατέρχομαι-εἰσέρχομαι (44)

a') νύξ (45)

b') φυλάσσειν (45)

f) ἐξεγέομαι (45).

<sup>19</sup> The importance of the resurrection is evidenced in its *repetitive narration* (30, 39, 56). The *analeptic anachrony* of the "late" reference to the descent into Hell, on its part, points out the dimensions of this episode's scope. Craig argues that the guard in the tomb had an apologetic function in the Christian discussion with Judaism. See W. Craig, "The Guard in the Tomb," in *NTS* 30 (1984): 273-281.

<sup>20</sup> We consider the enigmatic ὑπορθῶω as a symbol of exaltation (instead of *impossibility to walk by himself*), and as the narrator's word-choice to produce a paronomasia (play of words) with 11's ὀρθῶω. We don't understand 40 as a vague reference to the authoritative height of the victorious resurrected, but as a specific reference to the exalting ascension on the bases of a) the kinetic connotation of χωρέω and ὑπερβαίνω and b) the unity with which the angel depicts the resurrection and ascension in the repeated expression ἀνέστη (γάρ) καὶ ἀπῆλθεν of 56. Head quotes an important number of Apocalyptic, Rabbinic and apocryphal literature that refer to the Messiah's height as a sign of his authority. Head, "Christology," 218, 224 n. 65. Most of the editors of GP's text change κοινωμένοις into κοιμωμένοις. Even though the latter is the most common way of referring to the spirits in Hell, the former is not absolutely strange and coheres with the communal emphasis that GP gives to the suffering and vindication of the righteous ones. According to Irenaeus, Marcion said that the heathen's spirits *participasse salutem* when Christ descended into Hell. *Haer.* 1.27. In the *M. Polyc.* 6.2, the bishop is called Χριστοῦ κοινωνός.

*The eighth paragraph (50-57): The women's visit to the tomb.* Even though the *plot of fortune* is already defined, the *plots of thought and character* are still at stake because of the disciples' ignorance of all the things that happened. Naturally, this deepens even more the narrative focus upon the contrasting evaluative points of view and lets the reader enjoy the irony and idleness of the women's concern on account of its anachronism.<sup>21</sup> Three groups of reappearing concepts or *leitmotive* express not only the *plot of thought's* conflict (the ignorant focus on the tomb) but also its solution. The tomb-centered language of ἐκεῖ/ἐκεῖνος (52, 55, 56) and (παρα)καθέζομαι (53, 55) is changed by the heuristic παρακῦψαι καὶ ἰδεῖν (55, 56) into the heaven-centered language of ἀνέστη καὶ ἀπῆλθεν (56). Even at this point of the narrative the reader is not left without surprise. Instead of diluting the dominant φόβος (50, 52, 54, 57) the women's discovery of reality changes just its consequent effect from the seclusion's inactivity into the activity of the flight.

*Ninth paragraph (58-60): The disciples' dispersion.* Once again the narrator returns to his human skin, and this time under the specific name of Simon Peter (60). The three adversative conjunctions δέ introduce each "facet" of the narrator's reductive individualization.<sup>22</sup> The Jewish feast not only was changed into mourning (25, 28) but finally also finished (see 18), and with it the disciples' communal mourning reaches its end. The repetitive εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ (58, 59) supports the theme of the dispersion, as well as works as a mark of regression of the narrative back to the ignorant situation of the women before arriving to the tomb (54), and of Peter and his companions back to their original occupation just as before everything happened.<sup>23</sup> In spite of the fragmented ending, the reader is still able to see the irony produced by the disciples' (the narrator's!)

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B. Dehandschutter, *Martyrium Polycarpi: Een Literair-Kritische Studie*, vol. 52 of *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1979), 116. Head, "Christology," 212.

<sup>21</sup> The eighth paragraph (50-57) covers 201 words (17.1 % of the text) and is formed by 9 complex sentences (an average of 22.3 words per sentence). For the only time in the gospel, the narrator occupies less than half of the paragraph (92 words, 45.7% of the paragraph). Most of the text is occupied by the women's (77 words, 38.3% of the paragraph) and the angel's speeches (32 words, 15.9% of the paragraph). Like in the epiphanic vision of the previous paragraph, part of the narration happens again from within the women's eyes (55). Contrasts appear between the retrospectivity of the narrator (50, 52) and the women's prospectivity (52, 54), between the women's focus on the tomb (50-54) and angel's focus on heaven (56). Part of the structural complexity of the paragraph is provided also by the use of three discursive devices: a) *Pause* (with respect to discourse's vs. story's *duration*) to introduce b) the *intercalation* of the narrator's explanation (50b). c) The rhetorical question, or, more specifically *aporia* (feigned ignorance) used by the angel (56) adds even more irony to the women's process of ἀναγνώρισις. See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 33, 38-39. H. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (n.p.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 674 § 3014.

<sup>22</sup> The ninth paragraph (58-60) covers 66 words (5.6 % of the text) and is formed by 13 sentences (9 simple and 4 complex) with an average of 5 words per sentence.

<sup>23</sup> Because of the interruption of the narrative in the Akhmīm MS, we are left without the real end of the story. Most of the commentators see 58-60 as the introduction of the Lord's apparition to the disciples parallel to Jn 21. This is possible, but



anachronic ignorance, and by the fact that no matter what they do to stay alone (seclusion or dispersion), they cannot avoid becoming the vindicated righteous' partakers inasmuch as the persecuted righteous ones.

#### Organic Approach to the Plot

Crossan's application of the genre of *vindicated righteous*, as defined by Nickelsburg, is appealing in its unified comprehension of the Lord's death and resurrection. However, it neglects the following elements: a) Jesus' obedience did not bring him deliverance but death. b) GP clearly ascribes a positive value and a vicarious character to the cross. c) GP is not the story of the individual Jesus but of the others' experience around his epic.<sup>24</sup>

It is at this point that we should make a mutually influential interpretation of the Lord's cross, descent into Hell, resurrection-ascension. Evidently the crucifixion is not only a mistake committed by the Jews in their blindness and opposition to God and his righteous one, but it is the embodiment of the scapegoat in its ἀφεισις-mode, of the Paschal lamb, and of the Isaianic suffering servant. His persecution and death implies not only the community with all the righteous sufferers, but the achievement of forgiveness for the partakers (13). The intimacy of cross and proclamation in Hell evidences that the achievement of the cross forms at least part of that victorious proclamation (41-42).

The following three elements suggest that the resurrection of the Lord was not only his own resurrection but a communal event in which the κοινωνόμενοι ἐκοινώσαντο: a) The absence of both a commission of the disciples and a reference to a future eschatological salvific event indicates that the eschaton has already happened, there is no *not-yet*. b) The accompaniment with which the Lord comes out of the tomb (actually he is brought out) that is not only formed by the two that came before (36), but also by the prosopopoeic cross that speaks and follows the path of the vindicated

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there is no certainty at all. At any rate, any apparition at this point would be definitely different from that of Jn 21 inasmuch as it would be a post-ascension one.

<sup>24</sup> Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 297-334. G. Nickelsburg, "The Genre and Function of the Markan Passion Narrative," in *HThR* 73 (1980): 153-184. Donaldson rightly points out that while Nickelsburg's genre of *vindicated righteous* moves around the idea of the obedient's own salvation, the gospels think in terms of Jesus' death as consequence of his obedience. Donaldson, "The Mockers," 14-15.

righteous is suggestive of a communal resurrection (39).<sup>25</sup> c) The simultaneity of Jesus' coming out and the disciples' fleeing out of their respective prisons in which the religious leaders enclosed them (26-27, 32-33, 50) suggests that the parallelism between Jesus and his partakers not only happens at the level of the imprisonment but also at that of the deliverance (39-40, 57, 59).

Now, this communal resurrection implies that what happened in Hell was something more than the Orthodox proclamation of the Lord's definitive victory on account of the earthly events of the cross and resurrection. Here it is necessary not only a report about the partakers' forgiveness *ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ*, but a struggle within the Hell that may produce the partakers' actual deliverance from there. The depiction that the narrator makes of the religious leaders suggests that they are the earthly incarnation of *the* enemy of God. In this strain, the defeating implications that the revelation of the crucified's divinity has for the religious leaders (45-48), most probably suggests that it is precisely the revelation of the Lord's divinity itself which was the defeating element of the proclamation that the Lord uttered among the leaders' hellish *κοινωνόμενοι*.<sup>26</sup>

With respect to the three types of plot that we were considering, it is clear that what happens at the level of *plot of thought* (ignorance, discovery and confirmation) and *plot of character* (doubt, fear, complaint, repentance, hardening) are merely consequences or causes of what happens at the level of the central type of plot, the *plot of fortune*. That is to say, GP is about the definition of reality, more specifically of the cosmic and eschatological reality.

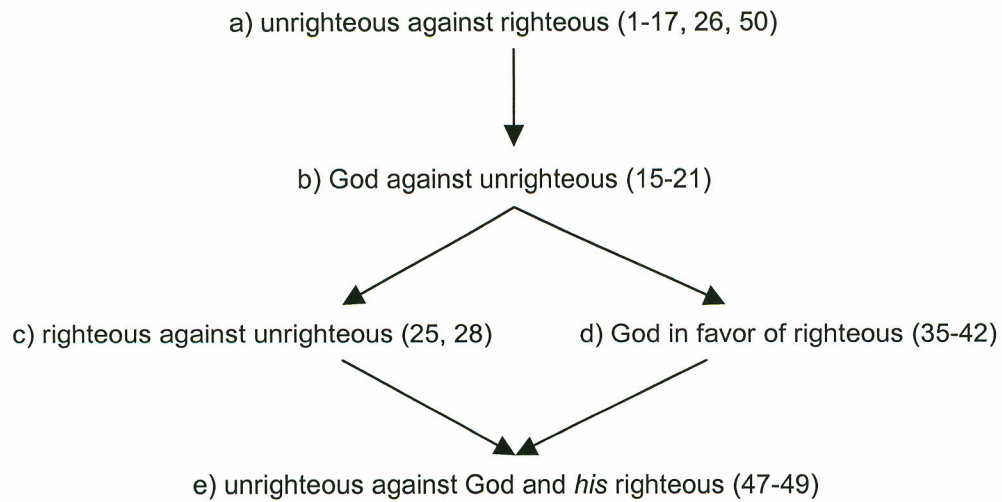
### Summary

There are five kernels in which the plot of fortune develops that develop the confrontation between the unrighteous on the one hand, and God and the righteous on the other: a) The unrighteous' attack against the righteous one(s) (1-17, 26, 50) triggers b) the divine intervention against the unrighteous (15-21). c) Now, this opens the repentant righteous' opposition against the unrighteous (25, 28), as well as d) the second chapter of the divine intervention, but this time in favor of the righteous ones (35-42). e) Finally, in the face of the complete opposition that the

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<sup>25</sup> Crossan says that the cross not only has human characteristics but is the embodiment of the *κοινωνόμενοι* themselves. That is why the cross assumes the heavenly question so willingly. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 387-88.

righteous and God himself are offering, the religious leaders harden their own opposition to the righteous ones and make it deliberate with respect to God (47-49).



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<sup>26</sup> What takes place on earth between the Lord's death (19) and resurrection (39) is significantly representative of what may have happened in the under- or supra-world (19: ἀνελεῖσθαι), namely the enemy's helpless attempt to hold the Lord and his partakers in the deadly prison by securing the door.



## CHAPTER IV. CHARACTERS

Since scholars have different opinions regarding certain ambiguous details on narratological characterization, it is important to specify how each set of terms work within our approach to the characters.<sup>1</sup> We will consider two different kinds of elements: a) *How the plot influences the character*, which focuses on the degree of conflict and development that the character's traits present. It is referred to in terms of *round, flat*.<sup>2</sup> b) *How the character influences the plot*. It is spoken about in terms of *protagonist, principal, secondary* and *minor* character(s).

### The Lord

Certainly the Lord is GP's protagonist since it is what others do upon or with respect to *him* which moves the narrative a step further.<sup>3</sup>

The attacks that are inflicted upon him are not only his sharing with the common destiny of the righteous ones, but also the exclusive events in which each individual's lots are ultimately cast either for salvation (for he is the ἄφεσις-scapegoat and the Paschal lamb) or for condemnation (for he is the son of God). In the same way, the second chapter of God's intervention (35-40) not only confirms what the first had left rather clear (15-20), namely God's intimate alignment with the Lord and his opposition to those who killed him, but also bears the cosmic dimension of initiating the

<sup>1</sup> In his critique to Kingsbury's characterization, Black III recalls the criterion that Foster proposes to define the different kinds of character: "The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round." C. Black III, "Depth of Characterization and Degrees of Faith in Matthew," in *Society of Biblical Literature: 1989 Seminar Papers*, ed. D. Lull (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 610. See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 54-55. J. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 9-10. J. Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 4-8. M. Thompson, "God's Voice You Have Never Heard, God's Form You Have Never Seen: The Characterization of God in the Gospel of John," in *Semeia* 63 (1993): 177-179.

<sup>2</sup> The characters' changeability in biblical narrative is also subject to discussion, specially because of its border-line nature between the Greco-Roman interest in the character's static function as type of good or evilness and the Semitic tendency toward human mobility and *not-yetness*. Thompson, "God's Voice," 179. F. Burnett, "Characterization and Reader Construction of Characters in the Gospels," in *Semeia* 63 (1993): 3-28. C. Bryan, *A Preface to Mark: Notes on the Gospel in Its Literary and Cultural Settings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 42-44.

<sup>3</sup> Notice that the Lord is the active agent of 22 verbs, but the passive receptor of 42: *Subject of 22 active verbs*: κρῖνε (7), ἐσιώπα (10), ἔχων (10), ἐστιν (11, 28), γενόμενος (13), ἠδίκησεν (13), [ἀποθάνοι (14)], ἔζη (15), ἀνεβόησε (19), λέγων (19), εἰπών (19), ἐποίησεν (23), ἀνέστη (30, 56 [x2]), ἐξεληθόντας (39), ὑπερβαίνουσιν (40), ἐκήρυξας (41), ἦν (45), ἀπῆλθεν (56 [x2]). *Subject of 11 passive verbs*: παραλημφθῆναι (2), πεφονεμένω (5, 15), [σκελοκοπηθῆ (14), βασανιζόμενος (14)], ἀνελήφθη (19), χειραγωγουμένου (40), ἦν τεθεῖς (51), ἐσταυρώθη (52), σταυρωθέντα (56), ἀπεστάλη (56). *Object of 31 verbs*: ποιῆσαι (2), ἤτησε(ν) (3, 4), ἤτῃκει (5), ἐθάπτομεν (5), παρέδωκεν (5), λαβόντες (6), ὤθουν (6), σύρωμεν (6), περιέβαλον (7), ἐκάθισαν (7), ἐνέπτουν (9), ἔνυσσον (9), ἐμάστιζον (9), ἐτιμήσαμεν (9), ἐσταύρωσαν (10), [ἀγανακτήσαντες (14)], ποτίσατε (16), ἐπότισαν (16), κατέλειψας (19), ἔθηκαν (21), δεδώκασι



communal resurrection. Thus, the reader knows that everything gets measured in the Lord. He who partakes by experiencing the same kind of persecution and death, or by acting in his favor, is aligned with the righteousness and with God, and his point of view is somehow reliable. But he who acts against the Lord is intrinsically unrighteous and opposed to God, and his point of view tends to be wrong.

The blindness with which the religious leaders act in the abuse and crucifixion makes their affirmations at this point completely wrong (1-18). Thus, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (6, 9) and ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ (7, 11), the two titles that intended to be ironically wrong, actually are ironically right. On the other hand, the leaders are consciously right when they confess the reality of the Lord's divine sonship (45) after having experienced the epiphanic ἀναγνώρισις (35-42).<sup>4</sup> Pilate's (1, 46), the evildoer's (13) and the people's (28a) disassociation from the religious leaders qualifies their affirmation with respect to the Lord's divine (46), saving (13) and righteous identity (28b) as possibly reliable ones. Now, the testimony that the cross makes regarding the victorious descent into Hell (41-42), and that the angel who speaks with the women makes with respect to the Lord's coming from and arriving at heaven (56), become trustworthy on the basis of their heavenly sources. Finally, the narrator makes two important statements with respect to the Lord. One is a tangential reference to his ministry in terms of all his good deeds (23), which would be congenial with the evildoer's rhetorical question (13). The other is a mention of the Lord's silence "as if he had no pain" (10) in the midst of the abuse's climax. This would be congruent with the leaders' originally mistaken point of view, in that the sufferings that they intended to inflict upon the Lord (6-9, 14) do not come out as expected. In actuality, throughout the whole narrative there is an aura of disconnection around the Lord.<sup>5</sup>

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(23), θάψη (23), λαβών (24), ἔλουσε (24), εἴλησε (24), εἰσήγαγεν (24), κλέψωσιν (30), ὑπορθοῦντας (39), ἀκολουθοῦντας (39), ζετείτε (56).

<sup>4</sup> Apart from the discussion about ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ's background opened by Bultmann's proposal of the Hellenistic θεῖοι ἄνδρες over against its clear OT connotations, some scholars suggest possible connections with either the royal imagery of the Pharaoh as the anointed son of god or with the anarthrous *divi filius* used by Augustus as a way of securing his political position, what eventually would concern its use by the religious leaders in addressing Pilate (45). See D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 301-303. J. Hoffmeier, "Son of God: From Pharaoh to Israel's King to Jesus," in *BiRe* vol. 13 no. 3 (June 1997): 44-49, 54. T. Kim, "The Anarthrous υἱὸς θεοῦ in Mark 15,39 and the Roman Imperial Cult," in *Biblica* vol. 79 no. 2 (1998): 221-241. J. Fitzmyer, "4Q246: The 'Son of God' Document from Qumran," in *Biblica* 74 (1993): 153-174.

<sup>5</sup> Note that the Lord and the solitary male disciples are the only characters in the narrative that do not interact in a dialogue. The detached way in which he faces the abuses and crucifixion and even his exaltation (he seems not to walk on the earth but to suspend on the χειραγωγόντες (39)) as if those around him and his own disciples did not exist at all (he leaves straightforwardly), moves in the same direction toward an autistic depiction of the Lord.

The consistent image that the reader gets points to the Lord's single root trait of being *the* righteous one on account of his divine sonship. This makes the Lord to be a flat character that invites the reader to experience an *idealistic empathy*.<sup>6</sup> He doesn't experience any character's conflict or development; he behaves with absolute coherence throughout the whole narrative. The repetitious use of κύριος also supports this continuity of identity between the condemned (2), the abused (6, 8), the crucified (10, 19), the corpse (21, 24) and the resurrected one (50, 59, 60).<sup>7</sup>

### Religious Leaders

The religious leaders function as if they were a single character. At the beginning they are considered as part of the Ἰουδαῖοι (1, 23), but in the rest of the narrative they are referred to by different combinations of πρεσβύτεροι, ἱερεῖς, γραμματεῖς and Φαρισαῖοι.<sup>8</sup> They are one of the two *principal characters*, since their actions upon the Lord are part of the plot principal movements as well as trigger those other main changes produced by God's intervention.

Their absolute opposition to the Lord makes them to be his mirrored type of unrighteous ones. With relative certainty the reader is able to extend this parallelism to their representation of the supra-earthly powers in conflict. Just as the Lord, by virtue of his divine sonship, reflects God's righteousness and dominion, in the same way the religious leaders become Hell's earthly expression.

Two dramatic changes take place around the religious leaders. At the level of the *plot of fortune*, the leaders lose the support of those who once were associated with them. Our fragmentary text begins with the first of these splits when Pilate washes his hands (1), what becomes definite later on (46), when Pilate declares his own innocence as opposed to the leaders' culpability. The other split happens after the crucifixion (28), when people understand the heavenly signs as proof of

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<sup>6</sup> He is the type of righteous one after whom the reader is invited to shape his patience in suffering and after whose destiny the reader realizes that his own destiny has been already determined.

<sup>7</sup> Against Head who suggests that the fact that κύριος is never used specifically with reference to the resurrected together with the decreasing frequency with which κύριος appears after 24, imply a change of identity. We consider that the different way the Lord is referred to around the resurrection responds to the fact that the narration mainly depends on the characters' perception of the events rather than on the narrator's direct depiction, as it happened on the previous sections. The way the narrator connects the resurrection/ascension day with the lordship (κυριακή: 25, 50) suggests that the resurrection is certainly part of ὁ κύριος's external entailment. See Head, "Christology," 211. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 291-301.

<sup>8</sup> οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς (25), οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ πρεσβύτεροι (28), οἱ πρεσβύτεροι (29, 38), πρεσβύτεροι καὶ γραμματεῖς (31). When οἱ πρεσβύτεροι appear alone, they seem to stand in synecdoche for the rest of the religious sub-groups.



the divine alignment to the Lord on account of his righteousness and become the principal threat for the religious leaders (30, 48).

The leaders themselves experience a change at the level of the *plot of thought*. The blindness with which they acted in the crucifixion (18) was transformed into clear recognition of the Lord's divine identity and final victory (45) in his epiphanic resurrection and ascension (35-42). This change from ignorance to knowledge has them consciously confirm their overt opposition not only to the righteous one(s) but to God himself. Ultimately this is the discovery of their own identity. Neither are they opposing the  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\upsilon\sigma\omicron\varsigma$ -scapegoat for the fulfillment of the divine law (6-15), nor are they mistakenly killing a righteous person (25, 28), but they are in open enmity to God himself (48).<sup>9</sup> This is what was at work behind their stubborn anxiety for the observance of a code (15, 23) and their fear for the people (30, 48-49).<sup>10</sup>

We could understand them as round characters on account of their changes at the level of *plot of fortune* and *plot of thought*. However, these very changes expose and emphasize their consistent attitude in front of what they come to experience (*plot of fortune*) and know (*plot of thought*), and confirm once and again their root trait of unrighteousness (*plot of character*). On this basis, and since the religious leaders are not surprising characters and don't suffer any conflict of trait throughout the narrative, we can comprehend them as the flat character that mirrors the Lord.<sup>11</sup>

## God

Apart from the particularities that the figure of God opens, the fact that he is drawn by the narrator into the story makes him to be a character subject to literary analysis.<sup>12</sup> In fact he is the other *principal character*, just as the righteous leaders, who has the responsibility of moving the plot ahead.

God's intervention is always revelatory and confirmatory of the Lord's identity (28, 45), and because it is diametrically opposite to the religious leaders, becomes a vindicative reversal of the

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<sup>9</sup> It is significant how the morally accusatory language that originally is falsely used against the righteous ones ( $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omega\varsigma$  (7),  $\alpha\delta\iota\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  (13),  $\kappa\alpha\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  (13)),  $\kappa\alpha\kappa\omicron\upsilon\rho\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  (10, 13, 26),  $\kappa\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\pi\tau\omega$  (30)  $\pi\omicron\iota\eta\sigma\omega\sigma\iota\nu$   $\eta\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$   $\kappa\alpha\kappa\acute{\alpha}$  (30)), becomes used more and more against the religious leaders ( $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\nu$   $\tau\acute{\alpha}$   $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  (17),  $\omicron\upsilon\alpha\acute{\iota}$   $\tau\alpha\acute{\iota}\varsigma$   $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota\varsigma$   $\eta\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$  (25),  $\eta\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$   $\acute{\omicron}\phi\lambda\eta\sigma\alpha\iota$   $\mu\epsilon\gamma\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\nu$   $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$  (48)).

<sup>10</sup> Note how the leaders' schizophrenic change from fear to joy in 21-23 betrays their disregard for the identity of the crucified and for the heavenly reaction, and their exclusive concern not to break the letter of the law.

<sup>11</sup> Foster attributes a central role to the *surprise* in defining the characterization. See note 1 of this chapter.

<sup>12</sup> See Thompson, "God's Voice," 186-87. Black III, "Depth of Characterization," 613.

latter's deeds. When the leaders crucify the Lord with the unique concern of observing the law (5), God sets nature and law against them (15). When they celebrate their victory (6-9), God changes their feast into mourning (15, 21, 25, 28-29). When the leaders seek to reconcile the people to themselves by certifying the Lord's irreversible death (32-34), God uses the same seals and witnesses to certify the Lord's divinity and victory (35-49).<sup>13</sup> God's steadfastness and consistency make him a flat character.

### The Disciples

Though they are the followers of the Lord, and though one of them is nothing less than the narrator, they are *secondary characters*.<sup>14</sup> Their experience and fate are in part consciously and in part unconsciously affected by what the religious leaders and God do with the Lord.

The disciples could be distinguished as two different groups, each one with its representative (Peter and Mary respectively), and each one experiencing the Lord's death in a particular way (27, 52). However their common seclusion on account of the religious leaders' persecution (26, 50), their pain for what came to happen (26-27, 52-54, 59), and their final flight and dispersion (57, 59-60), identify them as a single collective character.

The reader gets a mixed impression of their identity. Their intimate relation to the Lord (50), their deep pain because of the crucifixion (59), and their sharing his destiny of being persecuted (26), accused (30) and locked up (27, 52a), clearly align them with the righteous one. Nevertheless, their fearful attempt to avoid the righteous ones' common destiny of death (26, 59), and their anachronistic mourning and flight when it is time of victorious celebration (50-59), which ultimately responds to their obscured and earthly-bound point of view, portray them as standing in the risky

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<sup>13</sup> The heavenly voice that inquires regarding the preaching to the partakers is probably God's own voice. Thus, the mere rhetorical question lets the reader and witnesses know about the victorious descent into Hell. See Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 159.

<sup>14</sup> As Darr affirms, the narrator-character is the only one that does not have to pass the censuring filter of another's decision in order to express his own ideas. The most interesting feature of GP's narrator is how he manages to change his evaluative point of view (specially in the last section of 58-60) from omniscience to individuality and from joyful description of victory to sad ignorance of reality. Here he gets ironic with himself! J. Darr, "Narrator as Character: Mapping a Reader-Oriented Approach to Narration in Luke-Acts," in *Semeia* 63 (1993): 43-60. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 73-77.



border line near unrighteousness.<sup>15</sup> Actually their flight from the righteous ones' destiny, as we have said before, ultimately sets them as partakers of the persecuted righteous ones.

At any rate, although the disciples' development of character is not clear, their mixed traits present them as round characters.<sup>16</sup> The double judgment that is pronounced upon these characters functions as the narrator's trap for the intended reader, whose normal tendency to empathize with the disciples makes her/him find their own traits depicted and judged, and discovers that her/his experience is also that of the border line where a decision has to be taken, while her/his destiny (inasmuch as righteous one) is found to have been defined in that of *the* righteous one.

### The Jewish People

The Jewish people are, just as the disciples, the other group which functions as a *secondary character*. Perhaps with a more consistent presence throughout the narrative, and with a stronger influence in the development of the plot, but they still are clearly of secondary position.

If there is a dynamic character in GP it is the Jewish people. This group moves from association with the religious leaders in their condemnation (1), abuse (5-9) and murder of the Lord (15-23), passing through the repentant complaint against what the religious leaders led them to do (28), finally to become the threatening force that impulses the next leaders' actions (30, 48).

They change from a blind alliance with their leaders (15-25) to stand also in the border line, not too far from the disciples (28, 30). Their developing and mixed traits and the ambiguity of their alignment(s) make them the other round characters, the negative complement of the disciples. Now, just as their lack of alliance to the righteous ones (34, 50) does not make them to work as type of evilness as it happens with the religious leaders, in the same way, their split with the religious leaders never succeeds in transforming them into righteous ones. Though the Jewish people is a

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<sup>15</sup> Just as happens in Mk, the women are lately introduced in GP with the purpose of aligning them to the male disciples. They also were hidden (women: 50, 52; men: 26-27), they also are suffering at the leaders' hand (women: 50; men: 26), they also flee (women: φεύγω (57); men: ἀπαλλάσσω (59)), they want to mourn in a way consistent to their male peers (women: [μὴ] κλαίω (52, 54), παρακαθέζομαι (53); men: καθέζομαι (27), κλαίω (27, 59)), but also in a way consistent to the religious leaders (!) (women: φοβέομαι (50, 52, 54, 57), [μὴ] κόπτομαι (52, 54); leaders: φόβος μέγας ἐγένετο (21), φοβέομαι (29), κόπτομαι (25)). See P. Danove, "The Characterization and Narrative Function of the Women at the Tomb (Mark 15, 40-41. 47; 16, 1-8)," in *Biblica* 77 (1996): 375-397. C. Osiek, "The Women at the Tomb: What Are They Doing There?," in *ExAu* 9 (1993): 99-107. F. Bovon, *New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives* (Pennsylvania: Pickwick Publications, 1995), 147-57.

<sup>16</sup> The women seem to develop in their *plot of character* from fearful seclusion to courageous confrontation to what may come (52-54) and back to fear, but this time in order to flee (57).

changing character, they continue being unrighteous ones throughout the narrative,<sup>17</sup> and their doom is likely unavoidable (20, 25).<sup>18</sup>

### Minor Characters

Even though GP's minor characters tend to be aligned with the Lord, it is plain that their function is not to be types as it happens in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>19</sup> Only Pilate functions in GP as a contrasting character that highlights the religious leaders' blame.

GP's minor characters rather function as "providers" of what is necessary for the narrative:

a) They supplement the Lord's silent disconnectedness by being his spokesmen. This is the case of the evildoer who, allowing the Lord to keep impassive (10), gives expression to the righteous reaction against the Jews' abuse (13). This is the case of the cross that uttered the laconic *ναί* in the Lord's stead (42). Also the angel that descended to meet the women has this function as messenger (43, 55-56). b) They provide the means so that the events may actually happen. This is the case of Herod (2, 5) and Pilate (31, 49), who function as the automate authorities who enter the stage just to make effective the religious leaders' evil plans. c) Finally, they work as narratological devices to fill the events with a particular significance and dimension. This is the case of Joseph (3-4, 23-24), Petronius and the soldiers (31-45), who, by placing the corpse of the Lord in the tomb and watching it, provide the necessary conditions to make both the Lord's death and resurrection irrefutable.

A singular feature of GP's characterization is the tendency to give names to the minor characters and to leave in anonymity the rest of the characters. This functions as a narrative device to point to the character without ascribing him any personal trait.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Even after the experience of discovery of 28 that marks the split with the religious leaders, the Jewish people don't lose negative traits. They come out of Jerusalem to check the sealed tomb and make sure that the Lord's death continues being a fact (34). In the leaders' final address to Pilate (45-49), when they speak the truth for the only time in the narrative (see 45), they refer to the Jewish people's cruelty as worse than God's punishment for the greatest sin (48).

<sup>18</sup> The narrator seems to be saying: "No matter how much you change, Jewish, since you don't become suffering righteous ones, you still are the same doomed." According to Wright, Denker suggests that GP is not anti-Jewish for the narrator intends to move them to repentance. Wright, "Egerton 2," 137. An important number of ancient documents that usually are linked to GP have clear anti-Jewish traits. See S. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 12. For further discussion with respect to GP's anti-Jewish elements, see Head, "Christology," 223. Kirk, "Examining Priorities," 578. Rodríguez Ruiz, "Evangelio de Pedro," 524. J. McCant, "The Gospel of Peter: Docetism Reconsidered," in *NTS* 30 (1984): 258-273. Craig, "The Guard at the Tomb," 273.

<sup>19</sup> See E. Malbon, "The Major Importance of the Minor Characters in Mark," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament*, ed. E. Malbon and E. McKnight (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 58-86.

<sup>20</sup> The narrative function of the proper name is very discussed. Sternberg, Natanson and Burnett say that to name a character is to give him a very important position in the narrative. On the other hand, Searle and Polzin affirm that proper names function as the non-descriptive way of referring to a character, while anonymity tends to force the narrator to ascribe the character at least a trait. See F. Burnett, "Characterization and Christology in Matthew: Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew,"



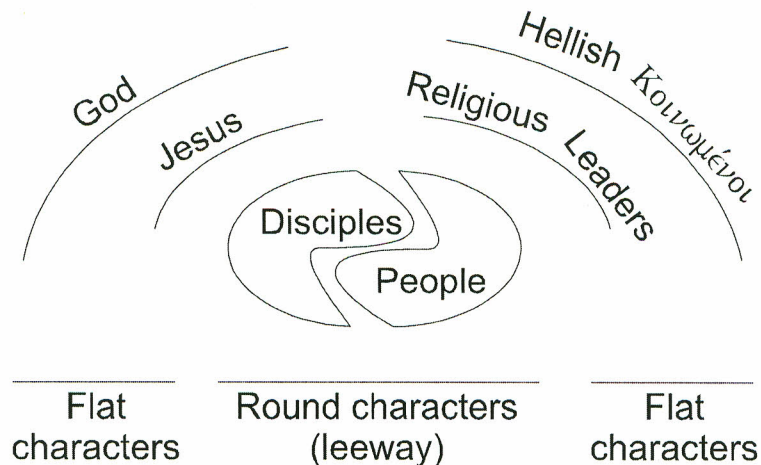
## Summary

It is significant that while the protagonist (the Lord) and the principal characters (God and the religious leaders) are flat and static, and serve the narrative as types of goodness and evilness, the secondary characters (the disciples and the Jewish people), presenting mixed traits and being located in the leeway left by the two rigid types, reflect the dynamism of the narrative plot in a way that the principal characters cannot. They work within the plot in the free and risky area of the decision between the two options of alignment either with the righteous or the unrighteous ones.

The narrator expects the reader to identify with the disciples (or gives this identification for granted in the case of the suffering Christian reader) in recognition of the mixed traits, in order to prompt him to make a decision together with the disciples. NOTA 17

Are the identification and the consequent decision possible only in relation to the disciples? Though not desired, the identification with the Jewish people seems also possible. That's the reason for the narrator to set them so close to the disciples. If there is any opportunity to make a decision here, it is only to break with these characters on the basis of the doom pronounced upon them.

The following graphic represents the characters' scheme of GP's narrative.



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in *Society of Biblical Literature: 1989 Seminar Papers*, ed. D. Lull (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 588-603. R. Polzin, "Divine and Anonymous Characterization in Biblical Narrative," in *Semeia* 63 (1993): 205-213. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 331.

## CONCLUSION

As we mention in the introduction of this paper, we will attempt a definition of GP's Christology at this point. However, it is necessary that we first summarize the narrative analysis by defining the core theme of the text.

The crucifixion and descent-resurrection of the Lord, the protagonist, are the climactic points for the narrative in which the plot conflict is not only developed in the confrontation between God and the religious leaders, but also resolved in the ultimate definition of the unrighteous' condemnation and the righteous' salvation. Then, the plot theme can be worded as *the divine vindication of the righteous and the unrighteous ones in the person of the son of God*.

The hybrid nature of this section will drive our attention in a somewhat different direction from the unified line of thought and method that we were following up to this point. For, even though we consider that the gospels' narrative Christology is not "raw material" to be processed into a systematic formulation in order to make it "real Christology," the discussion around GP's Christology evidently brings water not from the literary, but from the systematic well.<sup>1</sup> Hence, we will take into account the systematic concern for both Christ's relation to God and men, both his person and his work.<sup>2</sup>

The ultimate character of the divine vindication that takes place in the person of the son of God, together with the significant absence of any future eschatological promise, and any post-resurrection appearance of the Lord to prove the corporality of his resurrection and to send the

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<sup>1</sup> This is the critique that Boring raises against Bultmann's distinction between NT epistles as *theological thoughts explicitly developed*, and NT narrative as *theological thoughts implicitly present in a mythological form still to be processed*. Obviously, this was for the detriment of the gospels' theological value. M. Boring, "The Christology of Mark: Hermeneutical Issues for Systematic Theology," in *Semeia* 30 (1985): 125-153. See also J. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 41. L. Chouinard, "Gospel Christology: A Study of Methodology," in *New Testament Interpretation and Methods: A Sheffield Reader*, eds. S. Porter and C. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 65-81. The identification that twentieth-century theologians made between *immanent* and *economic* language supports narrative as a valid form for theological formulation. This tendency to understand the Trinity in a necessary dependency of the narrative of its historical-salvific intervention is seen in the less clear-cut organization of modern systematic Christologies. See C. LaCugna, "Re-Conceiving the Trinity as the Mystery of Salvation," in *SJTh* 38 (1985): 1-23. T. Torrance, "Toward an Ecumenical Consensus on the Trinity," in *TZ* 31 (1975): 337-350. M. Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, vol. 1 (Saint Louis, Concordia Publishing House), 83-112. F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 2 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 55-394. P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 97-180. W. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 297-396.

<sup>2</sup> See Norris, *The Christological Controversy*, 2. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 2: 55.



disciples to preach into the world, indicate the type of eschatology that the narrator is assuming and suggesting, namely, an *already realized* eschatology.<sup>3</sup> Definite condemnation and break with the unrighteous as well as salvation and resurrection of the righteous have already taken place. There is no *not-yet* ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ for the righteous that share the divine perceptive and evaluative point of view.<sup>4</sup> Now, the *not-yet-ness* of the still remaining persecution of the righteous ones (50, 52, 54, 57, 59), and the still standing Jerusalem (25, 34) challenge this affirmation and indicate that there still is a *not-yet* for both redemption and condemnation.

We consider that the ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ of our previous affirmation is the answer to this challenge. The already realized salvation/condemnation in GP is not a matter of time, but of space. The question is not *when* the salvation/condemnation may overcome any *not-yet-ness*, but *where* it happens. It is in the parallel supra-earthly realm where the detached-from-the-world son of God became active in his definite proclamation (41-42), it is there where he and all the righteous ones belong (56).

Paradoxically, GP depicts the Lord with certain astoundingly anti-docetic features. It is not the human vessel Jesus the one forsaken by the divine Christ, but ὁ κύριος is forsaken by his power *when dying* (19). It is from ὁ κύριος' hands that the nails are drawn away (21).<sup>5</sup> It is the corpse who produces the σεισμός when laid on the earth (21), and who receives the title ὁ κύριος (21, 24).<sup>6</sup> The absence of the corpse in the tomb serves as the angel's proof that the crucified is really risen (56).

However, the salvation's loss of its historical dimension and its shift into a spatial level indicate GP's negative valuation of the physical world in favour of the spiritual realm. It is in this

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<sup>3</sup> Mara suggests that the parallelism to Rev. that the following elements display, imposes a strong apocalyptic tone to the narrative: a) The seven seals that can be opened just by the divinity (33, 37; see Rev 5.1). b) The φωνή μεγάλη on τῇ κυριακῇ/the resurrectional third day (35, 41; see Rev 1.10; 11.11-12). c) Gigantic and cosmic figures (36, 40 [Mara is considering τὴν κηφαλὴν χωροῦσαν μέχρι τοῦ ὀρανοῦ as a sign of height]; see Rev 10.1-3). Kirt, "Examining Priorities," 591 n. 55.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson argues that what finally came to be known as *baptismal regeneration*, in some communities was called *baptismal resurrection*. This concept implied that the *already* of our resurrection with Jesus mentioned by Paul in Ro 6.4 is taken to its extreme to the point of denying any future resurrection. The ultimate outcome of personal salvation was already attained at the initiation and needed not to expect any future resurrection of the physical body. Actually, Paul faces this same heresy in 1 Co 15.12. Robinson, *Jesus From Easter to Valentinus*, 16-21. The Valentinian *Gospel of Philip* presents a similar idea. NTA 1: 188-206.

<sup>5</sup> The crude depiction of the nails' fleshly piercing into the hands of the Lord was a prominent weapon in the anti-docetic discussion. See Barn. 5.13; Justin's Apol. 1.35; Dial. 97 and Ignatius' Smyrn. 1.2. Head, "Christology," 216.

<sup>6</sup> Giffert, "The Gospel of Peter," 115.

perspective that the Lord's death can be depicted so positively with the euphemistic ἀνελήφθη (19).<sup>7</sup> It is under this comprehension of reality that the Lord, as type of the persecuted and killed righteous, is presented as so detached from the physical-historical events that happen around him (10, 39).<sup>8</sup> The most docetically telling feature is the Lord's only verbal expression (19). All the scholarly attempts to do away with its adoptionistic flavor prove to be unsuccessful.<sup>9</sup> In fact, this is in strong tension with the clear identity that the narrator proposes between the corpse and the living Lord. The kind of quasi-docetic Christology that the gospel presents does move in the direction of a dualistic contempt for the physical realm, but not specifically toward an adoptionistic conception.

In summary, even though GP's Christology is not clearly docetic, it is dualistic enough as to wander at times into docetic terrain in its suggestion of ideas perfectly akin with this school of thought.<sup>10</sup> The Lord's intimacy with God is affirmed beyond discussion. The emphatically repeated οὐδὲς τοῦ θεοῦ (6, 9, 45, 46), as well as the events stress this reality: heavens –inasmuch as the creational expression of God- react on his behalf (15-22, 28), God vindicates him in the resurrection (45-46), and he returns there whence he was sent (39-45, 56). The fact that God is the Father, origin, sender, vindicator, and destiny of the Lord establishes the text's Christology from-above.

Not so in relation to his identity with men, which is left somewhat blurred. His principal point of contact is with the righteous men inasmuch as *the* persecuted and killed righteous *par*

<sup>7</sup> Irenaeus (Haer. 5.31.1) denounces the heretics that believed in an ascension immediately after death. Justin (Dial. 80.4) mentions that those who held this idea did not believe in a future physical resurrection.

<sup>8</sup> The construction ὡς+participle opens at least three possibilities: a) The Lord actually doesn't feel any pain. b) He acts under the impression that he doesn't feel any pain. c) Given the Lord's silence, the spectators are under the impression that he doesn't feel any pain. See D. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 674. Smyth, *Grammar*, 464, § 2086, 504 § 2244; BDF § 425. Liddell & Scott, 2039.

<sup>9</sup> Head compiles a significant number of quotations from Jewish literature, pseudoepigrapha, the Fathers and Gnostic writings in which δύναμις, δύνατος and ισχυρός function as circumlocution for *God*. On this basis he proposes that the Lord's words in GP are in the same traditional line. Boman argues that the fact that ἡ δύναμίς μου has a personal pronoun does away with the possibility of that Jewish customary circumlocution. Harris attributes this expression to the hypothetical text of Tatian's Diatessaron on the bases of Ephrem's commentary, which renders the Lord's last words as *Yaiil, Yailli (Oh God, my God)*. Eusebius (d.e. 10.8.30) says that Aquilas' translation of Ps 21[22].1 read ισχυρέ μου or possibly ισχύς μου (note that the LXX has just one personal pronoun ὁ θεός ὁ θεός μου). Zimmermann even argues that because of Peter's Galilean dialect (as if GP's author were the apostle), he confused the כ of אֱלֹהֵי (my God) with the ה of אֱלֹהֵי (my power). Robinson and Smith understand these words as clearly docetic. See Head, "Christology," 214. Robinson, *The Gospel According to Peter*, 21. T. Boman, "Das letzte Wort Jesu," in *ST* 17 (1963): 105. F. Zimmermann, "The Last Words of Jesus," in *JBL* 66 (1947): 465-466. Harris, *A Popular Account*, 82.

<sup>10</sup> This is absolutely independent of the useless attempt to justify or contradict Serapion's identification of GP with docetism (HE 6.12). The conclusion to which Treat arrives after comparing the two witnesses of GP (see Introduction, p. 4 n. 12), makes it plain that we are working with a different version of the gospel. Therefore, any attempt to defend or attack Serapion's judgment of the second-century GP on the bases of the ninth-century GP proves to be methodologically defective. *Contra* J. McCant, "The Gospel of Peter: Docetism Reconsidered," in *NTS* 30 (1984): 258-273.



*excellence*. This is to say, his point of connection with men is not necessarily an ontological one, but his common experience before God (of communion) and before the unrighteous (of persecuted and killed) by virtue of his being righteous.

The reader, thus, is invited by this type of persecuted and killed righteous to face the unrighteous attack in an angelomorphic apathy, under the dualistic conviction that the righteous' victory and the unrighteous' condemnation are the ironic reality not seen by the enemies of God. The reader knows that, because of his partaking in the Lord's destiny of persecution and death, he is also a partaker in the Lord's destiny of already victorious resurrection. The only thing to be waited for is the ἀναλημίσις from this realm to that where salvation is a present reality.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Note that the pain is the negative trait that makes the disciples' mixed-characters. There is a significant amount of martyrological literature that presents the silent acceptance of suffering as ideal. E.g. While Eleazar's flesh is being stripped off, the narrator says that ὁ δὲ μεγαλόφρων καὶ εὐγενὴς ὡς ἀληθῶς Ἐλεάζαρος, ὥσπερ ἐν ὄνειρῳ βασανιζόμενος κατ' οὐδένα τρόπον μετετρέπετο (4 Macc 6.5). The following are selections of the martyr type presented by Polycarp: "And indeed, is there anyone who would not admire their heroism, their patient endurance, and their love of the Master? ... Some, again, proved themselves so heroic that not one of them uttered cry or moan, and thus they made it clear to all of us that in that hour of their torture the most noble martyrs of Christ were no longer in their flesh ... but to them -no longer men, but already angels [οὔτερον μηκέτι ἄνθρωποι, ἀλλ' ἤδη ἄγγελοι ἦσαν]- a glimpse of these things was granted by the Lord ... But without turning round, as though he had suffered no injury [ὡς οὐδὲν πεπονθώς], he walked briskly as he was led to the arena." M. Polyc. 2.2-3; 8.3. Kleist, *The Didache*, 90-94. Dehandschutter, *Martyrium Polycarpi*, 113, 118. C. Rowland, "A Man Clothed In Linen: Daniel 10.5-9 and Jewish Angelology," in *New Testament backgrounds: A Sheffield Reader*, eds. C. Evans and S. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 33-45. Denker suggested that GP presents an angelomorphic Christology which has "docetic consequences." Head, "Christology," 219. See also Ignatius' Magn. 5.2 and Rom. 6.3; HE 5.1.41; 2.23; 3.32.2; 4.22.4; 5.1.51, 56.

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