Theology Of Prayer In The Gospel Of Luke

Kyu Sam Han

Prayer materials in Luke’s Gospel are rich and unique. P. T. O’Brien has correctly observed that “[p]rayer is a significant motif in the Lukan writings as both the terminology and the contexts make plain.” The verb προσεύχομαι (meaning “to offer petition”), for example, is used nineteen times in the Gospel of Luke alone. In fact, thirty-five of the eighty-six NT occurrences of the term are in Luke-Acts, whereas only ten occurrences are in Mark and fifteen in Matthew. When the noun προσεύχη is included in the count, the Lukan writings use the term forty-seven times, whereas Matthew employs it seventeen times, Mark twelve, John never, the Pauline writings thirty-three times, and others three times. In Luke’s Gospel alone, προσεύχομαι или προσεύχη occur twenty-two times. In the NT, δεόμαι and its noun δεησίς, appear thirty-four times: Luke uses these terms nineteen times, Paul ten times. Acts also uses κράζω (twice) and προσκαρτερέω (three times) in prayer contexts, and even the adverb ὁμοθυμαδόν is used to express unity in prayer in Acts 1:14 and 4:24. These statistics, however, may be misleading, since the Gospel of Luke and Acts are longer than any other books in the NT. More important for our purpose is not the frequency of the terms, but the fact that most of Luke’s prayer texts come in Lukan special material. O. G. Harris noted that Luke not only “has sixteen prayer terms where his sources do not,” but also that “these terms appear at significant points in his Gospel.”

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the theology of prayer in the Gospel of Luke. We will begin with a survey of scholars’ views regarding Luke’s theology of prayer. Two themes have been suggested: (1) prayer and salvation history; and (2) p...

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