

## The waiting of *Parousia*. Aspects of Lukan Eschatology (Luke 17:20-37)

Iulian Faraoanu\*

University „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”,  
Str. Vascauteanu, 6, 700462 Iasi, Romania

E-mail address: faraoanu@yahoo.com

**Keywords:** Day of the Son of Man, eschatology, perseverance, exhortation, vigilance.

**ABSTRACT.** The Gospel of Luke reveals an important aspect, namely, the combination of history and eschatology. Therefore, many scholars have discussed whether Luke is more a historian rather than a theologian or vice versa. In his historical and eschatological discourse, the evangelist talks about the *Parousia*. The coming of the Son of Man at the end of time is a certainty and people have to prepare for his arrival.

In this paper I aim to describe the attitude of the members of Lukan communities towards the second coming of the Son of Man having Luke 17 as a starting point. Firstly, I intend to evaluate the text of Luke 17:20-37 from a literary point of view, followed by a synoptic comparison to Matthew 24:36-44 in order to better underline Luke's theological orientation. The final step involves a series of theological (eschatological) insights: the unexpected second arrival of Christ and the necessity of an orientation towards everlasting life.

All of the images within the text of Luke 17:20-37 have an exhortatory intent: faith must always remain strong. And Christians should be faithful and vigilant at all times. This vigilance and the orientation towards the everlasting realities are important paths to salvation.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of Luke describes the life of Jesus Christ, the one in whom believers can see the fulfillment of the history of salvation. The evangelist intends to combine history and theology. In a real human history, God shows his power and invites both Israel and the nations to join in the Kingdom of heaven. This human history has a tension to the fulfillment in the eschatological era.

The text of Luke 17:20-37 is inserted in this eschatological tension and describes the arrival of the Day of the Son of Man. But, beyond the literal aspects, the author reveals his exhortatory intention. He invites his community to perseverance and to a life of righteousness.

### THE TEXT OF LUKE 17:20-37 AND ITS MESSAGE

The eschatological account from Luke 17:20-37 is inserted in the third part of the Gospel which describes Jesus's journey to Jerusalem, from Luke 9:51 to Luke 24:53.

From a literary standpoint, this fragment has some notable differences compared to the previous episode, namely, the story of the ten lepers (vv. 11-19), because in the 20<sup>th</sup> verse the Pharisees make their appearance. Not only that, but there is a change of theme, apparent in the use of a different vocabulary. Lastly, we can note a change of the protagonists, place and time. However, verses that follow: in Luke 18:1-8 the author describes the parable of the unjust judge. These being said, one cannot dismiss the affinities between Luke 18:1-8 and the fragment from Luke 17:20-30; they are indeed quite clear: the recipients are the same disciples, and in the eighth verse an important question is asked - when the Son of Man will come, will he still find faith on earth? That is why some scholars treat these two texts as a whole and see a unity between them, but this doesn't prevent us from treating Luke 17:20-37 as a freestanding literary unit [1].

Unlike the other two synoptic evangelists, Luke speaks about eschatology twice: here, in this context, about things concerning the end of the world, and again in Luke 21, where the description of the end is made in relation to the destruction of Jerusalem [2]. Scholars call the latter

“The Synoptic Revelation”: a text that talks about catastrophes of cosmic proportions, the judgment of Jerusalem, and the end of the world [3]. Following this train of thought, Luke 17:20-37 could aptly be named “The Little Revelation”: a text that has a different outline, the main theme being the coming of the Son of Man, which will strike those who ignore it as a totally unexpected event [4]. This coming leads to a series of separations: those who wait for it will be saved, and those who concern themselves only with their mundane lives will perish. Here the reoccurring question “what should I do to be saved?” receives a part of the answer in the way of waiting for the *Parousia* [5].

This study focuses mainly on the text of Luke 17:20-37, which can be split in two sections: a) vv. 20-21, and b) vv. 22-37. However many scholars consider that vv. 20-21 form a unity with vv. 22-37, despite the recipients being different. The reason for this is not necessarily the provenience from a single fragment of the Q source. There are much rather multiple reasons: a) Jesus is the speaker; b) similarity of vocabulary; c) similarity of content. A biggest affinity lies between the vv. 20-21 and vv. 22-24 which contain the speech addressed to the Pharisees and the disciples. The frequent use of the verb “to speak” is obvious (vv. 20 and 22); the use of phrases such as “here it is” and “there it is” is also obvious. Also, in verses 21 and 24 the verb “to be” is used to signal the presence of the Kingdom. All of this leads us to the conclusion that Luke put together two literary units, unifying on multiple levels. This is confirmed by the use of a narrative technique common to other Lucan texts, i.e., Luke 15:1; 16:13-17:10: a presentation of the same teaching from two different points of view. Oftentimes this is apparent in the middle of a polemic against the Pharisees, followed by a teaching addressed to the disciples.

The theme of the first text, Luke 17:20-21 is related to God’s Kingdom, i.e., to the date of his second coming, a date that Judaism tries to establish by appealing to precursory signs (Dan 9:2). But Fitzmyer doesn’t agree that this idea could be drawing on the Old Testament. On the contrary, it seems to be a Hellenistic theme or an apocalyptic hint that also appears in other parts of the Old Testament [6].

Regarding the origin, there is a general agreement between scholars that verse 20a can be regarded as an introduction peculiar to Luke [7], while verses 20b-21 may come from an own source called *L* and contain a speech of Jesus that is based upon an antithetic parallelism [8].

The question addressed to the Pharisees in the beginning of the story refers to a future time. In fact, when used in an eschatological context, the adverb “when” and the verb “to come” usually carry a future import, leading to the fulfillment of the Kingdom in future times [9]. Jesus’s answer emphasizes that nobody knows the moment when the Kingdom will come and neither the place where it will happen. These elude all human calculations. This is further confirmed by the use of the word *parateresis* (observation), a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament. From a formal point of view, the answer is set up in the antithetic parallelism: the first, negative element concerns the time (“that doesn’t come,” v. 20b) and the place (“nobody can tell,” v. 21a), and the positive element, in v. 21b refers to the Kingdom. In this situation, the Kingdom is already in the midst of the people, through Jesus’s salvific actions.

Of particular interest is the preposition *entos* (“in the middle of”), which is quite rare to see in a genitive construction in the New Testament. Some scholars have translated it with “inside yourself,” lending the entire clause a spiritual sense: the kingdom is inside the people, it doesn’t need to be looked for in the external signs. It’s also about a present sense in Psalm 39:4; 103:1; Isaiah 16:11. Other authors translated the preposition in question with “available to,” or “at hand.” However, a third group of scholars kept in mind the value of the emphatic adverb (state of place) and translated it as “in the middle of” [10]. This interpretation may also be the one that strays away the least from the narrative’s logic: actually, the kingdom cannot be inside the Pharisees; instead, it is present in the midst of the listeners, in the person and actions of Jesus. This third position wins increasingly more ground and it is the one this study is based on. Therefore the words of Jesus may appear as a paradox because he answers the question of “when” with a specification about the place, about “where.” There seems to be a subtle irony that condemns the search for external signs, like the one undertaken by the Pharisees in order to realize whether the kingdom is amongst them.

As to the literary genre to which this text belongs, some scholars speak about it in terms of an *apoftegma*; but more appropriate seems to be the opinion that considers that Luke 17:20-21 is a *chreia* – a Greek literary genre made up of a short sentence in order to solve a difficulty or to clarify a problem [11]. Taking into account the contents of the text, some commentators consider Luke 17:20-21 to be a teaching dialogue which has its roots in the rabbinic environment. But if we keep in mind the teaching to the disciples from the text of Luke 17:20-37 and drawing upon the Jewish conception in the discourse about eschatology, it would seem appropriate to be regarded here as belonging to the literary genre of the teaching dialogue.

The theme of the second text, Luke 17:22-30 is the future and unexpected coming of the Son of Man. At the same time, we notice the unexpected character of the *Parousia* that will precede the fulfillment of the Kingdom. Even if the kingdom is already present, the end must still come. In the beginning of the text one can notice a change of the recipients: Jesus no longer talks to the Pharisees, but to the disciples. Regarding the composition, v. 22a seems to belong to Luke while the other verses came from the Q source, which the Evangelist has adapted to better fit the discourse.

A first consideration concerns verses 22 to 25. From a formal point of view, two antitheses can be noticed: in the 22<sup>th</sup> verse the disciples want to see, but it is impossible; this situation is marked by the adversative conjunction “by.” Then, in the 23<sup>rd</sup> verse, the exclamations “here he is, there he is” are opposed by the imperative verbs “don’t go, don’t follow them.” The 24<sup>th</sup> verse allows these negations.

In terms of vocabulary, one can note the use of infinitives: “iden (to see), pathein (to suffer).” These fully define the meaning of the main verb and express the nature of the action needed to be carried out.

The disciples wish to see the Son’s manifestation also because they live in hard times (the prophetic expression “days will come/the time will come when”). This is a feature peculiar to text about the end times. There will be false prophets, but the disciples mustn’t allow themselves to be deceived because the Son of Man will come without submitting to external signs that allow forecasts. Jesus dismisses any apocalyptic speculations, for they betray a search for a knowledge that belongs only to God, and they have the purpose of forgetting the unexpected character of the Son’s arrival. The final manifestation of the Son of Man will come in a completely different fashion from how the false prophets imagine it: the unexpected character can be compared with a flash of lightning that crosses the sky from one end to the other. In the 25<sup>th</sup> verse Jesus speaks about the necessity of the passion in accordance to the divine plan. On this matter, it is worth mentioning the opinion of A. Feuillet, who sees the *Parousia* as related to the Calvary, i.e., it may constitute the victorious part of the cross [12]. The Day of the Son seems to be related to the *Parousia* mentioned in Acts 1:11. The phrase concerning “one of the days” creates a certain difficulty, but with this expression the Evangelist wants to emphasize only the unpredictable character and the discriminatory effect of the Son’s revelation [13].

The 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> verses compare the days of Son with those of Noah and Lot. The Son’s Day is nothing other than the God’s *Parousia*, the great Day of Judgment mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament.

The second consideration concerns verses 31 to 35. Jesus’s advice is to run away from the calamities that will happen in the end. If in the preceding verses he extends an invitation to the disciples, the warnings from the 31<sup>st</sup> verse are directed to the inhabitants of Palestine. It is also noteworthy that the hint at Lot’s wife in the 31-32 verses and previous 28-29 verses form an inclusion; she “tries to still look after the necessities of life, search salvation by her own strengths.”

The 33<sup>rd</sup> verse presents the paradox of sacrificing one’s life (Luke 9:24): this is the adequate behavior before the coming of the Son of Man. The meaning of the text could be reproduced as follows: “those who, like the inhabitants of Sodom, think only about themselves, willing only to enjoy life, these shall succumb to passions; those who despise the earthly life shall find the real and sustainable, lasting existence” [14]. Like the Master who has suffered, the disciple must lose his life to save it. The separation in that final moment is not arbitrary, but it depends on how everybody relates himself to the paradox of life sacrifice. Zedda affirms that this can’t be an allegory based on

internal dispositions: “maybe it is better to see in this context only images that show the unexpected and fast character of the *Parousia*, this being as unforeseen as the other misfortunes that strike one person and the other leaves unharmed” [15]. His statement stems from the difficulty that arises when trying to interpret the two expressions “to be taken and to be left.” Scholars have generally taken two stances on this matter: a) “to be taken” is a synonym to “to be saved” (Luke 9:26; Matthew 13:41-43: those who are taken by angels and carried to eternal happiness); b) “to be left” can mean to be saved if we think of doctrine of Israel remnant (Jeremiah 6:11; Isaiah 9:13). But, in this context it concerns a specific separation of the judgment that means the punishment.

In the 37<sup>th</sup> verse we can see the unexpected coming of the end, without any notice or any sign of warning. However, once arrived, the day of the Son of Man will be recognized, as easily as it is to recognize a group of eagles that signals the presence of a corpse.

As far as the outline of the text is concerned, it is obvious that the fragment Luke 17:20-37 begins and ends with a question: the first is about time (when), a question which Jesus answers with a spatial indication (where); and the second question concerns the place where the *Parousia* will occur, which will arrive after the manifestation of certain temporal indications. Between these two questions the Evangelist has placed the speech of Jesus to the Pharisees and the disciples.

It’s interesting a hypothesis structure offered by Meynet, starting from the observation of the frequent occurrence of the expression “day/days” in Luke 17:22-35. Actually he calls this fragment “the day of the Son of Man,” notice that the expression Son of Man always appears alongside the words “day/days.” So there is a first part (vv. 22 – 33) where the 25<sup>th</sup> verse is the central one; then we have the section of the 22-24 verses, where the day of the Son of Man forms an inclusion; at the end the section of the 26-30 verses contains the same inclusion. A second part (the 31-35 verses) has as a central point the 33<sup>rd</sup> verse, that it’s framed in the 31-32 verses („in the same day”) and in the 34-35 verses („in the same night”). The 33<sup>th</sup> verse relates to the 25<sup>th</sup>, both of them talking about suffering, either the suffering of Jesus or that of the disciples [16].

From a critic of form point of view, verses 22-37 are a collection of prophetic and warning sayings about the coming of the days of the Son of Man. In Fitzmyer’s opinion, vv. 23-24 can be fitted in the literary genre of apocalyptic prophecy, even though the statements contained in this fragment also carry a warning undertone [17]. From a different point of view, the section between verses 22-37 could be regarded as only a teaching to the disciples about the way in which the day of the Son of Man will come, about the situation of the humanity at his arrival, and about the right behavior at the moment of final revelation. One could say that the fragment from Luke 17:20-37 synthesizes to a certain extent the teaching about eschatology: the concept of “already and not yet,” the presence of Christ in history (vv. 20-21), and the wait for his glorious return (vv. 22-37).

## 2. SYNOPTIC PARALLELISM TO MATTHEW (MT 24:36-44)

The parallelism between Matthew 24:36-44 and Luke 17:26-30 highlights the similarities and the differences between these two texts and leads to one of the conclusions concerning the theology of Luke.

First of all, Matthew makes reference to a similarity between the days of Noah and the Son of Man’s coming, without a big emphasis on the causes of the judgment. While Luke speaks about the days of the Son of Man, Matthew uses the term *Parousia*. Actually Matthew is the only Evangelist that uses this word: in Matthew 24:3.27.37.39, the *Parousia* used in verses 37 and 39 has the role of inclusion to the literary unity in which is shown the example of Noah contemporaries [18]. By using the verb *egeneto* (was), Luke seems to have in mind events that had already happened, while Matthew places a stronger emphasis on the time and place.

A second observation concerns the absence of the repetition for the expression “because as in those days before the flood” existing in Matthew 24:37. The first item of comparison in Matthew lacks a main verb. Then, unlike Matthew that uses the verb *trogo* (to feed, to pasture), Luke prefers the term *esthio* (to feed). Luke uses four verbs in the imperfect tense in the 27<sup>th</sup> verse in a form of coordination, willing perhaps to underline the rapid and continued succession of the actions listed. Matthew uses the coordination through the preposition “kai” and the four verbs are in participle.

Going further, we should take note of the fact that Matthew adds “and they didn’t know.” He insists on the ignorance towards judgment day. There is also an emphasis on the idea that nobody knows its date and time. Then Matthew issues a warning about those who can mislead others.

The example of Lot and the destruction of Sodom in the ending don’t have any parallelism in Matthew. “The example of Noah contemporaries in Matthew must be understood as an illustration of the theme of ignoring the day and time when God will come.” Luke is the only Evangelist that puts together the flood and the destruction of Sodom, an association common in other parts of the Bible, like Ecclesiast 10:4; 6-8 and 2 Peter 2:5-6 [19].

Summing up, it can be said that Luke allots more space to the theme of how the humanity will present itself at the end of time. Matthew has in mind the ignorance of the knowledge related to the day of the Son of Man’s arrival, while Luke brings an array of arguments in order to demonstrate the indifference towards the coming of the Son of Man. The long list of actions reported by the third Evangelist reflects an attitude adopted by many Christians who thought that the *Parousia* can be dismissed for the time being. The world was so preoccupied by its daily activities and chores that it forgot that the Lord will return.

### 3. MATTHEW INSIST LESS ON THE THEME OF THE PAROUSIA

Keeping in mind the arguments above, we can conclude that Matthew insists less on the theme of the arrival of the Son of Man and on humanity’s status at that time. The finding is the ignorance of the date of arrival. That leads to the exhortation to stay vigilant. Matthew brings forth the example of Noah’s contemporaries, but from a different point of view. The idea of people being ignorant towards the hour of the Son’s arrival and the necessity of vigilance, even if it’s not present in Luke 17, can be found in the eschatological speech in Luke 21.

Turning back to the fragment of Luke 17:26-30 which has an imperfect parallelism in Matthew 24:37-39, one can draw another conclusion. If Matthew alludes to Noah’s contemporaries, his only observation is that they didn’t know anything; they didn’t understand that the flood would soon come and would wash them all away. Matthew is not interested at all in actions; his focus is just on the state of ignorance. But in Luke’s case, the simple fact that he adds the example of Lot’s generation may be a test of interest for a behavior that is out of sync with the wait for the coming of the Son of Man.

Neither in Matthew, nor in Luke is there any kind of judgment passed on the morality of actions or deeds, but it’s quite obvious that Luke highlights the necessity of remembering and orienting oneself towards eternal life. The activities described by Luke have striking similarities with the behavior of the rich, who are so often criticized in the Gospel. Even if we can’t state for sure that Luke makes a reference to the rich, still it can be said that the people in question weren’t poor. The Beatitudes talk about the poor calling them hungry and thirsty; and the parable of the rich man portrays him as one who eats, drinks, and feasts while Lazarus is starving. Moreover, in the Gospel of Luke a poor man never builds, while the reckless rich man is the one who build deposits.

In the light of these considerations, it can be said that those who carried on with their daily activities in Luke 17:26-30 could be a part of the middle-upper class, a class of rich people, and they were more at risk of exaggerating in their daily activities and forgetting about the arrival of the Son of Man.

### 4. ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ESCHATOLOGY IN LUKE

A first look at the text of Luke 17:20-37 quickly reveals the existence of an eschatological speech. The eschatology in the Gospel according to Luke is a quite difficult theme. In the last years there have been a lot of studies on it. The Lucan texts that contain eschatological ideas can be classified in three categories: a) data without temporal indications about the *Parousia* (Luke 9:26; 12:40; 17:20-37); b) facts against the impending end (Luke 19:12-27; 21:8); c) data about the nearness of the end (Luke 9:27; 21:32) [20]. Out of these categories, the texts that don’t speak about

the impending of *Parousia* seem to have more weight, but also we cannot dismiss the texts in which Luke has no interest in defining the end of time.

When it comes to eschatology, the strain between this dimension and history led to a change of perspective on Lucan theology. In the opinion of several scholars, in Luke's writings, eschatology becomes a part of history, unlike Paul, in whose writings eschatology is an aspect of Christian life, like a life under the sign of call and judgment of the Word of God. "The history of salvation and the eschatology don't go on different paths but are conditioned one another. Eschatology for Luke doesn't just mean the limit point of world history but it begins with the Ministry of Jesus, set in a series of events till the coming in glory of the Lord" [21].

Still, concerning the eschatological speech, some commentators say that Luke insists more on "semeron" (today) than on "eschaton" (last) meaning he highlights the "today" more than the final events. In Rengstorf's opinion, in the Lucan community the idea of the impending of *Parousia* wasn't so strong, that's why the emphasis is placed on the salvation that is done today [22]. In this sense, it is noteworthy what Fitzmyer said about Luke's eschatological outlook: "the Christian concern wasn't on the impending *Parousia*, that's why Luke pays more attention to the reaction of people at the disciples preaching" [23]. But Acts 1:11 shows that Luke did not outright suppress the speech about the second coming of Jesus, just that he insists on the speech about "today." That's why I can't agree with those scholars who accuse Luke of distancing himself from the common teaching about *Parousia* and of replacing the coming of God with the gift of Holy Spirit. In this were the case, his main idea would have been about the delay of *Parousia* and the offering of a consolation prize to some, the disillusioned and the anxious. Luke may assert some delay for the Son of God coming, a dilatation of the final days till turning them in a long lasting era, a period that becomes the time of the Church. This could be in contrast with the original conception that saw the immediate establishment of the Kingdom. The nearness of *Parousia* like a long awaited and hoped for reality is seen in these terms because hope cannot be reconciled with delay. However, in that time the traditions were varied indeed. That's why we could rather talk about ideas and beliefs concerning the wait for God's intervention. Even if God is late in his coming, the fulfillment of the salvation plan will be carried out at the end of time and it will be inaugurated by *Parousia*.

Summing up, it can be said that Luke the Evangelist highlights the "today" of salvation and insists on the necessity of the Christian effort. On the one hand there is the reaction to the *kerygma*, that become real in faith, the only way to salvation (Luke 8:15), in penitence and in conversion. On the other hand there are the demands for a truly Christian life, which can be translated in following Jesus, in testimony, prayer, and the righteous and adequate use of material possessions. Luke insists on human responsibility that becomes the necessity of conversion that allows the coming of the last times.

## 5. THE SECOND ARRIVAL OF JESUS AND ITS WAITING

Turning back to the theme of the *Parousia*, it is quite clear that Luke doesn't exclude it. This idea is confirmed by the mention of the days of the Son of Man. The date when the Son of Man will come is unknown to anybody; that's why the attitude must be one of continuous vigilance. The coming of the Lord will bring about the judgment, and that requires a certain preparation. The same idea is underlined by the Evangelist in the three beatitudes bestowed upon the bystanders (Luke 12:37-38. 43).

Like in another part of the Gospel, the delay of *Parousia* in Luke 12:32-37 represents the basic element in the changes concerning the wait for the coming of the day of the Son. Luke is elaborating in a new way the material taken from the tradition and makes changes in the conception about eschatology.

In this framework of modifications the Lucan presentation follows a steady upward trend: the final epoch will come unforeseen, without any precursory notice. Zedda is convinced of the surprising character of the final judgment: "the unexpected character must be understood like of the flood and Sodom destruction, these cataclysms hadn't appeared in a precise moment. Their unexpected character connects with the subjective dispositions in which the people found

themselves then. This way the Son of Man coming on earth will find regardless people, he will not found any faith or people who are waiting for Him, that's why his come will be a surprise" [24].

Jesus is very clear in his speech: the disciples should not let themselves be deceived by false prophets that claim to know and show the signs about the time and place of the final revelation. The coming of the Son of Man will be certain but unexpected.

Verses 24 to 37 approach the questions of how and when the *Parousia* will take place. The picture in the 24<sup>th</sup> verse motivates the "be on your guard" attitude from the 23<sup>rd</sup> verse. The lightning Jesus spoke about means rapidity, and the expression "days" is an eschatological term, while the use of the plural shows how the "eschaton" is no longer seen as a single event, but a succession of separate events. The fact that the end will come unforeseen, when nobody expects it, is a central idea in Luke 17:20-37. Multiple elements converge to lend support to this thesis: the lightning (24<sup>th</sup> verse), the flood (26<sup>th</sup> verse), the rain of fire (28<sup>th</sup> verse), the unexpected hour of parting (34<sup>th</sup> verse).

Luke bases the fashion of his interpretation of the sources on the delay of *Parousia*; this leads to a global reflection on the nature and course of the final events. The original conception insisted on the impending character of the end, but Luke is certain of the delay of this event, which he tries to explain. To explain this delay, the Evangelist makes use of two concepts: on one hand, the idea of a divine plan in which the second coming of the Son is still far away; on the other hand, he highlights his unforeseen and surprising coming at the end of time. Indeed, in Luke's works the end comes in an unforeseen way, like lightning or a storm or a thief in the middle of the night [25].

In Conzelmann's opinion, once the awareness of impending coming of the end is lost, the theory of the nearness of the final times receives a new significance: the induction of the need to be always ready even if the wait may be long. In this case, even Luke 17:22-37 insists on the unexpected arrival of the Son of Man and on a faraway end, starting points for ethical urges. If the end is still far, instead of a passive attitude of simply waiting for it to come, another idea comes into the spotlight: living the Christian life in its daily experience, and that demands an ethical organization. Therefore, the virtues of perseverance and patience now come first. The motivation of an authentic life is based now not anymore on the moment of judgment, but on the simple fact that this will indeed happen one day [26].

Rouiller and Varone are following in A. George's footsteps when they speak about a *Parousia*. The Son's day doesn't have any apocalyptic connotations. On the contrary, in his optimism Luke presents this day like a favorable event. Regarding the moment of the Son's coming, some texts suggest that the *Parousia* is near, as seen in Luke 9:27; 21:32. In other texts it can be seen how the Lord's coming is far away (Luke 19:11; 20:9). That's why, if we were to bring together these two statements, it could be said that Luke has kept the traditional ideas (he did not dismiss the traditional outlook on the end-times), but his is primarily concerned with dismissing the speculations on a precise date (Acts 1:7). On the other hand, he makes a point that what matters is the present with its responsibility, because the Kingdom is already in the midst of the people [27].

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Needless to say, eschatology has always had a strong influence on Christian life and will continue to do so. A first element is the necessity of waiting. "It's essential for the Christian life the waiting for God's arrival, the waiting for the curtain to draw over the world scene, to come the definitive and solemnly triumph of Christ, to begin the next world with the glory of the chosen ones together, with the resurrection of the bodies and perfect salvation. It this waiting will not be this will happens because of a poor faith and because of an attachment for all what is ephemeral and present" [28].

Actually the whole chapter 12 of Luke could aptly be titled "the waiting of Jesus and the vigilance." Every generation risks falling into the same mistake which the contemporary of Noah and Lot fell prey to. It's about the lack of waiting given the fact that the end isn't imminent. From here it turns to indifference towards the essential things, namely, those related to God and the everlasting life.

This waiting attitude must be characterized by detachment. The Christian, if he's not waiting for the realities of God, this is because of his lack of love. If he's not waiting for the end of the world, it will happen because for him the world has eternal value and he got attached to it. An example of wisdom in this sense is the image of the dishonest manager. His capacity of foresight led him to secure a place in the Kingdom and in doing so, he managed to avoid exclusion (Luke 16:1-7). However, there is an issue that always remains: the right way to use riches and to organize the earthly existence without ever losing the orientation towards the future one.

Another aspect of waiting pertains to faith. The right attitude in front of God is the modest status, the trust in God and the refusal to trust in one's own possessions or status. This is also a problem of today's world: there are too many possessions, people trust in themselves and in these possessions and the concern for the Kingdom of God has slowly faded away. That's why to find the blessing of God you have to abandon the connection with earthly things and situations and thus point our heads toward the future life.

Two further elements are characteristic of Christian life in relationship with eschatology: charity and hope. *Parousia* influences the Christian life and constitutes a reason that feeds Christian hope. And charity has to get into all Christian areas of life, because love is the link to perfection.

## REFERENCES

- [1] D. L. Chrupcala, *Il Regno opera della Trinità nel vangelo di Luca*, Franciscan Printing Press, Jerusalem, 1998), 67-68.
- [2] H. Cousin, *Vangelo di Luca*, Edizioni Paoline, Cinisello Balsamo, 1995, 265.
- [3] S. Zedda, *L'escatologia biblica*, Paideia, Brescia, 1975, vol. I, 277.
- [4] J. Schmid, *L'Evangelo secondo Luca*, Paideia, Brescia, 1957, 340.
- [5] O. da Spinetoli, *Luca*, Cittadella Editrice, Assisi, 1982, 554.
- [6] J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke*, Doubleday, Garden City, 1975, 1160.
- [7] R. Schnackenburg, *La vita cristiana, esegesi in progresso e in mutamento*, Jaca Book, Milano, 1977, 239-240.
- [8] J. Jeremias, *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums*, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1980, 266.
- [9] A. Feuillet, *La double venue du Règne de Dieu et du Fils de l'homme*, *Revue Thomiste* 39 (1981) 7; G. Nolli, *Evangelo secondo Luca*, Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano, 1983, 762.
- [10] L. Sabourin, *Il vangelo di Luca*, Piemme, Roma, 1989, 290.
- [11] A. Feuillet, *La double venue du Règne*, 6-7.
- [12] A. Feuillet, *La double venue du Règne*, 14.
- [13] J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke*, 1169.
- [14] R. Schnackenburg, *La vita cristiana*, 248.
- [15] S. Zedda, *L'escatologia biblica*, 281.
- [16] R. Meynet, *Il vangelo secondo Luca. Analisi retorica*, Edizioni Dehoniane, Roma, 1994, 496-501.
- [17] J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke*, 1166.
- [18] J. Dupont, *Le tre apocalissi sinottiche*, Edizioni Dehoniane, Bologna, 1997, 76.
- [19] J. Dupont, *Le tre apocalissi sinottiche*, 78.
- [20] A. George, *Études sur l'oeuvre de Luc*, Gabalda, Paris, 1978, 332-334.

- 
- [21] D.L. Chrupcala, *Il Regno opera della Trinità*, 113.
- [22] K. H. Rengstorf, *Il vangelo secondo Luca*, Paideia, Brescia, 1980, 343.
- [23] J. A. Fitzmyer, *Luca teologo. Aspetti del suo insegnamento*, Paideia, Brescia, 1991, 106.
- [24] J. Jeremias, *Teologia del Nuovo Testamento*, Paideia, Brescia 1972, vol. I, 151.
- [25] C. Spicq, *Fin du monde et vie chrétienne*, *Assemblées de Segnieur* 6 (1969) 37.
- [26] H. Conzelmann, *Il centro del tempo*, Piemme, Casale Monferrato, 1996, 142.
- [27] G. Rouiller and C. M. Varone, *Il vangelo secondo Luca*, Cittadella, Assisi, 1993, 388-391.
- [28] S. Zedda, *L'escatologia biblica*, Paideia, Brescia, 1976, vol. II, 549-550.