

THE EXEGETICAL MEANING OF DEI IN THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO SAINT LUKE.

BY

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INTRODUCTION:

Exegesis means to lead out, to draw out, to narrate, explain, or interpret. ¹ It is used in this work as a medium of leading an intended audience to an understanding of God's activity in history. A close observation of Luke's narrative pattern will an exegetical motif built around the use of dei. Luke's exegetical motif can be understood from the location of dei in hoti clauses and in context with reference to scripture, or as implied from prophecy.¹

The argument of this writer is that the use of dei in the Third Gospel follows a pattern of divine 'oughtness' (and human "what ought to be done"). This is because the narratives attached to dei² by Luke in the life of Jesus, is not only a demand upon his life, but also upon the community of believers, due to God's expectation of obedience to his revealed plan/will. This writer shall attempt to justify the above propositions from the location of *dei* in *hoti* clauses in the gospel of Luke.

1. THE LOCATION OF DEI IN HOTI CLAUSES

Hoti as translated means "that," or "because", and can also serve as a conjunction in a sentence. The hoti clause serves basically any of the following functions within a sentence: a declarative function, consecutive sense; and a

subordinate causal sense.³ On close study the hoti clauses in the context of dei in Luke's Gospel appear to have been used eight times in the declarative sense and three times in the causal sense. We shall now examine each context to understand the Lukan exegetical motif in these hoti clauses.

2:49

Kai eipen pros autous. Ti hoti ezeteite me. Ouk édeite hoti en tois tou patros mou dei einai me;

Jesus expressed surprise that the parents Joseph and Mary did not know where to find him. The use of the interrogative ti defines the context where Jesus is to be located: even in the Father's house. This is enhanced with the use of hoti, which suggests as a declarative particle the personality of Jesus and the word of the angelic messenger before his birth (cf. 1:30-33). Dei therein revealed the distinction in Jesus' relationship with his earthly parents.⁴ The hoti locates the significance of dei in the life of Jesus, which the parents had to be conscious of. To quote Norval Geldenhuys:

Jesus must be busy with the interests of Him Father, with His is, however, not a Case of external compulsion – His whole nature yearns to serve and obey His Father voluntarily. This divine calling of His is to such a degree of very first importance that even his most intimate relations must be subordinated to it.⁵

So, Jesus' use of dei was meant to recall the facts of his person since ouk édeite was a negation of the awareness. Dei served as a medium into understanding his life's purpose, person and passion for the things of God.

4:43

ho de epen pros autous hoti kai tais heterais polesin euaggelisasthai me dei tén Basileian tou theou, hoti epi touto apestalén.

There are two uses of *hoti* in this verse. While the first use is declarative, the second is causative. In the declarative sense, *euaggelisasthai* serves as the subject infinitive of that *hoti* clause. Through *hoti* Jesus declares that “to preach” the Kingdom of God to other places is a necessity in his life. Thus, that work cannot be confined to a single locality. The location of dei in this *hoti* clause is a demonstration of one whose life was governed by a divine imperative “which stands against the human will expressed by the residents of Capernaum.”⁶

Jesus’ commitment toward creating an awareness of his mission in the use of the first *hoti* clause is significantly highlighted by the second use of *hoti epi touto apestalén*. This subordinate causal clause gives the ground for Jesus’ mission. He came for the sole purpose of preaching the kingdom of God. In other words, thus, the divine imperative which governed Jesus’ life was purposeful in his preaching of the good news in all Jewish territory.

9:22

Eipōn hoti dei ton hion hion tou anthrōpou polla pathein kai apodokimasthēnai apo tōn presbuterōn kai archiereōn kai grammateōn kai apoktanthēnai te tritē hemera egerthēnai.

This periscope (9:18-22) contains the confession of Peter about Jesus’ messiahship. It was within this revelational disclosure that Jesus made the

statement of verse 22. The *hoti* is again placed after a verb of saying: *eipōn* by which *dei* is introduced. The exegetical motif expressed therein might have been to correct the prevalent notion about the messiah as a political redeemer, and one who would dwell physically forever in Israel. Significantly, Jesus uses the term *huios to anthrōpos* (a term associated with humanity, suffering and death for Luke) after *hoti dei* as a declarative that the divine decree marked out was not to be halted.

11:42

alla ouai humin tois pharisaiois hoti apodekatoute to hedusmon kai to péganon kai pan lechanon kai parerchesthe tēn krisin kai tēn agapn tou theou. Tauta de edei poiésai kakeina mé pareinai.

The declarative *hoti* serves to show the exegetical motif of Luke in what true religion consists of. While Jesus does not condemn the Pharisees for tithing the *hoti* reveals that *kai parerchesthe tēn krisin kai tēn agapēn* is a moral obligation neglected as suggested by *edei*: (as) an obligation in present time that is abandoned.

The exegetical motif thus seems to suggest that the Pharisaic religious activity was a “degenerate form of religion,”⁷ because, it neglected an obligation expressed by *edei*.

13:14

Apokristheis de ho archisynagō gos aganaktōn, hoti tō sabbatō etherapeusen ho lesous elegen tō oklō hoti eks hemerai eisin en hais dei ergazesthai. En autais oun erchomenoi therapeuesthe kai mé té hemera tou sabbatou.

While there are two uses of *hoti* in this verse, the second serves a declarative function. The ruler of the synagogue felt Jesus' action was a negation of Sabbath sanctity by healing on the Sabbath. The ruler defines such healing as work, which violates the injunction of keeping the Sabbath holy. The use of *hoti* in the context clause of *dei* serves to remind and reawaken the crowd to the law that forbids work on the Sabbath (cf. Exodus 20:9-10, Lev. 23:3; Jeremiah 17:21, 22). It had an exegetical motif to show that the ruler had the legal standing of the law.⁸

22:37

Legō gap humin *hoti* touto to gegrammenon dei telesthēnai en emoi to kai meta anomon elogisthē kai gap to peri emou teles echei

Apparently disturbed by the almost-ended mission of the Master, the disciples of Jesus needed a fresh orientation concerning the events in Jesus' life. While *hoti* as a declarative is used after a verb of saying *legō telesthēnai* serves as the subject infinitive of the *hoti* clause, the *hoti* clause makes room for *kai meta anomon elogisthē* a clear reference to Isaiah 53:12. Luke's use of dei in this hoti context tends to justify the divine counsel of God (Boulē) located in *dei* as crucial to the divine plan. Luke seems to "stress that the progress of Jesus' career is governed by divine necessity expressed in Scripture," with the use of *telesthēnai*⁹ which must be understood by the disciples.

24:7

Legō ton huion tou anthrōpou *hoti* dei parathēnai eis cheiras anthrōpon hamartōlōn kai staurōthēnai kai té trité hemra anastēnai.

Two men, perhaps angels, met the women – Mary Magdalene, Johanna, Mary the mother of James, and others unnamed – at the sepulcher after the resurrection of Jesus. The women being confused about the empty tomb were supposed to recall the words of Jesus in verses 6 and 7. The declarative *hoti* herein serves a recitative function in Lucan exegetical motif, because as a divine passive, *paradothēnai* defines the nature of divine involvement revealed in dei. This is especially strengthened by *staurōthēnai* and *anastēnai*, all passives referring to divine involvement in the events concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

24:44

Eipen de pros autous. Houtoi hoi logoi mou hous elalēsa pros humas eti ōn sun humin, hoti deiēnai panta ta gegrammena en tō nomō mōoseōs kai tois prophetais kai psalmois peri emou

The focus of this verse suggests a pure exegetical motif since Jesus *uses houtoi hoi logoi mou hous elalēsa pros humas eti ōn sun humin*. This points back to 9:22,44; 17:25; 18:31f; 22:37 where predictions about Jesus' passion had been made. The confused Emmaus road disciples needed a legitimate base for understanding the reason for Jesus' passion. *Hoti* used after a verb of saying *elalēsa* points to a declarative significance of the necessity of the events (of suffering, death and resurrection) in Jesus' life from scripture. Again the passive *plērothēnai* serves to justify the divine hand behind the events. God is the initiator and guides the fulfillment of the events.

Having examined the exegetical functions of *hoti* clauses, this writer shall examine the location of dei in contexts of references to scripture, or implied

prophecy. It should be noted that location of *dei* in *hoti* clauses serves a declarative function in understanding the mission and person of Jesus. Also, the location of *dei* in *hoti* clauses serve to shown that event around Jesus were divinely caused or decreed.

2. LOCATION OF DEI IN CONTEXTS OF SCRIPTURE OR IMPLIED PROPHECY

Luke tends to recount events of the Old Testament to support his narrative of historical theology about Jesus of Nazareth. The role of scripture is crucial to Luke, especially as it relates to fulfillment of events in the life of Jesus.¹⁰ There is no corresponding Hebrew equivalent for the Greek dei as used by Luke in the Septuagint where it occurs significantly in two contexts of the Old Testament. These are in Leviticus 5:17 and Daniel 2:28, 29, 45. In the former, dei is introduced in the sense of a moral negation of an obligation. But in the latter, dei connotes the things that must be. So, Luke adopts an exegetical-narrative schemata to show that familiar events in Old Testament history express the counsel of God.¹¹

13:16

Tautēn de thugatera Abraam ousan heedēsen ho satanas idou deka kai oktō eté ouk edei lythēnai apo tai desmou touto té hemera ou sabbatou

In 13:16 Luke mirrors the scene of Jesus' healing on the Sabbath against it's Judaic old Testament background. The location of *edei* (the imperfect of *dei*) in the context of the women "being a daughter of Abraham", and Jesus' mission in *Lythēnai* serves the Lukan exegetical motif to interpret Jesus' action in the light of

scripture (cf Luke 4:17-19) Jesus' use of edei challenges the dei of law appealed to by the synagogue ruler (13:13). Thus Jesus' edei meant that "one cannot interpret the 'law' solely as a commandment,"¹² it ought to meet human need. Edei therein serves to understand what the Sabbath was all about; to how mercy consistent with God's person and character.

13 :33

Péln dei me sémeron kai aurion kai té echomené poreuesthai hoti ouk endechetai prophētēn apolesthai eksō Jerousalém

Jesus begins with the use of the term plēn. It was to serve as a counter to the threat of Herod expressed by some Pharisees. It might be suggested that Jesus' indirect reference to himself as a prophet follows a prophetic pattern of identification. It means that Jesus presents himself as an Old Testament prophet to enhance the idea of promise and fulfillment. Walter Zimmerli notes that:

If we attempt now to define the category of promise and fulfillment more deeply in terms of its content, a primary point to establish is this: promise and fulfillment encompass in every case a specific historical space. They are bound inseparable to history, not merely to a 'historicity' conceived as having no extension in either direction, but a history which is extended in time. Without such a history, promise and fulfillment is inconceivable.¹³ The "specific historical space"¹⁴ in which promise is located is the Old Testament scripture. Thus Jesus' use of dei in the context of *ouk endechetai prophētēn apolesthai eksō Jerousalém*

presents an exegetical parlance crucial in the New Testament community for understanding God and his activity in history.

22:37

Legō gap humin hoti touto to gegrammenon dei telesthēnai en emoi to kai meta anomon elogisthē. Kai gap To peri emou telos echei

In this context of instruction to his disciples (22:35-38), Jesus in using the declarative hoti points to touto to gegrammenon as necessary to be fulfilled. The phrasetouto to gegrammenon as a reference to Isaiah 53:12 is further stated: *kai meta anomon elogisthē*.

Luke here pursues the theme of promise and fulfillment. Dei is introduced by Luke to demonstrate an exegetical motif founded on scripture. This is because, dei “expresses submission to the will of God, which personally summons (people) and which fashions history according to (divine) plan”.¹⁵ kai gap to peri emou teles echei shows that Luke deliberately wove into dei an exegetical understanding in and for history. This exegetical methodology is “theocentric”¹⁶ as portrayed by *telos*. Such is because, the use of two similar phrases *telsthēnai en emoi* and *peri emou telos echei* point to a plan revealed in scripture – the Septuagint which falls back to a divine initiative in history. *Kai meta anomon elogisthē* (cf Isaiah 53:12) is basically a missiological intent. The context of the phrase point to an Old Testament pattern of identification in sin (cf Lev.4:3, 29, 6:25). Jesus was to bear the sins of humanity for the salvation of all. Thus *touto to gegrammenon* (about suffering for sinners) must be fulfilled according to divine plan.

24:26

Ouchi tauta edei pathein ton christen kai eiselthein eis ten doksan autou ;

In Keeping with Luke's scriptural tendency, as the unrecognized Jesus discussed with the "Emmaus road disciples" he employs prophetic resonances in such words as "tauta" to reveal the necessity of his suffering, and death. *Tauta* is placed at fore with *pathein* revealed in old testament scripture is avoided, *tauta* is a proclamative aside cast in the language of divine plan to further Luke's exegetical motif located in dei. Dei justifies the reason of Jesus' suffering/death as a promise located in scripture (as *tauta* represents) which expresses the *boulē tou theou* and Christ as fulfillment of God's Counsel. So, "Jesus' death was therefore not a tragic accident but a divine necessity taught in scripture (24:26-27)."¹⁷ Luke tends to accomplish in *dei* the idea of fulfillment as an act of God. *Dei* therein links prophesy and fulfillment to facilitate why it had to be so, for God decreed it.

24 :27

Eipen de pros autous, Houtoi hoi logoi mou hous elalésa pros humas eti ðn sun humin, hoti dei plérōthénai panta ta gegrammena en tō nomō Mōuseō s kai Tois proophétais kai psalmois peri emou

The section of vs. 44 (24:36-49) contains Jesus' exposition of scriptures to Cleopas and his companion; the disciples on Emmaeus road. (cf. vs 45). Jesus' reference to *panta ta gegrammean en tō nomō Mōuseō kai tois prophetais kai phalmois* presupposes. Prophetic proclamations of his suffering and death in the entire old Testament. This pattern of prophecy/promise and fulfillment apart from

being Gods *theléma* is a hermeneutic vehicle to convey the divine plan revealed in scripture. Such is justified by the proceeding sentence in vs 45 *tote diēnoizen autōn ton noun tou sunienai tas graphas*. When Cleopas and his companion referred to Jesus as a ‘powerful Prophet in speech and action before God and the whole people’ (24, 19), his nature as the Messiah and eschatological prophet who was to liberate Israel was undoubtedly brought into focus. Jesus’ exposition about Himself in the Pentateuch (24:27) will have in Deuteronomic motif as *anastésai* (verse 15) might mean Jesus’ resurrection.

The “opening of their minds”, and “understanding of scripture” in vs 45 were to the things written in scripture about Jesus’ suffering, death, resurrection (cf vs 46), and salvation that comes through his proclaimed name (vs 47). Thus Jesus’ *dei* was not only necessary to confront the near fatalistic idea that the Old Testament hope in Jesus was misrepresented, it was also to accomplish the missiological intention of God; even the inclusion of Gentiles in God’s plan of salvation as shown by *eis panta ta ethnē*. Herein the Gospel of Luke discloses the decisive intervention and prophetic purpose of God to fulfill his plan of salvation.¹⁸

CONCLUSION :

The divine design located in scripture is given a hermeneutic parlance in dei, which serves as the basis for the explanation and understanding of the divine imperative. While the negative events in history, especially in Jesus’ life were conceived to have truncated the divine purpose, dei demonstrates a definite, divine direction for such activities in the history of the church. Therein lie

the exegetical meaning of dei which has literary, theological, Christological and missiological implications.

END NOTES

¹ John Stott, *Men with a Message: An Introduction to the New Testament and Its Writers*, revised by Stephen Motyer, (Suffolk: Evangelical Literature Trust, 1994), 57-58, citing John Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts*. See also A. W. Mosley, "Historical Reporting in the Ancient World," *New Testament Studies*, 12, No. 1, October 1965, pp. 10-26. Mosley examined the influences that might have shaped the attitude of New Testament writers in the first century. Citing Greek, Roman and Jewish historians (and samples of their work), viz: Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Posidonius, Dionysius of Halicarnasus and Lucian of Samosata, (Greeks) Tacitus, (Roman) and Josephus (Jewish) among others, Mosley submitted that literary style of writing in ancient historiography had the goal of accuracy. This defines Luke's literary device employed in his work, cf. A. H. McDonald, "Historiography, Greek," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1949 ed., 430-433. Thomas L. Thompson, "Israelite Historiography," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 3, 212.

² John W. Pryor, *John: Evangelist of the Covenant People – The Narrative and Themes of the Fourth Gospel*, (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1992), 139. Pryor while citing John 3:14 said "we can recognize the use of the divine imperative dei ('must'), found also in Mark 8:31 and so on." Pryor's submission informs an understanding of the imperatival nature of dei that follows a linguistic pattern of interpretation true to Greek syntax.

³ In the 'declarative' function, *hoti* serves as recital objective of the author's words, act as a quotation mark to point out direct speech or scripture quotations.

According to A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, (Nashville: Broadman press, 1993); “recitative hoti (is) a method of reporting speech. But sometimes hoti was used before declarative hoti in the New Testament are numerous . . . The great mass of verbs of perceiving, showing, replying, testifying, etc. use either the declarative hot or the infinitive” cf. Luke 9:18; XRA 14:22, PP. 1034 35. Hoti is use the in a consecutive sense to mean “so that” cf. H. Klein, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament 2*, p. 539. Finally, it acts as a subordinate causal particle to show the reason for an action. Cf. Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 294 and Klein, *Hoti, Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 2*, p. 539.

⁴ Frank E. Gaebelin, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 8: Matthew, Mark and Luke (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1984), 874.

⁵ Norval Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956), p 128.

⁶ Malcolm O. Talbert, The Broadman Bible Commentary 9, Luke – John 1990 ed., p. 39.

⁷ N. Geldenhuys, Commentary on the gospel of Luke. (NICNT), P. 342.

⁸ Jesus’ challenge in vs. 16 demonstrated in dei also had this exegetical motif. According to Ellis, the contention here was on the real meaning of the Sabbath. While the ruler appealed to the law, Jesus in dei appeals to tradition, reason and Scripture for the necessity of works of mercy on the Sabbath Robert Stein, New American Commentary 24, p. 373 citing E. E. Ellis, The Gospel of Luke (NCB), (Grand Rapids! WM. B. Eerdman 1981), p. 187.

⁹ Telesthēnai – is used as a divine passive. Thus, it is God who accomplished or brought to completion what was decreed in Scripture about Jesus. Telesthēnai is the subject infinitive of the clause.

¹⁰ Craig A. Evans, “Prophecy and Polemic: Jesus in Luke’s Scriptural Apologetic.” Luke and Scripture: The Function of Sacred Tradition in Luke-Acts. Craig A. Evans & James Sanders, ed., (Minneapolis: Fortress press, 1993), pp 171-211. Evans is of the view that “one of Luke’s major concerns is to show that Jesus is truly the fulfillment of scriptures, as seen in his numerous summary statements (Luke 24:25-26, 45-47; Acts 3:18; 24, 10:23; 17:2-3; 18:28; 24:14-15; 26:22-23; 28:23). These statements testify to the centrality of the scriptural debate between Christians (both Jews and Gentiles), non-Christian Jews, and Luke-acts is a Christian response to this debate. What appears as anti-Semitic polemic is an exegetical polemic. It attempts to demonstrate Jesus, the gentile mission, and Jewish unbelief fulfill the prophetic scriptures. Luke interprets the scripture in order to present Christianity, Gentile question and all, as the fulfillment and completion of the biblical.

¹¹ I. H. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text (Grand Rapids. WM. B. Eerdmans, 1978), p. 824, citing Taylor Jesus and His Sacrifice, p. 193.

¹²A. T. Robertson, Word pictures in the New Testament, 2, Luke, p. 189. Robertson opines that Jesus from verse 15 put the Talmud (cf. Exodus 20:9-10) into proper perspective from the rulers’ perverted interpretation. Jesus appealed

to tradition (daughter of Abraham, a Jewess). To charity (which the Talmud supports as sabbath mercy), and to reason (the woman was ill). .See also David P. Moessner. "Luke 9:1-50: Luke's Preview of the Journey of the prophet like Moses of Deuteronomy" Journal of Biblical Literature. 102, No.4, December 1983, p. 575-605.

¹³ Walter Zimmerli, "The Interpretation of the Old Testament," trans. By James Wharton, Interpretation. 15, No.3 July 1961, p. 310.

¹⁴ Barnabas Lindars, "The place of the Old Testament in the formation of New testament Theology. Prolegomna", New Testament studies, 23, No.4, 1977, p. 66. Lindars explains that the Old Testament "was the natural medium of expression in religious contexts. They understood the Old Testament of refer to their own generation".

¹⁵ Helmut Flinder, St. Luke: Theologian of Redemptive History, trans. By H. Reginald and L. Fuller, (London: SPCK, 1967), p. 143.

¹⁶ See Yusufu A. Obaje, "Theocentric Ecclesiology and its Implications for Missiological Presence of the Church in Africa," A Paper Delivered at the Post-Graduate Inaugural Lectures, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, 6th June 1997, p. 22., and James A. Sanders, "Isaiah in Luke" Luke and Scripture, p. 19. Sanders say, "Luke's basic hermeneutic was theocentric" in defining the role of scripture and its fulfillment.

¹⁷ Robert Stein, New American Commentary, 24, p. 612

¹⁸ Cf. Gerhard Delling, “plēroō”, Theological Dictionary The New Testament, 6, p. 92. Delling says plēroō interpreted as fulfillment means “to fulfill a demand or claim; always used in the New Testament with reference to the will of God never to a human demand” p. 292. it is adjudged ‘to fulfill prophetic sayings which were spoken with divine authority and which can thus be called directly the words of God.’ See H. Hubner, plēroō Exegetical Dictionary of The New Testament, 3. pp. 108 – 110. luke used plēroō on nine occasions in the gospel and dei was used eighteen times.

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