

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to critically inform the task of preaching on Lukan judgment texts. In particular, it aims at biblically faithful and pastorally responsible preaching of what could become in uncritical or ideological hands 'texts of terror'.

Careful exegesis of three sampled judgment texts (John the Baptist's oracles of judgment in Luke 3; The Parable of the Pounds in Luke 19; Jesus' eschatological discourse in Luke 21) largely confirms Wright's claim that these texts refer primarily to the historical judgment of Jerusalem in the form of the events of 70 CE. However, Luke has narratively shaped the texts for his post-70 CE Christian readership to refer also to the Christian hope that includes final judgment. The result is a literary text, full of metaphor and story, which can neither be limited to past historical events nor distilled to propositional claims.

This non-reducibly literary nature of the texts studied concords with the analogical and oblique nature of eschatological discourse. We do well to speak tentatively about final judgment. Even so, Moltmann's position that final judgment is not the last thing, but reconciliation of all things in preparation for the Eschaton, coheres with the Lukan texts as well as systematic theology as a whole.

Relating Moltmann's 'theology of hope' to homiletics, a fruitful approach to eschatological preaching on judgment follows a Ricoeurian ontological hermeneutic which takes seriously the world made possible by metaphor and narrative. In a post-conflict Northern Irish context, such sermons can become eschatological moments in which Luke's text excites the Christian imagination, effecting much needed transformation of the present in the light of God's future.

CRÍOSTOIR NOC BRUITHIN