

# THE RESURRECTION AS CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO HIS GLORY (LK. 24:26)

## ABSTRACT

This essay discusses some apocalyptic perspectives on Luke's portrayal of the resurrection as Christ's entry into his glory (Lk. 24:26) in order to point out its mystical nature. After a discussion of some recent developments in research on Luke's Christology and apocalyptic literature, the importance of glory in Early Jewish and Christian apocalypses is discussed. This is followed by an explanation of the glory motif in Luke 24:26, its place in Luke's resurrection account in general and in the story of the disciples of Emmaus in particular. The essay then compares the mystical use of the glory motif in Luke 24:26 with Luke's use of glory elsewhere in his writings. It concludes with general remarks about the mystical nature of the resurrection in Luke's writings.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the episode of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-35), the resurrected Jesus, unrecognized by two of his disciples, joins them and questions them about their discussion of the empty grave (Lk. 24:17). The two, surprised at his lack of knowledge of events (Lk. 24:18), inform him about the earthly ministry of Jesus. At the end of their explanation of Jesus' ministry and death they mention the discovery of the empty grave and the news that Jesus was alive (Lk. 24:22-24). Jesus, having reprimanded them for their unbelief, then interprets the resurrection events to them with the words, "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" (οὐχὶ ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ; Lk. 24:25-26).

This tantalizing remark of Jesus is part of Luke's resurrection narrative that has been used to argue that Luke has a high or exaltation Christology, even though, it is argued in scholarly circles, he otherwise strongly emphasizes the humanity of Jesus.

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Insofar as there is a unity to Luke's Christology, few would probably quarrel with the statement of Wilson that the consensus is that the Christology of Luke-Acts is fundamentally an exaltation Christology (Tuckett 1999:148).

Once this theory about a "high" Christology is accepted in scholarly research, it is then further argued that the transformation of Jesus from his earthly into a heavenly existence is an indication of Luke's subordinationist Christology.

Recent developments pointed out the need for further clarity on Luke's Christology because of the growing debate about the nature of Luke's exalted picture of Christ. Despite the general conviction that Luke has a high Christology, "it is not agreed what capacity the risen and exalted Jesus occupies for Luke" (Tuckett 1999:148). And in recent times Rowe (2006:28) in similar vein pointed out that the study of Luke's Gospel will have to reflect further on a Christology that, narratively speaking, binds the identity of the earthly Jesus to the identity of the God of Israel – remarks with particular implications for a subordinationist Christology and its assumption of Jesus' human nature.

There is still another reason why Luke's understanding of the exalted Jesus needs attention. Major shifts in the study of Jewish and Early Christian apocalyptic texts have significant consequences for understanding Luke's texts in general and his reference to Jesus' entry into his glory in particular.<sup>1</sup> Apocalyptic texts were previously regarded as eschatological texts about a future dispensation that will replace the present evil age. Lately, though, scholars have been reading them also as speculative texts that have to do with heavenly secrets of a cosmological nature and with hidden knowledge about the heavenly throne of God, the being of God, the being and the abode of the angels, the operations of the natural elements and with historical surveys.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Cf. e.g. Eskola 2001 and Fletcher-Louis 1997.

2 The influence and traces of these mystical texts are already evident from later traditions in rabbinic texts that reflect a keen interest in mystical experiences and speculative material, often known and described as merkabah mysticism. Perspectives from merkabah mysticism are, though, not that new to the discipline and have been used from time to time in the interpretation of Biblical texts. Cf. Scholem 1941; DeConick 2006; Gruenwald 1980. For the study of the New Testament from the perspective of mystical texts, cf. Odeberg 1929, Dahl 1962 and especially an influential article of Meeks 1967 on the Gospel of John, which argues that John countered the Moses-centered mystical piety of Merkavah mysticism by proclaiming Jesus as divine agent, as prophet-king who reveals God's name, testifies and judges the world. Dunn 1989, in turn, also read the Gospel in terms of a dialogue with mystical traditions that aimed at experiencing for oneself a mystical ascent to or revelation of the throne of God by meditating on the Chariot vision of

Of special interest among these is what is often described as their “mystical” dimension, that is, that someone can

directly, immediately, and before death ... experience the divine, either as a rapture experience or as one solicited by a particular praxis (DeConick 2006:2).<sup>3</sup>

When scholars speak of this new development in apocalyptic research and label it as “mysticism,” it can cause misunderstanding. Mysticism has a notorious reputation, as DeConick (2006:1-2) noted because it is associated with ecstatic, non-rational forms of religion and with “organized practices used to illicit direct contact with the divine”. Yet it is also a word that refers to transformative experiences of Jewish and Christian mystics who thought that they could be invested with heavenly knowledge, join the choir of angels in

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Ezekiel 1, Isaiah 6, Daniel 7:9-10 and Genesis 1. This work prepared the way for the thesis of Dunn's student, Kanagaraj (1998) who focused on John's mystical experience of God's glory in Christ during worship as a community experience (Jn.1:14; 12:41; cf. e.g. Kanagaraj 1998:317). It was, however, especially Rowland (cf. e.g. 1982, 1985:56-64) who contributed significantly to the new research on apocalyptic texts as mystical literature. Rowland consistently stood out as someone who offered an independent perspective to the study of apocalypticism as early as 1981. His work is especially noteworthy because it appeared at a time in which research on apocalypses was to a large extent dominated by the SBL group on apocalypses (cf. Collins 1974). Stone was at that stage the other scholar who pointed to the speculative contents of apocalypses, especially in his seminal article in 1976 (cf. also Stone 1976:32-33; Stemberger 1995:30; Rowland 1996:405). In recent years, major work on the mystical nature of apocalyptic texts has been done by the SBL group on Jewish and Christian mysticism. Cf. e.g. DeConick 2006:1-24 and for a recent, extensive discussion, Schäfer 2009:1-23.

3 DeConick's remarks on the internalization of apocalypse (2006:18-22) are especially useful for understanding the mystical nature of apocalypses and material worthy of further reflection. She points to practices described in Early Christian texts that “democratized” the mystical and made the presence of God regularly available to all believers. This included baptism and the eucharist that reintegrated the person immediately and ontologically into the divine. “Some texts even narrate this belief in terms of the ascent-journey motif! That is, the ritual is presented as the vehicle that elevates and transports the person into the sacred realm that he or she can come into the very presence of God” (23). Through meditation on words of Scripture or apocalypses the text and the mysteries that they represent are also appropriated so that the person him/herself would have journeyed into the heavenly spheres and the presence of God. In this essay the rituals and practices cannot be discussed, but within such a context it is to be expected that mystical motifs will be taken over by authors in whose texts such practices are present.

worship before the throne or be glorified in the body (Deconick 2006:2).<sup>4</sup> One can describe this as mystical in the sense that the author of an apocalypse assumes a direct and experiential encounter with the Sacred that transformed them to witness in a new way to their faith in their present context.

This belief has to do with religious experience, the act of revelation itself, the encounter with God that results in the devotee's immediate personal transformation and the uncovering of God's mysteries (Deconick 2006:19).

On the face of it, it may seem as if the New Testament and Luke's texts are devoid of such mystical leanings. But here too, there is a major revision under way, as will be indicated in this essay from time to time. One example of such recent remarks is the statement of Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009:99) that, though there is

little in the Gospels which suggests preoccupation with heaven and the disclosure of its mystery (like Revelation), there are hints that important dimensions of their messages are thoroughly imbued with an apocalyptic outlook which deserves the epithet 'mystical'.

This article aims to provide some more material that will show that Luke's Gospel reveals a preoccupation with the heavenly and the revelatory.

In the case of the Lukan text and since the important contribution of Jervell (1972) to Lukan research, more attention is being paid in Lukan scholarship to the interaction between the Lukan texts and their Jewish setting. This, in turn, drew attention to Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts as a valuable context for the Lukan texts.<sup>5</sup> There has been a growing awareness of the mystical nature of the Gospel of Luke and Acts in particular. DeConick (2006:6)

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4 Wolfson (1994) argues against using etic terms like "mystical union" that assume a neo-Platonic world view and ontology. Jewish mysticism should not be understood as contemplation of God that results in the mystical merging of the soul in the Godhead and a shedding of the body. It rather has to do with practices that lead to an experience of ontic transformation through which a person becomes divine or angelic. In this essay, mysticism is not understood in this neo-Platonic manner. Cf. also Schäfer (2009:17-19). Schäfer (2009:355) makes some seminal remarks about imposing modern categories on ancient texts and on the role of Christian mysticism in the study of Jewish apocalypses. Whilst the mystic is not dissolved into the Godhead in Jewish mysticism, it does assume some sort of assimilation. Cf. Fletcher-Louis (1997:13) and further below.

5 For an assessment of Jervell, cf. Fletcher-Louis (1997:18-20) and Tyson (1999:91-109). On the apocalyptic nature of the gospels, including Luke, cf. important remarks by Carey (2005:102-124).

emphatically remarks, with, amongst others, references to important Lukan texts, that

the evidence of mystical experiences from second hand accounts in the early Christian literature is *staggering*, ranging from the transfiguration of Jesus to the postresurrection appearance to the vision of Stephen (emphasis added).

If correct, this confirms Luke's exposure to mysticism and creates space for investigating his texts from the perspective of Early Jewish and Christian mysticism.

This mystical meaning is found in the description of the exaltation in Luke 24:26 which is closely linked with the motif of glory. Glory is a key to the mystical nature of Luke's reflection on Jesus' heavenly status since his resurrection.<sup>6</sup> This will be the topic of investigation in the following essay. It will focus on Jesus' remark about the entry into glory in Luke 24:26 within Luke 24 as account of post-resurrection events. Though some excellent studies on this chapter and in particular on the Emmaus narrative have been done, there is not one that reads it specifically in terms of the glory motif in Luke 24:26. This is striking, especially in the light of Luke's prominent use of glory elsewhere in his writings and in the light of the seminal place of glory in apocalypses.<sup>7</sup> The results of this analysis will be compared with and interpreted in the light of other references to glory in Luke-Acts. Luke is a careful author who provides more information on particular themes as he develops his narrative. This implies that one can only understand his text fully in the light of his two works. This analysis will be done, furthermore, with constant reference to relevant material from Jewish and Christian apocalypses. Only some perspectives can be indicated because of the complexity of the theme of glory and the restricted space for this essay.

## 2. GLORY AS SEMINAL MOTIF IN EARLY JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

The seminal role of glory in Jewish and Christian apocalypses was pointed out already some time ago by Klaus Koch, one of the pioneers of apocalyptic studies in Germany, in his publication on Jewish apocalyptic (1972). In Jewish

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6 Cf. Rowland (1985:62-63) for the place and role of mysticism in early rabbinic and apocalyptic texts.

7 Cf. DeConick (2006:11-14), who lists glory as the first characteristic of the cosmology of apocalypses.

apocalypses,<sup>8</sup> according to Koch, salvation takes place through an act from the throne of God after God or the Son of man ascended to it. This act will end the division between heavenly and earthly history when the divine glory will finally be clear to all and all hidden things will be revealed.<sup>9</sup> Glory as defining motif in apocalypses also implies a complete transformation. Those who have been raised from the dead will be transformed together with the conditions and state in which they find themselves to become as the angels or the stars of heaven and participate in glory (Dan.12.3; 1 En. 50.1; 51.4). This is an altered state of existence that differs from the prophetic expectation of a return from times of evil back to a normal state of existence. Glory is the mark not only of humanity, however, but also of conditions, the “state” in which they live, the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev.21.1ff; 2 Bar.32.4), or of the eschatological ruler (2 Bar.30.1) who is above them.<sup>10</sup>

In recent research the significance of the Jewish *Kavod Jahweh* doctrine has again been stressed and carefully studied, this time within a context in which Early Jewish and Christian mysticism was investigated.<sup>11</sup> DeConick (2006:11-14), for example, in her discussion of some seminal elements of early Jewish and Christian mystical hermeneutics, described the belief in the Glory as body of God as the “centerpiece” of their cosmology.<sup>12</sup> Like Koch, she too points out that this belief draws on early traditions in Hebrew Scriptures with their visions of an enthroned one like the appearance of a Man who looked like fire. He is an anthropomorphic figure of fire or light who appears in Ezekiel 1:28 as the Glory (cf. also Ezek. 8:2; Isa. 6:1-4) that is the manifestation of the hidden Jahweh.

This reception history reveals how the motif of glory in Hebrew Scripture becomes a key theme in later Jewish and Christian Scriptures. In these texts the glory of God is not only to be revealed fully at the end of time, but is already being experienced in heavenly journeys. Angels and human beings,

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8 Koch (1972:23) includes in his discussion of apocalyptic writings Daniel, 1 Enoch, 2 Baruch, 4 Esra, the Apocalypse of Abraham and Revelation (because of its Semitic nature). There are many other apocalypses, as is clear from the well-known work of Collins (1979), but Koch's observations to a large extent retain their validity in terms of those apocalypses he includes in his research.

9 Koch (1972:31) traces this understanding of a future appearance of glory to Isaiah 24:23. It is noteworthy that Koch stresses that the future dispensation is “thought of as being already present, though in a concealed form.” He quotes Dan.3:33; 4 Esra 26ff and Rev. 1:9 as examples.

10 Cf. also the discussion in Newman (1992:81).

11 Cf. DeConick (2006) for the impressive list of contributions by members of the Early Jewish and Christian mysticism group of the SBL.

12 Her work is part of the Early Jewish and Mysticism group of the Society of Biblical Literature. The group explored a great number of texts in their study of mysticism.

both dead and alive, are depicted as sharing in this divine glory. The motif of glory reveals the close and intimate relationship between the divine and the human, between the heavenly and the earthly sphere. Glory becomes a seminal motif to express an intimate union between God and human beings, the transformation this brings about and the ongoing process in which the mystic becomes involved. These remarks show why it will be useful and also necessary to read Luke's references to glory in terms of Jewish and Christian apocalypses, and, consequently, in terms of mysticism, as will be done now.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. JESUS' ENTRY INTO HIS GLORY (LK.24:26) FROM A GRAMMATICAL PERSPECTIVE

The remark in Luke 24:26 contains several exegetical challenges that require more attention before its significance can be discussed. It reflects, in the words of Jeremias, the Semitic form of a grammatical parataxis which has the character of a logical hypotaxis. The second phrase, therefore, follows as an addition to the previous one about Jesus' suffering.<sup>14</sup> The term for "to enter into" can express purpose (in order to enter), or it is a temporal indication (before entering), or it functions consecutively (and so to enter). In the light of the passage as a whole, the verse refers to the new dispensation that began with the resurrection. After the death of Jesus in accordance with the divine plan, follows the heavenly existence. In this essay the focus will be on the part of the phrase that focuses on Jesus's heavenly existence. The exact relationship of this part of the phrase with the previous one requires a much fuller investigation of the Lukan texts which cannot be pursued here, although some clarity can be achieved by relating it to the rest of the Lukan texts. To "enter into" does, however, remind one of the seminal motif of the way in Luke's texts (Fitzmyer 1998b:255; cf. Ac.13:24-25; Lk.9:31). Jesus' way to

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13 This essay contributes to the study of Biblical Spirituality with the particular aim to point out how mysticism, as a key focus in spirituality, has its own particular character in Biblical times. Spirituality and mysticism are always contextual in nature. They relate decisively to the situation in which they originated. This suggests the important methodological requirement that later forms of spirituality and mysticism should not be imposed on earlier forms. On the contextual nature of Spirituality, cf. Waaijman (2002:20; 48-51; 72-85; 199-200). Sheldrake (1999:164) for example, writes that "Context is an essential element in the modern study of spirituality.... (It) has become the primary hermeneutical framework in the study of spiritual traditions. Spiritual experience is always determined to some degree by culture." Biblical Spirituality is therefore confronted with the necessary challenge to understand the context in which Biblical texts functioned. There is a need in Spirituality to clarify the nature of mysticism in Biblical times.

14 Cf. Riesner (2003) for a full reference and for a thorough discussion of Luke 24:13-35.

Jerusalem to suffer which is expressed in Luke's travel narrative (Lk. 9:51-18:14) is compared with his way into glorification which is also, as is clear from Acts, the beginning of the proclamation of the Gospel to the nations.

In the light of the previous section, it can be stated provisionally that the "glory" refers to the divine, heavenly status that Jesus shares (cf. Hegerman 1990:346; Lk. 9:31; cf. 2:9; Ac. 9:3, 7), the moot point then being what the entry into this glory implies and whether it refers to more than Jesus' resurrection. A number of exegetes assume a chronological development in the narrative. They argue that the glory refers to the exaltation of Jesus to heaven or to the ascension. The ascension is described at the end of the narrative (Lk. 24:50-53; Fitzmyer 1998b:378). This is difficult to maintain, especially in the light of the fact that Jesus' glory has been revealed earlier in Luke's narrative in his transfiguration (Lk. 9:28-36). The ascension is not the first indication of Jesus' glory. It is rather the final entry of Jesus into the glory that he had from the very beginning. Nolland (1993:1204) thus rightly observes that in terms of the Lukan context, glory can only be the exaltation to the right hand of God.<sup>15</sup> Fitzmyer (1998a:378) offers a sensible interpretation when he writes,

From this we can see that the basic affirmation of the New Testament about the sequel to the death and burial of Jesus is that of a passage from death to the Father's glorious presence, whether one calls that passage an "exaltation," a "resurrection" or an "ascension". It is a way of affirming the mysterious triumph that is Christ's over death itself.<sup>16</sup>

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15 Nolland (1993:1204) also argues, however, that the exaltation to the right hand does not refer to Jesus being raised from death immediately to heaven and that Jesus did not appear to the Emmaus disciples from heaven. He notes that only Luke and John make a chronological distinction between resurrection and ascension, which must then be the background against which Luke 24:26 is understood. These remarks depend on how one understands the ascension in Luke 24:50-52 and what is meant by the "chronological" distinction. The assumption in Nolland's case seems to be that there is a strict separation between heaven and earth in Luke and that the "first" contact of Jesus with heaven can only be with the ascension. The transfiguration and references to glory in Luke question this assumption. Secondly, the order between the resurrection and the ascension in Luke should not necessarily imply that it is chronological in nature. In terms of Nolland's analysis one has to try to conceive of Luke portraying Jesus as exalted to the right hand of God without Christ being in heaven. Welzen (2011:421-422) is of the opinion that the verse could refer to both the resurrection and the ascension.

16 He also, (1998a:378), draws attention to Romans 6:4 where Paul speaks of Christ who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Thus, when Christ appears after Pentecost to Cephas and the others (1 Cor. 15:5-6), it is, like in the case of Luke, also an appearance from the presence of the Father.

Here too, however, Fitzmyer points out a very broad common relationship between Jesus and the divine, without explaining in more detail what this implies. From this and from the preliminary explanation of Luke 24:26, it is clear that its meaning can only be fully determined in the light of the context in which the verse appears and in the light of the broader context of the Lukan writings, as will be done now.

#### 4. LUKE 24:26 WITHIN LUKE'S RESURRECTION NARRATIVE

Luke 24:26 is part of a densely constructed narrative which decisively determines its meaning.<sup>17</sup> The narrative of the resurrection in Luke 24 comprises three related,<sup>18</sup> but also distinct episodes. There is, firstly, the description of the women who discover the empty tomb (Lk.24:1-12), followed, secondly, in Luke 24:13-35 by an episode about Jesus who accompanies two disciples on their journey back to their home town, Emmaus as they discuss the events at the empty tomb. There is, thirdly, the first appearance of Jesus to the disciples to announce their empowerment followed by concluding remarks about his ascension (Lk.24:36-50).

These three parts are linked in various ways. The episode of the Emmaus disciples, for example, contains a smaller narrative in which the two disciples describe to Jesus the women's account of events at the empty grave (Lk. 24:19-24). It is a narrative within a narrative which refers to and thus brings about a close relationship with the previous episode (Lk. 24:1-12). It repeats, but also adds new detail – illustrating how Luke skillfully develops the plot and nature of his narrative. As a careful author he structures this narrative to draw his readers' attention to key moments. He constantly offers further seminal insights in the significance of the resurrection, but also in his understanding of its relationship with the ministry and person of Jesus. The reference to the motif of glory in Luke 24:26 is, therefore, to be regarded as further information that Luke adds to inform his reader about events that he mentioned earlier in his narrative.

It is, however, not simply information. It is revelatory insights that he offers to his readers in order to involve them in the narrative as disciples and

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17 For the importance of this chapter in New Testament studies, cf. Bovon (2006:97). Cf. also Bovon (2009:551-552) on the nature of Luke 24 as a summary of Luke's gospel.

18 All three episodes retain an explicit link to events in Jerusalem (cf. 24:6; 24:13, 33, 47, 49, 50 and 52); all three refer to the resurrection events that took place on that day (Lk.24: 13, 33, 39); all three link the resurrection with the passion of Jesus (Lk.24: 7, 26, 32, 44) and all three describe the inability of the disciples to understand the resurrection.

witnesses to the Jesus events. In the case of the glory motif, it is part of the climactic development of the narrative. Luke places it in such a location that it catches the eye. Luke's description of Jesus' entry into his glory on Luke 24:26 is used to explain the resurrection. This phrase illuminates the key focus and reveals the deeper meaning of the resurrection by developing it as the glorification of Jesus. The reference to Jesus' entry into glory must, therefore, be understood in terms of Luke 24 as a whole as a revelation of the deeper meaning of his resurrection.

## 5. A VISION OF ANGELS

Luke's reference to Jesus' entry into his glory follows directly after the two Emmaus disciples had recounted the empty grave episode – which ended with the remark that the women and the disciples did not see Jesus (Lk. 24:24). There is a consistent emphasis in the resurrection narrative on human inability to understand the resurrection events. Even the relatively short episode of events at the empty grave mentions the perplexity of the women when they discover that the tomb was empty (Lk. 24: 5; cf. verse 22). Their response is similar to that of the disciples on the way to Emmaus and the disciples in Jerusalem (Lk.24:25, 31; 37) who are also unable to grasp what has been happening among them.<sup>19</sup>

Their perplexity is the reason for the explanations which are provided for the events in all three episodes: The women receive an explanation from “two men” (Lk. 24:4-5). The two men at the empty tomb are the first witnesses to the resurrection, but then also and especially as revelatory figures. In the following narrative their revelatory testimony is confirmed by Jesus when he confirms and clarifies his resurrection to the two disciples. In both cases the women and the two disciples lack insight and knowledge of the true nature of what they are experiencing. In this way Luke emphasizes that the recognition of Jesus as resurrected Messiah is a divine gift.<sup>20</sup> It is a hidden insight into

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19 Stuckenbruck (1995:88-89) points out that angelophanies were accompanied by the motif of fear and veneration to communicate a message of divine comfort. Recipients are thus “assured of God's redemptive activity on their behalf”. Note his emphasis (1995:92) on the visionary setting in which such revelations function. Luke 24:5 is an example of this.

20 Cf. also Ac.1:6. For Jesus as Messiah, cf. Van Unnik (1962:101-116). For an extensive discussion of the Lukan focus on Jesus' authoritative works and deeds as an indication of his identity as prophet and Messiah, on the Scriptural predictions about Christ's suffering and on the ascension and exaltation, cf. Strauss (1995).

divine actions that are revealed from the glorified Jesus.<sup>21</sup> In the third episode the disciples' minds are opened by Christ (Lk. 24:44).

To understand this better, two aspects of the short, introductory episode in Luke 24:1-12 about the empty grave are of special relevance for an understanding of the next episode and its focus on the glorification of Jesus. They illuminate the revelatory nature of the resurrection narrative and, as a consequence, indicate its mystical nature.

## 5.1 Angelic beings

It is striking how Luke portrays the two men who revealed the resurrection events to the bewildered women at the empty grave. They are authoritative figures, so that the women accept their witness without due and report it to the other disciples. The message of the women, though, has a less fortunate fate when the disciples reject it as nonsense (Lk. 24:11).<sup>22</sup> Luke further ensures that the message of the resurrection is understood when he reports that the two men referred to the resurrection twice with two different words (Lk.24:6-7; ἡγέρθη; ἀναστήνατ).<sup>23</sup> He will again clarify the resurrection when, later on, in Luke 24:23 he elaborates on this message with two distinct comments that the body of Jesus was not found (*καὶ μὴ εὑροῦσατ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ*) and that the women were told he was alive (*αὐτὸν ζῆν*). In all these places the resurrection is announced and explained with a number of different expressions and reactions. The two men thus are shown to have revealed the true meaning of events at the empty tomb.

More important, though, is Luke's later description of these men. The apocalyptic nature of the chapter is stressed when Luke indicates the revelatory status of the men in the grave through a telling description of their appearance. Initially he described them as two "men" (*ἄνδρες δύο*), but in the following episode the two Emmaus disciples tell Jesus that the women "came

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21 Kurth (2000:96) pointed out that the resurrection appearances focus on the bridging of the gap between not-recognizing and recognizing. In the three parts of Luke 24 the recognition of Jesus follows after revelatory words of Jesus. The women remember Jesus' words (Lk. 24:8), the two disciples on their way to Emmaus speak about their hearts that were burning when Jesus opened Scriptures to them (Lk. 24: 32) and Jesus opened the minds of the others to understand Scripture (Lk. 24:45). Scriptures and the revelatory activity of Christ bring them to their insights.

22 Luke thus prepares the way for the last episode in which these disciples will also be enlightened by Jesus about the resurrection.

23 The focalization on the resurrection is clear from the syntaxis. The references to the resurrection are placed in both cases in focal points: the first one in the sentence initial position and the second one in the sentence final position.

and told us that they had seen *angels*" (*ἀγγέλων*; Lk.24:23).<sup>24</sup> This description of the men as angelic beings and Luke's fluid handling of the different spheres of the human and the divine is not a mistake or oversight. In Acts 10:3, 7, 22 a (holy) angel appears to Cornelius to instruct him to let Peter come to his house. In Acts 10:30 Cornelius tells Peter that "a man in shining clothes" appeared to him.<sup>25</sup>

The remark that the men were angels also explains why the two men in the first episode have a revelatory function. Angels often appear in other passages in Luke-Acts as other-worldly figures who bring revelatory messages to humans (e.g. esp. in the infancy narratives in Lk.1:11; 1:21-22 and in Ac.7:2, 26, 30, 35; 9:17; 13:31; 16:9; 26:16).<sup>26</sup> Gabriel, having announced John's birth, afterwards reveals as a sign to Zechariah that he is an angel who stands in the presence of the Lord (*ὁ παρεστηκώς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ*).<sup>27</sup> Gabriel also indicates his own revelatory function when he adds to this that he has been sent to Zechariah with "good news" (Lk.1:19). In Luke 1:26 Gabriel "is sent by God" to Maria (*ἀπεστάλη*; Lk.1:26). In Luke 2:9 an angel of the Lord announces Jesus' birth to the shepherds. For Luke the heavenly and earthly sphere are connected through angelic beings who reveal the divine will to humanity, but who can also be depicted as human beings.

These revelatory figures are mentioned at seminal moments in the Lukan texts, pointing towards their apocalyptic nature. Angels are namely a special feature of apocalyptic texts. They are revelatory figures who reveal the hidden meaning of events to human recipients. As Fletcher-Louis (1997:27) wrote,

When apocalyptic is understood in the broader sense of revelation, of, and interaction with the heavenly realm, Luke-Acts demonstrates a high regard for such a world of thought.<sup>28</sup>

24 Cf. the discussion in Fletcher-Louis (1997:16-17) about research on human beings who take on angelomorphic qualities. Welzen (2011:421) expressly notes the difference between their remark about angels and the initial reference to men.

25 Cf. also Ac.1:10.

26 Cf. Fitzmyer (1998a:238). Fletcher-Louis (1997:29) mentions 44 certain instances in Luke-Acts. He refers to the high angelophanic density in Luke 1-2 "accompanied by an appropriate mood of apocalyptic joy." Cf. also Rowland & Morray-Jones (2009:100).

27 The implications of this remark may well be to distinguish the angel from God. Stuckenbruck (1995:102) noted that the glorious appearance of angels "would seem only proper" because of "their proximity to the throne." They then mirror the divine glory. At the same time they are clearly distinct from God.

28 For Luke's apocalyptic thought, cf. Carey (2005:115-116) who points out how apocalyptic motifs frame Acts. Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009:101) refer to Isa.6 as the closest parallel of the angelic hosts' appearance to the shepherds. The fearful response of the human recipients (e.g. Zechariah in Lk.1:12; Mary in

This characteristic element provides a clue to the mystical nature of Luke's understanding of Christ and his resurrection.

## 5.2 Clothes

Closely linked with the previous remarks is another special feature of Luke's description of the two men at the tomb. They are said to be dressed "in clothes that gleamed like lightning" (ἐν ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπτούσῃ; Lk.24:4).<sup>29</sup> Clothes of light are a common motif in apocalyptic texts and are closely linked with divine glory.<sup>30</sup> Its origins can be traced to Biblical texts and has to do with the fact that in Biblical antiquity clothing, as Brock (1999:247) pointed out, is an expression of identity. God is, first of all, portrayed as dressed in white or shining clothes, as Podella (1996:270-273) noted. Psalm 104, Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1 played a key role in the development of this tradition.<sup>31</sup> The opening verses of Psalm 104 exclaim, "O Lord my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. He wraps himself in light as with a garment" (cf. also Job 40:10). Especially the divine presence, expressed by the notion of the *Kavod Jahwe* in the Old Testament was later on linked with garments of lighting in Merkabah-mysticism, Hekhalot-literature, Ši'ur Qomah-Speculations<sup>32</sup> and in the Kabbala. In this mystical literature the mystic who enters into heaven, experiences with fear and shock the bodily presence of God by the divine clothes of light.<sup>33</sup> In 1 Enoch 14:18b-21 the divinity has clothes like the sun, brighter and whiter than snow.<sup>34</sup>

It is, however, not only God who is dressed in shining or white clothes. Also the righteous are often portrayed in apocalyptic texts as wearing garments of

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Lk.1:29 and the women in Lk.24:5) is typical of apocalyptic literature (cf. e.g. Rev. 1: 17).

29 In Acts 10:31 there is a man with shining clothes and in 1:10 the two men at the ascension of Jesus have white clothes on.

30 Cf. Heil (2000:84-90) with many examples from apocalypses.

31 Cf. Fossum (1995b:349) who sees Ezek.1:26-28 as the starting-point of the mystical tradition describing the vision of the divine Glory on the heavenly throne, of which 1 En. 14:28b-21 and T. Levi 3:4 are examples.

32 Cf. Fossum (1995b:350) for a discussion. The Ši'ur Qomah is described as "Measure of the [divine] Body that sits upon the heavenly throne. The Measure is a representation of the hidden glory." Also DeConick (2006:13-14).

33 Cf., e.g., in Hekalot Rabbati 3.4 (cf. also Hekalot Rabbati 4,2; Podella (1996:272)). Cf. also Schäfer (2009:61) who, in agreement with Himmelfarb, detects in the whiteness of the divine garments in 1 En.5:20-32, the influence of Daniel 7:9 and a priestly background.

34 Cf. Fossum (1995b:348); Rowland (1982:367) for a discussion. He also refers to the description of Abel in T.Abr. (Rec. A) 12. Cf. also Hartenstein (2008:289) who discusses light as salvific expression of God's presence.

light and glory. That there was to be a final “garment of glory” in which the righteous would be clothed was probably a fairly widespread idea by the time of Christ, and it appears most prominently in different parts of the Ethiopic book of Enoch, in particular at 62:15-16, “the righteous and elect will have risen from the earth... and will be clothed with garments of glory”<sup>35</sup>.

The significance of the angels’ clothing becomes clear through similar remarks in the transfiguration episode in Luke 9:29-31. At the transfiguration, a key moment in Luke’s narrative, Moses and Elijah appear in glory and speak to Jesus about his exodus to Jerusalem.<sup>36</sup> That these two human beings appear in glory, is a further indication that apocalypses do not always distinguish rigidly between heaven and earth or the divine and the human. The episode of the transfiguration illustrates, however, that Jesus’ heavenly existence is not only a matter of the future. As he is praying, Jesus’ “clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning” (οἱ ματισμὸς αὐτοῦ λευκὸς ἐξαστράπτων; Lk. 9:29). Even before his ascension Jesus participates in the heavenly sphere, as is clear from his shining clothes.

The mystical contents of apocalypses in terms of clothing reveal a much more open and fluid situation in which there was a close relationship between heaven and earth. The righteous therefore can be considered angelic already during this life and a human being can take on angelomorphic categories.<sup>37</sup>

35 Brock (1999:247-248) also draws attention to the Syriac version of Daniel in which Daniel’s angelic interlocutor wears garments of glory (Dan. 10:5; 12:7). On the righteous or elect as transformed into the divine glory, cf. Fossum (1995b:352) and Heil (2000:80). For a fuller description, cf. DeConick (2006:13). She refers to Adam and Abel in the T.Abr. with their thrones in heaven and Moses in the Exagoge of Ezekiel. Mk. 12:25 and 1 Cor. 15 provide examples of how New Testament passages regard the future existence of believers as an angelic state. The righteous are, according to Fletcher-Louis (1997:18), transformed upon entry into a particular sphere of God’s action and vocation.

36 Green (1997:380): “Throughout Luke-Acts, clothes are a signifier of status, dazzling clothes denoting heavenly glory.” For the role of Moses and Elijah in the transfiguration narrative, cf. Heil (2000:98-114). He argues that their presence in the transfiguration serves to contrast the way in which Jesus will ultimately attain the same heavenly glory they enjoy. Not one of them died as a result of rejection.

37 Cf. also Heil (2000:79-80). Fletcher-Louis (1997:12-13), lists research by Bühner, Fossum, Morray-Jones, Mach, Attridge and Himmelfarb. Note especially also his remark that Merkavah mysticism is not, as Scholem maintained, free from any sense of the *unio mystica*. Referring to Idel’s work, he writes (1995:13 note 56), “Merkabah Mysticism already expects some kind of assimilation of the adept to the godhead.” Contrast with this DeConick (2006:2), who argues that authors of apocalypses never described their experiences in terms of the *unio mystica* so central to later Christian mysticism. Much depends here on how one understands the *unio mystica*.

For Luke the boundaries between the earthly and heavenly spheres are fluid.<sup>38</sup> With this he points towards the mystical nature of the events that he is describing.

All in all, then, the divine light and glory are shared by angels and righteous human beings (like Moses and Elijah). They are part of the hidden, divine sphere. This is the world from which and about which the revelation is given, like in apocalyptic texts. The clothes of the two men in the empty grave suggest that they share the power of the heavenly sphere. They have the status and the special knowledge to inform the women of the resurrection in the light of Jesus' predictions about it. They know what no human being knows. This should also be compared to Luke 9:31 where Moses and Elijah spoke to Jesus about his departure. Also these two, being part of the divine sphere, know what no one else understands. In both these passages the heavenly world and characters with their awareness of the true state of matters are contrasted with human lack of knowledge and insight.<sup>39</sup> With these remarks, Luke reveals his links with the apocalyptic thought world and points to the mystical nature of his work.

### 5.3 A vision

Another important motif also indicates the apocalyptic and mystical nature of Luke's description of the resurrection. When the two Emmaus disciples refer to the episode of the empty grave, they strikingly say that the women saw a *vision* of angels (*διπτασίαν ἀγγέλων ἐωρακέναι*; Lk.24:23). It is a striking feature of Luke 24 that does not always draw the necessary attention, perhaps because its implications are not always appreciated enough.

First of all it must be pointed out that this motif is not restricted to Luke 24:26. Elsewhere in Luke there are several references to "visions" of angels who appear to reveal hidden things. In Luke 1:22, after the angel Gabriel visited Zechariah, the people outside the temple interpret Zechariah's inability to speak to them as an indication that he had seen "a vision" in the temple

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38 Heil (2000:84) sees this as an indication that Jesus "has been temporarily transformed into a heavenly figure."

39 Cf. Rowland (1982:367) who concludes that some key words in the transfiguration narrative indicate that "it is in the direction of the apocalyptic theophanies and angelophanies that we should look for an explanation of the material in this passage."

(Lk.24:19).<sup>40</sup> The vision of Satan falling from heaven,<sup>41</sup> but especially the crucial role of visions in Acts further underline the apocalyptic nature of Luke-Acts and indicate that Luke consciously inserted this interpretation of the two disciples that the women saw a vision.<sup>42</sup>

This vision motif in Luke 24:23 further reveals the apocalyptic and mystical nature of Luke's text and reference to the entry into glory. He links the resurrection with a revelatory vision, coming from God, in which angels explain its hidden meaning to the women disciples of Jesus. Formally a vision communicates to a recipient through revelation eschatological matters like the coming of the promised Messiah and the pouring out of the Spirit. In this way the authority and authenticity of the revealed contents are confirmed.<sup>43</sup> This is also what happens in Luke 24:23 – which forms the context in which Luke 24:26 should be understood. When the two women witness to the resurrection, they do so with an appeal to its visionary, and therefore, its authoritative nature.

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40 This vision, however, is presented in a realistic manner. It is not a vision which is received in a dream state. This is, for example, clear from the transfiguration, where the disciples experience a special vision of Jesus with Moses and Elijah and are explicitly said to have awakened when it happened (Lk. 9:32). Fletcher-Louis (1997:28) reads the remark about the awakened disciples in Lk.9:32 in the light of Dan.8:18 and 10:9 where Daniel is awoken to receive a revelation. The experience is therefore more realistic than a dream vision. Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009:100) write in connection with Luke's narrative about the angels appearing at night to the shepherds, that there may be a possible link with Dan.7, but underline that the mundane circumstances of the "demonstration of apocalyptic glory" is reminiscent of a theme in Matthew's Gospel that the divine is located in unexpected places.

41 Lk.10:18; cf. the discussion in Rowland (1982:364) who argues that this reveals a visionary experience of Christ which had important consequences for Jesus' understanding of his ministry. He also discusses other examples to illustrate that visions may have played a central role in directing Jesus' understanding of his office; also Carey (2005:105).

42 Other visions include those of Stephen (Ac.7:55-56), of Ananias (Ac.9:10-16), of Cornelius (Ac.10:3-6) and of Paul (Ac.16:9 and 18:9-10). Carey (2005:116) describes how, in Luke's gospel, apocalyptic motifs and dramatic revelations introduce Jesus in apocalyptic contexts so that apocalyptic discourse shapes its structure. Also, "Acts begins with apocalyptically-oriented expectations and manifestations, and then visions and dreams propel its plot." Rowland (1985:64) noted that visions of a type found in the apocalypses are found in the New Testament "and serve to initiate the careers of key-figures (Mark 1.10; Gal.1.12, 16; cf. Acts 9; 26,19)."

43 In a footnote to his discussion of apocalyptic material in early Christianity, Rowland (1982:502) writes that he did not investigate post-resurrection appearances of Jesus for such material. "It must be admitted that some or all of these may have been visions, but the stories in the gospels do not allow us to suppose this with any certainty." Luke 24:23 is an example of such a vision.

Revelations permeate Luke 24, colouring it further as an apocalyptic text. Luke 24 as a revelatory text reveals, like apocalypses, the significance of future and present events to human recipients (Forbes 1995:218-250). In this it assumes a piety that seeks to understand God's way through revelation. "What is expected on a horizontal level already exists with God on a vertical level and can be ascertained by the visionary fortunate enough to enter God's presence and receive this information" (Rowland 1985:356). In Luke's texts, the hidden world and the divine will are revealed to people in various ways. Angels from heaven explain to the women the resurrection event, but also note that it is the fulfillment of Jesus' revelatory words from earlier times (Lk.24:7). Jesus in his state of glory is especially the one who reveals God's way. He continues with this after his resurrection when he explains to the two Emmaus disciples hidden things about himself in the light of Scripture (Lk.24:27).<sup>44</sup> This is why, in the last episode in Luke 24, Jesus "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (διήγοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν in verse 45; Lk. 24:44-48; esp. 44).<sup>45</sup>

For Luke, the revelatory function is transferred to the disciples after Jesus' glorification. This is also the reason why the revelation is transformative. When Jesus speaks to the two disciples about the Christ who entered his glory, he reveals to them the plan of God which would transform them from their sadness into witnesses of the glorified Christ. The glorification of Christ has as a necessary consequence the prophetic task of the disciples. They too need to witness to Scripture in the light of the meaning it has in the life and resurrection of Jesus (verses 46-49; Bovon 2006:97).<sup>46</sup>

## 6. THE RESURRECTION AS THE ENTRY INTO GLORY

The three closely related episodes in Luke 24 represent Luke's clarification of the resurrection. After drawing attention to the empty tomb, the message of the two men-angels and the confusion of the women in his first episode (Lk. 24:1-8), Luke proceeds to add more information and explain the implications

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44 "The ignorance of which Luke speaks concerning the Jews responsible for Jesus' death implies 'that the scriptural testimony remained veiled or ambiguous until then'... The eruption of the events clarifies the meaning of the prophecies. History, we can say following Amsler, has a coherence and a consistency that the Scripture could not do without. Revelation is real insofar as the reality of the text meets the reality of history" (Bovon 2006:99; referring to a study of Amsler).

45 Note the prominence of the motif in Luke 24:25 where the two disciples are reproached because they struggle to believe what "the prophets" have spoken. The phrase with the subject, οἱ προφῆται, is placed in the sentence final position.

46 Cf. how this is developed in Ac. 2:17-21 where believers receive the Spirit to prophesy.

of these events in the following episode about the two Emmaus disciples.<sup>47</sup> The same literary skills of Luke which are evident in the neat pattern of the three episodes in Luke 24, can be detected in the Emmaus narrative in Luke 24:13-35. It is also a carefully composed ring composition of which the various elements are closely connected. This is clear from a formal analysis, as must be illustrated now.

## 6.1 The entry into glory as a focal point

A close reading of the Emmaus narrative will reveal that Luke's statement about Jesus' entry into glory is located at a seminal moment in his text. He structured his text in such a way that it formally links this remark to the motif of the resurrection which is central to Luke 24. A formal analysis of Luke 24 reveals how central the resurrection is in it.

Several researchers agree that the passage of the Emmaus disciples has a chiastic structure.<sup>48</sup> Welzen (2008:180), for example, drew attention to the outside frame in which the journey of the two disciples from and to Jerusalem is narrated (A and A'; verses 13 and 33). In the following pair of passages, the conversation of the disciples with Jesus in verses 14-15 corresponds to the conversation of the disciples in verse 32 (B and B'). In a still deeper embedded pair of passages, the remarks about Jesus joining them (in verse 15) correspond to the observation about Jesus leaving them in verse 31 (C and C'). Their veiled eyes (D) in verse 16 contrasts with their eyes that are opened in verse 31(D'); that they stopped in the road (verse 17; E) corresponds with their sitting at the table (verse 30; E').

Of special importance is the middle section of this ring composition in Luke 24. This centre section comprises two closely related discussions. On the one hand there is the disciples' extensive report of events (Lk. 24:19-24; τὰ περὶ ἵησοῦ τοῦ ναζαρηνοῦ), followed, on the other hand, by Jesus' short response (Lk. 24:25-27; F'). The remark about Jesus' entry into glory is part of Jesus' reaction. In his short response Jesus makes only two remarks. In the first one he reproaches the two disciples for their foolishness and slowness in heart to believe the prophets before he explains the resurrection to them as an entry into glory. The significance of this centre section is underlined when, later on in this narrative, Luke reports the remark of the two that their hearts were burning in them as Jesus talked to them and opened Scripture to them (Lk. 24:32).

47 This is in line with the dynamic nature of the chiastic structure in Luke 24. The narrative is not merely a repetition of mutually related elements, but is a climactic development of a plot. The structure is, therefore, spiral in nature. Cf. also Bovon (2009:551).

48 Cf. the careful analysis of Bovon (2009:549-550).

In their speech (Lk. 24:19b-24) the two disciples offer two important theological perspectives. First of all, they stress the powerful nature of Jesus' life as prophet that impressed them to such an extent that they regarded him as the one who was going to redeem Israel (Lk.24:19, 21). With these two perspectives they characterize Jesus in Christological and soteriological terms. They, finally, in a second part of their speech, discuss the discovery of the empty grave by the women and the disciples.

It is at this point that researchers locate the real point which Luke wants to make. The centre of Luke 24 with its dialogue between the two disciples and Jesus, it is said, has a further centre, as Bovon (2009:550) noted, namely in the remark of the angels that Jesus is alive (*οὗτος οὗτον ζῆν*).<sup>49</sup> This explanation is emphasized by Luke through the statement that the resurrection was made known through the "vision of angels." With this carefully inserted phrase, Luke introduces apocalyptic motifs in the heart of his Emmaus narrative to stress the revelatory nature of events.<sup>50</sup> The angels' pronouncement that Jesus is alive in Luke 24:23 is inextricably linked to and explained by Jesus' remarks about the Christ's entry into glory. From a narratological point of view, the remark on the entry into glory represents Jesus' point of view on the resurrection. In the development of the narratological plot, the one character who should know the true meaning of events and of Scripture, offers his interpretation of the implications of the angels' message that Jesus is alive. Jesus' remark about the entry into glory is therefore a climactic moment in the text: it indicates that the resurrection is the mystical reunion of Jesus in his bodily existence with his heavenly glory.

## 6.2 The notion of glory

The Emmaus narrative explains the special nature of Jesus' resurrection existence when it reports the remark of Jesus that the Christ entered into his glory. Glory, as was indicated above, refers to the notion of the *Kavod Jahwe*. The term is "loaded with the Jewish understanding of glory" and refers to a "phenomenon of light characteristic of angelophanies, theophanies and

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49 This view contrasts with the point of view that the climax is to be found when the two disciples recognize Jesus at the table. Cf. Kurth (2000:96) for examples.

50 Another aspect of Luke's careful composition further stresses the significance of Jesus's comment about the entry into glory. Luke let Jesus respond to the remarks of the two disciples in their speech (Lk. 24:19b-24) in reversed order: The disciples began their speech with a discussion of Scriptures and ended with the climactic reference to Jesus who is alive. Jesus begins his response with a discussion of the resurrection and only then continues to explain Scriptures to them (Lk. 24: 25-27). This creates a chiasm (Scriptures-resurrection-resurrection-Scriptures) with the result that the resurrection is again placed in the middle.

Christophanies" (Fossum 1995b:351).<sup>51</sup> It denotes the exalted, powerful and even visible state of the divine.<sup>52</sup>

This entry into his glory involves, first of all, Jesus's body. Luke 24 depicts the bodily existence of the resurrected Jesus repeatedly, for example when he invites the disciples to touch him (Lk.24:39) and eats with the disciples (Lk. 24:41-43). The body is, however, not merely a resuscitation or a return to his earthly existence, as is evident from the fact that the Emmaus disciples and Jesus' disciples initially do not recognize Him and He could simply disappear from their sight (Lk.24:31). But there is more to the fact that Jesus entered into his glory than that it surpasses his previous existence, as requires more explanation now.

### 6.3 The glory in the transfiguration

Luke's remark about the entry into glory is linked with the resurrection and creates the impression that Christ was glorified with his resurrection. And yet Luke provides other information that shows his glory already in his earthly existence. The transfiguration narrative in Luke 9:28-36 has some significant links with the resurrection narrative in Luke 24 and especially with the explanation in Luke 24:26 that the resurrection is Christ's entry into his glory. The transfiguration offers an important perspective for the understanding of Jesus's entry into glory.

The transfiguration is a narrative in which the focus is on the revelation of the glory of the Messiah as Son of God.<sup>53</sup> The scene with this emphasis on glory is striking because of the strong interconnectedness between the human and the divine and the numinous effect it has. This is made clear when the episode is introduced by the statement that Jesus' face changed and his clothes became bright while he was praying (Lk. 9:29). He shares this glory with Moses and Elijah who "appeared in glory" (Lk. 9: 31; οἱ ὄφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ).<sup>54</sup> But their glory, though striking, is a secondary remark that partially illuminates the glorious setting in which the episode take place. The glory as focal point and theme of the transfiguration of Jesus is revealed when Luke narrates in a summarizing manner that the disciples saw "his (Jesus's) glory" (Lk. 9:32; εἶδον τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ).<sup>55</sup> This is how, in the words of Luke, the disciples experienced the transfiguration.<sup>56</sup>

51 Cf. also the discussion that follows below.

52 Fossum (1995b:351) notes that mystical texts use power as a synonym of glory.

53 Cf. e.g. Bovon (1989:493).

54 Cf. Rowland (1982:368) who links the verb "appear" to visions.

55 Note that Luke speaks of "his" glory, like in Luke 24:26.

56 Adding to the numinous quality of this scene is Luke's note about the remark of the disciples to Jesus that it was "good" for them to have been there (Lk. 9:33).

This “glory” of Jesus has a special character. This is evident when Luke describes a further revelatory experience during the transfiguration. God confirms the way of Jesus and his glory by pointing out that He is the elected Son (Lk. 9:35). Within the glorious setting in which Jesus participates on the mountain and in which he shares divine glory with Moses and Elijah, Jesus is singled out as the Son and allocated a glorious status that exceeds that of all others. The title “Son of God” denotes the unparalleled relationship Jesus has with Jahweh, as well as his complete obedience to him. This implies that he is more than Moses and Elijah. At the same time his special role in the life of his disciples is singled out. They must “listen” to him, as He listens to and obeys the Father. Christ becomes a revelatory figure and as such the model for what disciples should be. The Sonship explains why discipleship and obedience to the Son will determine the eventual fate of believers (cf. Lk. 9:23-27).

This focus on Jesus’s glory is even stronger given the fact that the narrative appears at a crucial point in Luke’s Gospel. The transfiguration follows after the previous section (Lk. 9:18-27) in which Peter’s confession leads to the revelation of Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection as the Messiah. It follows immediately after Jesus, in response to Peter’s confession, reveals to the disciples that the Son of Man will be ashamed of those who do not deny themselves when he comes in the glory of the Father, his own glory and the glory of the angels (cf. Lk. 9:23-27).<sup>57</sup>

Of special importance in this regard is the topic of the discussion of Moses and Elijah with Jesus. They talk about τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ (Lk. 9:31). After the episode of the transfiguration, it is said in Luke 9:51 that this journey of Jesus to Jerusalem and to his death on the cross will begin. In Luke 9:51 this is explained when the beginning of the way is announced as Jesus’ departure to Jerusalem. The “way” to Jerusalem is introduced by a formulaic phrase about the fulfillment of the days of his assumption (ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι<sup>58</sup> τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήμψεως αὐτοῦ), which will end with

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They experience the glory of Christ in a special way. Luke expands on this when, moments later they are also depicted as being “afraid” when the three men are enveloped in a cloud (Lk. 9:34). Bovon (1989:498) notes that the symmetrical number of disciples and Jesus, Moses and Elijah suggests the participation of the human sphere in the divine glory. Cf. for the tension between not seeing the face of God and experiencing the presence of God, Hartenstein (2008:265-283).

57 Here the glory of Christ is viewed from an eschatological perspective. He will enter “his” glory in future. When compared to the parallel versions, Luke’s phrase “in his glory” is added next to that of the Father and the angels. Cf. also the similar pronouncement in Luke 21:27 that refers to the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

58 Once again the divine plan in the life and ministry of Jesus is carefully spelled out. On the meaning of ἀναλήμψις, cf. Baur, Gingrich and Danker ad loc. who translates it as ascension. Scriptures speak in all three episodes of the resurrection narrative

the ascension in Luke 24:50-51.<sup>59</sup> With this, the “way” of Jesus is given a special quality: it is more than Jesus’s travels to Jerusalem to be crucified and resurrected. His way is an ascension: it is a journey that takes him into the powerful presence of God.

It is interesting to note how close this language is to the Danielic figure of the Son of Man (Dan. 7) and the standard *topos* in apocalypses which speak of a heavenly ascent of a righteous man to heavenly spheres (cf. Fletcher-Louis 1997:28). Despite some marked differences,<sup>60</sup> one notes in the transfiguration how the angelic figures of Moses and Elijah are close to those revealers of apocalypses who disclose hidden knowledge to a human recipient in their discussion of his exodus.

The glorious appearance of Moses, Elijah and Jesus evoke other well-known motifs and strengthens the link with apocalyptic literature. The changing appearance of Jesus’ face (Lk. 9:29) represents an intertextual reference to Exodus 34:29-35 where the transformation of Moses on the mountain because of the presence of God, is described (Bovon 1989:494-495).<sup>61</sup> Luke thus reveals his acquaintance with a passage of great importance to authors of Jewish apocalypses. They reinterpreted this passage to outline Moses as someone who ascended to a divine sphere, had a vision of the divine glory, was offered a throne in heaven and became a revealer of the most intimate secrets of divinity.<sup>62</sup> This portrait too reflects general Jewish speculations on the exaltation of a righteous man to heaven, his identification with a heavenly being or the allocation of a position of pre-eminence in the heavenly world.<sup>63</sup> Luke’s text shows affinities with this tradition and further underlines its mystical nature.

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of what “must” happen (Lk. 24: 7, 26 and 44). Carroll and Green (1995:68) state “the inevitability” of Jesus’ suffering, rejection, and death as flows from a divine necessity, from God’s redemptive purpose, disclosed long ago in Scripture. Jesus... also dies because God purposes his death.”

59 Green (1997:375).

60 The transfiguration, for example, takes place on the mountain and not in heaven,

61 Cf. DeConick (2006:12-13) for a careful analysis of the glory in Exodus 33-34. This could explain why this episode takes place on the mountain.

62 Cf. Rowland (1985:37); Heil (2000:81-84) for various examples from apocalyptic literature.

63 This is “of considerable importance for our understanding of the way in which the first Christians fashioned their belief about Jesus”. Rowland (1985:38) adds, “For a Jew to have called another being ‘God’ or to have supposed that divine characteristics may have been shared by an exalted man of old seems to have been an accepted part of Jewish thought among some of the groups during this period”. Judaism offered many categories “for a profound expression of the intimacy of the relationship between Jesus and God and to produce a highly developed Christology, albeit in Jewish categories”.

When Luke refers to Jesus' entry into "his" glory later on in Luke 24:26, it should be understood against this background of the transfiguration. From a Lukian perspective Jesus experienced moments of glory already in his earthly ministry.<sup>64</sup> He shares similar glory than that of Moses and Elijah, although ultimately his glory transcends their glory. In this sense his mystical glory differs from the standard pattern of a righteous person who is exalted to a position of glory. Jesus experienced glory in his earthly life already before he set out on his final journey to Jerusalem to be glorified.<sup>65</sup>

#### 6.4 The glory in the Lukan works

The phrase in Luke 24:26 about Jesus' entry into his glory should also be understood in terms of several other instances in Luke's Gospel and Acts. Elsewhere glory is associated with God. In the birth narrative the glory of God shines on the shepherds when an angel appears to them to bring them the news of the Davidic ruler who is Christ the Lord (Lk.2:9-12). Angels appear with a doxology: "Glory to God in the highest" before they left the shepherds to go into heaven (Lk.2:13-14). The shepherds "glorify" God for what they saw and heard (Lk.2:20). Right at the beginning of Stephen's speech in Acts 7:2, he spoke of "the God of glory" who appeared to Abraham. After his speech, Luke reports that Stephen looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God (Ac.7:55). Luke once again reveals his mystical perspective when he describes a vision of Stephen who remarks that he sees "heaven opened" and Jesus at the right hand of God.<sup>66</sup> When Jesus reveals that the Christ enters into his glory, he indicates that he shares a divine status.

The glory of God in Luke-Acts is linked with several important motifs which helps to explain its mystical nature and meaning. Luke associates it with the symbol of light "associated with angelophanies, theophanies and Christophanies" (Fossum 1995b:351). According to an angelophany in the birth narrative in Luke 2:9 a heavenly light shines around the shepherds. This is explicitly linked with "the glory of the Lord (which) shone around them" (*καὶ δόξα κυρίου περιέλαμψεν αὐτούς*).<sup>67</sup>

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64 Cf. Heil (2000:84) who sees this as a temporary transformation into a heavenly figure of what would later be his post-mortem state.

65 Another consideration could point towards the mystical nature of the transfiguration narrative. The conclusion of the narrative (Lk. 9:36) may indicate that it could have been based on a visionary experience of his disciples, but this is not certain. Cf. Bovon (1989:368).

66 Rowland (1982:369) argues that Stephen's vision is typical of apocalyptic and serves as "a final reassurance to the dying martyr that he has been accepted by God, and, at the same time, as a rejection of the opponents' point of view".

67 Cf. Fossum (1995b:351) where he describes glory as a phenomenon of light.

Light as symbol for the glory of God is seminal also in a number of other episodes in Luke-Acts. In a Christophany on the way to Damascus, a “bright light from heaven” flashed around Paul (Ac.22:6) who is blinded by its brilliance (Ac.22:11). In the repetition of this episode (Ac. 26:13), the motif of light is especially strong. It comes from heaven, is brighter than the sun, shining around Paul ( $\pi\epsilon\rho\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\psi\alpha\nu$ ) in the middle of the day.<sup>68</sup> This light indicates divine intervention and points to the mystical light of the divine glory. The light is closely associated with the presence of the Lord, or, as Acts 22:8 indicates, with Jesus of Nazareth. White, light, glory and the divine presence of Jesus are linked in a complex configuration of thought.<sup>69</sup> This is a configuration that reveals the closeness between the heavenly and earthly spheres and thus indicates Luke's mystical understanding of events. The divine glory appears to human beings, surrounds them, transforms them and steers their lives in a new direction. Its effects are powerful.

## 6.5 The glory and the throne

The entry into glory should, finally, be understood in terms of the notion of Jesus' enthronement in some passages in Luke-Acts. The entry into glory is a final transformation to a divine status or mode of existence.<sup>70</sup> Christ, like no one else, enjoys a special, intimate and living relationship with God, revealed to some on the occasional time during his ministry, but fully and openly expressed to all in the resurrection as his enthronement. Luke describes this by letting Peter quote from Scripture in Acts 2:29-36 when he witnesses about the ascended Christ. Peter uses Psalm 110:1<sup>71</sup> and Psalm 2:7 to show that the resurrection was an elevation and enthronement (Bovon 2006:96).<sup>72</sup> God promised a throne to a descendent of David (Ac.2:30). This, Peter remarks in Acts 2:31, means that God spoke of the resurrection of Christ. The implication is that Christ ascends to the throne with his resurrection. Peter makes clear what this enthronement means: Other than David who did not ascend

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68 Green (1997:132) noted the juxtaposition of the darkness of the night and the luminous glory of the Lord in Luke 2:8-9. Cf. further below on the motif of light and Acts 26:13. Note also how Luke compares key figures in his works to angels (e.g. Stephen in Ac.6:15 and Peter in Ac.14:15), though they are human beings of flesh and blood (cf. Rowland & Morray-Jones 1009:104).

69 DeConick (2006:12) speaks of a “cluster of images” which include Jahweh enthroned with, amongst others, a face emitting sparks, with splendid white garments, or a terrifying robe engraved with the tetragrammaton.

70 Cf. Schille (1983:129).

71 On the role of Psalm 110 in descriptions of Christ's exaltation, cf. Stuckenbruck (1995:128-129) and the literature cited there.

72 Cf. esp. DeConick (2006: 16-17) on the throne in apocalypses.

to heaven, Christ was “exalted” to the right hand of God (Ac. 2:33).<sup>73</sup> The exaltation or ascension fully reveals to all the exalted relationship with God as Christ shares the divine throne with God (Eskola 2001:183).<sup>74</sup> It confirms the unique place of Jesus that was revealed to some in the transfiguration as the one whom God elected (as Acts 2:26 shows). The implications are remarkable: Jesus, the suffering Messiah arrives and shares in the presence of God. The quotation of Psalm 110 is presented as, “I saw the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand” (Ac. 2: 2:25, 28). It ends with the remark that “You have filled me with joy in your presence.” This is the reason why Peter ends his speech with the remark that Jesus was made Lord and Messiah. Because of his glorious existence, Jesus who is so intimately united with the Father, is worthy of adoration. As divine Lord, he is worshipped by the disciples in Luke 24:53 (Fletcher-Louis 1997:22).<sup>75</sup>

## 7. CONCLUSION

Luke’s remark of Jesus’ entry into his glory is one of a number of apocalyptic pronouncements about the glorious existence of Jesus during and after his earthly ministry. With these pronouncements Luke wishes to express the close and intimate relationship between Jesus and God and its implications for those who follow Jesus. Luke uses several motifs and develops various intertextual links with apocalyptic literature to express Jesus’ state of glory. What he writes about Jesus fits in well with the context in which his readers experienced their faith and the language with which they reflected on the significance of these experiences. Jesus of Nazareth (Lk. 24:19) is the Davidic ruler who, through suffering, is finally exalted and exceedingly glorified. He is depicted in terminology that reminds one of the Son of Man in Daniel who enjoys an extraordinary status in heaven.<sup>76</sup> Jesus’ kingship is vindicated when

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73 The phrase is a locative dative and refers to the place at God’s right hand. Cf. Haenchen (1971:183); Schille (1983:113).

74 “In a similar way as in Acts 2 also here the Jewish enthronement pattern has been re-interpreted by locating it into an eschatological context. For Paul, the only proper form of merkabah mysticism is the one where the resurrected Christ is venerated as the enthroned Lord. Therefore, also Col 3:1 in its original context, is a perfect example of early Christology that is based on enthronement discourse” (Eskola 2001:196).

75 Fletcher-Louis (1997:24) gives several examples from the Gospel which indicated that Jesus transcends a mere human existence.

76 “The visions of the enthronement of the Son of Man are identical with the visions of the resurrected Christ. Such descriptions can be understood only in the context of the apocalyptic tradition of Jewish mysticism.” According to Eskola (2002:246), there is coherence of Luke’s enthronement image of Christ and that of Paul in Romans.

"he is exalted and enthroned at God's right hand" (Ps.110:1; Eskola 2001:181). There is a unique perspective in Luke's use of these traditions. It has to do with the inextricable link he makes between the glory and the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus as event is the final entry, the exaltation, the taking up of Jesus (Lk. 9:51). Jesus finally enters this glory as his new form of existence only with the resurrection and after his death.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, though, it is problematic to conclude from this that Luke has a subordinationist Christology. It is at the point where an analysis of the motif of glory provides an important insight and decisively determines the debate about Luke's Christology. Luke's narrative and his intertextual links show that Christ enters into the glory that he already had previously – as the transfiguration reveals and as is clear from the glory that surrounded him at his birth. All these descriptions contribute to portray an exceptionally close and intimate relationship between Christ and God throughout his earthly ministry.

With such an exalted description about Jesus' glory, Luke makes an important theological and spiritual point. His remarks reflect the conviction of apocalypses that people experienced the living God who is present among them. They were not merely waiting for it to take place in future. This made them aware that a caring God still loves the people of God in this world (Schäfer 2009:354). The glory of Jesus that speaks about an intimate relationship with God in which the presence of God in the life of Jesus is experienced and celebrated, affects the daily lives of those who follow Jesus in a mystical manner. Luke therefore can end his Gospel with the note that the disciples worshipped Jesus (Lk. 24:51). They not only become witnesses of the word as a result of the transformative experience of the resurrection, but they become worshippers of Jesus as the One in whom God acted and remained with them in times of alienation and stress.<sup>78</sup>

Even though the motif of glory is not really explained in more detail, its roots in Hebrew Scriptures, its widespread use in apocalypses and its special place in Luke-Acts indicate how one should understand it. It reveals how intimately God is involved in the lives of people. Readers of Luke are thereby reassured about the trustworthiness of God and the divine promises. The image of Jesus' glory and his exalted state on God's throne confirm to them the fulfillment of the expectations about the eschatological divine rule and succours them

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77 The influence of the Isaianic servant is also visible in the Lukan texts. Cf. Isa. 52:13 LXX and Strauss (1995:262). That Jesus is "chosen" by God, for example, bears connotations of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 42:1. Green (1997:384); Nolland, Luke 9:21-18:34, 501. This important aspect, which has implications for understanding glory in Luke, cannot be pursued here because of limited space.

78 This tantalizing remark about the worship of Jesus offers a suggestion for the practice within which mystical experiences of Jesus belong and function.

in adverse circumstances (Rowland 1985:58). In their experience of Jesus in his glory, also in worship, they are given a direct disclosure of heavenly knowledge and, even more, they experience union with the heavenly glory. The glorious experience transforms them from wavering, despairing people into witnesses of their new found faith who speak powerfully and spiritually about their mystical relationship with God.<sup>79</sup> When Luke reveals Jesus' self-revelation about his glory to his disciples in Luke 24:26, it is a powerful and glorious reminder of the loving kindness of God which is on offer to them in faith and which has a profound transformative power.

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79 Cf. DeConick (2006:19) who argues that the mystical dimension of apocalypses is the result of “unfulfilled redemptive promises during times when hopes for their fulfillment were historically challenged.”

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