

## JESUS' PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

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Luke 12:13–34 among Ancient Conversations on Death and Possessions

# JESUS' PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

LUKE 12:13–34 AMONG ANCIENT CONVERSATIONS  
ON DEATH AND POSSESSIONS

*By*

Matthew S. Rindge

Society of Biblical Literature  
Atlanta

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For  
Shannon,  
Ava, and Sophia

*“Aimer ou avoir aimé, cela suffit. Ne demandez rien ensuite. On n’a pas d’autre perle à trouver dans les plis ténébreux de la vie. Aimer est un accomplissement.”*

— Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*



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## ABBREVIATIONS

### PRIMARY WORKS

1QpHab	Pesher Habakkuk
1QS	Rule of the Community
4QD <sup>e</sup>	Damascus Document
4Q109	4QQohelet <sup>a</sup>
4Q110	4QQohelet <sup>b</sup>
4Q185	Sapiential Work
4Q424	Instruction-Like Composition B
4Q468l	fragment mentioning Qoh 1:8–9
4Q525	Beatitudes
4QShirShabb <sup>f</sup>	Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice
'Abot R. Nat.	'Abot de Rabbi Nathan
Ambrose	
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae (Letters)</i>
Apollodorus Comicus	
<i>Frag.</i>	<i>Fragment</i>
Aristotle	
<i>Eth. nic.</i>	<i>Ethica Nichomachea (Nichomachean Ethics)</i>
Athanasius	
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>Apologia de fuga sua (Defense of His Flight)</i>
Augustine	
<i>Doct. chr.</i>	<i>De doctrina christiana (Christian Instruction)</i>
<i>Enarrat. Ps.</i>	<i>Enarrationes in Psalmos (Enarrations on the Psalms)</i>
<i>Serm.</i>	<i>Sermones</i>
<i>Serm. Dom.</i>	<i>De sermone Domini in monte (Sermon on the Mount)</i>
<i>Trin.</i>	<i>De Trinitate (The Trinity)</i>
b.	Babylonian Talmud
<i>Ceb. Tab.</i>	<i>The Tabula of Cebes</i>

## Clement of Alexandria

- Paed.* *Paedagogus (Christ the Educator)*  
*Quis div.* *Quis dives salvetur (Who Is the Rich Man Who Shall Be Saved?)*  
*Strom.* *Stromata (Miscellanies)*

## Cyprian

- Dom. or.* *De dominica oratione (The Lord's Prayer)*  
*Eleem.* *De opere et eleemosynis (Works and Almsgiving)*  
*Test.* *Ad Quirinum testimonia adversus Judaeos (To Quirinius: Testimonies against the Jews)*

## Dialogues

Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead*

## Dio Chrysostom

- Avar.* *De avaritia (Or. 17) (Covetousness)*

## Diogenes

- Ep.* *Epistulae (Letters)*

## 'Erub.

'Erubin

## Euripides

- Alc.* *Alcestis*

## Eusebius

- Hist. eccl.* *Historia ecclesiastica (Ecclesiastical History)*

## Heraclitus

- Ep.* *Epistulae (Letters)*

## Herodotus

- Hist.* *Historiae (Histories)*

## Hippocrates

- Ep.* *Epistulae (Letters)*

## Homer

- Il.* *Ilias (Iliad)*

## Horace

- Sat.* *Satirae (Satires)*

## Irenaeus

- Haer.* *Adversus haereses (Against Heresies)*

## Jerome

- Epist.* *Epistulae (Letters)*

## John Chrysostom

- Eutrop.* *In Eutropium*  
*Hom. Matt.* *Homiliae in Matthaicum*

## Josephus

- Ant.* *Antiquitates judaicae (Jewish Antiquities)*

## Lucian

<i>Bis acc.</i>	<i>Bis accusatus (The Double Indictment)</i>
<i>Cat.</i>	<i>Cataplus (The Downward Journey, or The Tyrant)</i>
<i>Char.</i>	<i>Charon</i>
<i>Demon.</i>	<i>Demonax</i>
<i>Dial. mort.</i>	<i>Diologi mortuorum (Dialogues of the Dead)</i>
<i>Dom.</i>	<i>De domo (The Hall)</i>
<i>Gall.</i>	<i>Gallus (The Dream, or The Cock)</i>
<i>Icar.</i>	<i>Icaromenippus</i>
<i>Ind.</i>	<i>Adversus indoctum (The Ignorant Book-Collector)</i>
<i>Jupp. conf.</i>	<i>Juppiter confutatus (Zeus Catechized)</i>
<i>Jupp. trag.</i>	<i>Juppiter tragoedus (Zeus Rants)</i>
<i>Luct.</i>	<i>De luctu (Funerals)</i>
<i>Men.</i>	<i>Menippus, or Descent into Hades</i>
<i>Nigr.</i>	<i>Nigrinus</i>
<i>Par.</i>	<i>De parasito (The Parasite)</i>
<i>Pereg.</i>	<i>De morte Peregrini (The Passing of Peregrinus)</i>
<i>Philops.</i>	<i>Philopseudes (The Lover of Lies)</i>
<i>Pisc.</i>	<i>Piscator (The Dead Come to Life, or The Fisherman)</i>
<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>De sacrificiis (Sacrifices)</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Saturnalia (Conversation with Cronos)</i>
<i>Symp.</i>	<i>Symposium (The Carousal, or The Lapiths)</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timon</i>
<i>Tox.</i>	<i>Toxaris</i>
<i>Vit. auct.</i>	<i>Vitarum auctio (Philosophies for Sale)</i>
LXX	Septuagint
Meg.	Megillah
Menander	
<i>Frag.</i>	<i>Fragment</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
Origen	
<i>Princ.</i>	<i>De principiis (First Principles)</i>
Ovid	
<i>Metam.</i>	<i>Metamorphoses</i>
P. Ins.	Papyrus Insinger
Philo	
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae (Allegorical Interpretation)</i>
Plato	
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Leges (Laws)</i>

Pliny the Younger	
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
Plutarch	
<i>Cupid. divit.</i>	<i>De cupiditate divitiarum</i>
Polycarp	
<i>Phil.</i>	<i>To the Philippians</i>
Qidd.	Qiddušin
Šabb.	Šabbat
Seneca	
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae Morales</i> (Moral Letters)
Stobaeus	
<i>Ecl.</i>	<i>Eclogae</i> (Anthology)
Strabo	
<i>Geog.</i>	<i>Geographica</i> (Geography)
T. Ab.	Testament of Abraham
Tertullian	
<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Adversus Marcionem</i> (Against Marcion)
<i>Or.</i>	<i>De oratione</i> (Prayer)
<i>Paen.</i>	<i>De paenitentia</i> (Repentance)
<i>Pud.</i>	<i>De pudicitia</i> (Modesty)
Virgil	
<i>Aen.</i>	<i>Aeneid</i>
y.	Jerusalem Talmud

## SECONDARY WORKS

AB	Anchor Bible
AEL	<i>Ancient Egyptian Literature</i> . Miriam Lichtheim. 3 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971–1980.
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Part 2, <i>Principat</i> . Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–.
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ATLA	American Theological Library Association
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>



- BBB *Bulletin de bibliographie biblique*
- BDAG Bauer, Walter, Frederick Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- BDB Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907.
- BHS *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Edited by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983.
- BJS Brown Judaic Studies
- BN *Biblische Notizen*
- BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
- BZNW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
- CBET Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
- CEJL Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
- CBQ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
- CNT Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
- CCSL Corpus Christianorum: Series latina
- DCH *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Edited by David J. A. Clines. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–.
- EvQ *Evangelical Quarterly*
- FzB Forschung zur Bibel
- Gesenius, *Thesaurus* Gesenius, Wilhelm. *Thesaurus philologicus criticus linguae hebraeae et Thesaurus chaldaee Veteris Testamenti*. 3 vols. Leipzig: Vogel, 1829–1842.
- HALOT Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999.
- HeyJ *Heythrop Journal*
- HNT Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
- HTR *Harvard Theological Review*
- HUCA *Hebrew Union College Annual*
- IBC Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching

ICC	International Critical Commentary
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods Supplement Series
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
KTU	<i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i> . Edited by Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. AOAT 24.1. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1976.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
NAB	New American Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NJPS	<i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTG	New Testament Guides
NTM	New Testament Monographs
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis

OTL	Old Testament Library
PG	Patrologia graeca. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 162 vols. Paris: Migne: 1857–1886.
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions (supplement to <i>Numen</i> )
SP	Sacra pagina
SSS	Semitic Study Series
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigraphica
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TPINTC	TPI New Testament Commentaries
TS	Texts and Studies
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>



## INTRODUCTION

Luke 12:16–21 is one of the most neglected parables in the Synoptic Gospels. Several modern studies of the parables omit Luke's parable of the Rich Fool,<sup>1</sup> and it is even absent in a study of Lukan parables.<sup>2</sup> When the parable is treated, it often receives scant attention, meriting only a sentence or two of comment.<sup>3</sup> Bernard Brendan Scott aptly summarizes the parable's negligible treatment: "[This parable] has not been of major interest in the history of parable interpretation, nor has it been at the center of controversy. Its interpretation has been stable, predictable, and unafflicted by the obscurities that so torment other parables."<sup>4</sup>

The lack of scholarly interest in Luke 12:16–21 is due in part to a perception that the parable offers little else beyond a simple and straightforward critique of avarice. The parable itself tells a somewhat different story. Extant only in Luke and Thomas (Gos. Thom. 63), the parable is situated in Luke's travel narrative (9:51–19:44), during which Jesus journeys to

---

1. See, e.g., Alexander Balmain Bruce, *The Parabolic Teaching of Christ. A Systematic and Critical Study of the Parables of our Lord* (3rd ed.; New York: Armstrong & Son, 1898); C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (rev. ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961); Dan Otto Via Jr., *The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967); Eta Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Exposition* (London: SPCK, 1975); Pheme Perkins, *Hearing the Parables of Jesus* (New York: Paulist, 1981); Robert W. Funk, *Parables and Presence* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); William R. Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994); Luise Schottroff, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus, 2005).

2. Kenneth Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976).

3. John Dominic Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1992), 83; Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus*, does not treat Luke 12:16–21 as one of the eleven parables in her study, but she does comment briefly on it.

4. Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 127.

Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup> The parable follows a short dialogue regarding an inheritance (12:13–15) and precedes a discourse about anxiety, God, and possessions (12:22–34). After rejecting a request to intervene in a fraternal dispute over an inheritance (12:13–14), Jesus offers a warning against greed, claiming that one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions (12:15). He then tells the following story that the narrator identifies as a parable (*παραβολή*) (12:16a):

The land of a certain rich person produced fruitfully. And he began to converse with himself, saying: "What shall I do, for I do not have [a place] where I will gather together my crops?" And he said, "This I will do: I will pull down my barns, and I will build larger ones, and I will gather together there all my grain and goods. And I will say to myself, 'Self, you have many goods laid up for many years; rest, eat, drink, enjoy.' But God said to him, "Fool! On this night they are demanding your life from you; and the things you prepared, whose will they be?" So is the one who stores up for oneself and is not rich toward God. (12:16b–21)<sup>6</sup>

Several basic features of the parable are noteworthy. This is the first of three *ἄνθρωπός τις πλούσιος* ("a certain rich person") parables in Luke (see 16:1–8, 19–31) and one of seven or eight *ἄνθρωπός τις* ("a certain person") parables.<sup>7</sup> Yet this is the only parable unique to Luke whose subject in the opening line is not a person. The man's initial response to his perceived dilemma is to ask a question (*τί ποιήσω*, "What shall I do?") that many of Luke's characters ask.<sup>8</sup> The man's monologue, which provides access to his

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5. Luke periodically reminds readers/hearers that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem (9:51, 53; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28). On Luke's travel narrative, see Filip Noël, *The Travel Narrative in the Gospel of Luke: Interpretation of Lk 9,51–19,28* (Collectanea Biblica et Religiosa Antiqua 5; Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 2004). There is fairly uniform agreement about where the travel narrative begins (9:51). Although most defend either 19:27 or 19:44 as the conclusion to the journey narrative, several other endings have also been proposed (18:14, 30, 34; 19:10, 28, 46, 48; 21:38).

6. My translation is based on the Greek text in Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Eberhard Nestle, and Erwin Nestle, eds., *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993). See chapter 5 for some of the text-critical issues involved in Luke 12:16–21.

7. Luke 10:30; 14:16; 15:11; 16:1, 19; 19:12; cf. 20:9. Many manuscripts omit *τις* in 20:9.

8. Luke 3:10, 12, 14; 10:25; 16:3; 18:18, 41; 20:13, 15; Acts 2:37; 4:16; 22:10.

mindset, contains an allusion to a Hebrew Bible text, Qoh 8:15. The parable also shares many similarities with Sir 11:14–19 and 1 En. 97:8–10. Luke 12:16–21 is unique in being the only parable in the Synoptic tradition in which God appears as a character and speaks (12:20).<sup>9</sup> This is, moreover, the only time the author of Luke-Acts attributes direct speech to God (θεός). The three elements in God’s announcement (epithet, statement, question) are striking. God does not provide an explicit reason for calling the man a “fool.” God tells the man, cryptically, that an unspecified “they” are demanding his ψυχή (life/soul/self). The encounter between God and the man ends with an enigmatic question regarding the future ownership of the man’s goods. The parable’s conclusion (spoken by Jesus or a comment by the narrator?) appears to interpret the rich man’s plans in theological terms.

These fundamental features of the parable raise questions and warrant closer scrutiny. Is there a reason that the rich man is not the subject in the parable’s introductory line? In what ways does making the “land” the subject change one’s reading of the parable? Why is God a character in the parable, and what is the function of God’s appearance? Are there particular elements of this parable that help explain God’s inclusion? How is one to read God’s announcement in 12:20? Is God informing the man of his imminent death, or is God punishing the man? What specifically does the man do (or not do) that results in being labeled a fool (12:20)? In the Greek Bible, the term “fool” (ἄφρων) occurs almost exclusively in sapiential texts. Is this suggestive for how one should understand the use of ἄφρων in the parable? Should this term, moreover, be interpreted in light of its only other occurrence in Luke (11:40)?

The parable leaves other questions unanswered as well. Who or what is the unspecified subject of ἀπαιτοῦσιν (“they are taking [back]”) (12:20a)? Are they demanding the man’s ψυχή or demanding it *back*? How should one translate the three occurrences of ψυχή (“self,” “life,” or “soul”)? How is one to understand God’s final question to the man (12:20b)? Is the question rhetorical? Is there an expected answer? In what precise way was the man not rich toward God (12:21)? What, in other words, does being rich toward God entail? Does Luke provide a positive corollary to the explicit

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9. God is mentioned in Luke’s parable of the Widow and the Judge (18:2, 4) but does not appear there as a character. Nor is God a character in the subsequent parable (18:9–14), although the Pharisee and tax collector both pray to God (18:11, 13).

critique in 12:20 and 12:21? Is there a constructive alternative to the rich man's folly and his failure to be rich toward God? A related question concerns the relationship between the parable proper (12:16–20) and its literary frame (12:13–15, 21; more broadly, 12:13–34). Should the parable be interpreted apart from its current literary context? If not, does the literary context interpret the parable or vice versa?

Additional elements of the parable are unclear and raise further questions. Does Jesus address the parable to the crowd *and* the disciples, or is the parable told only to the crowd? What is one to make of the similarities and differences between Luke's version and that found in Thomas? Does reading Luke's parable in light of Thomas significantly illuminate either version?

Interpreters of the parable frequently ignore or cursorily treat such questions. In what follows, chapter 1 shows that the neglect and marginalization of Luke's parable of the Rich Fool is due primarily to a mischaracterization of the parable as a simple and straightforward tale. Construing the parable in this manner is frequently the result of reading the parable through a "prophetic" lens. Interpreters who read the parable as a "prophetic" text typically conclude that it offers little more than a critique of avarice. This reading practice is the standard mode of understanding the parable among premodern and modern interpreters.

Yet reading the parable in this manner fails to acknowledge, among other things, the significance of the parable's own allusions and echoes to sapiential texts (Qoh 8:15; Sir 11:14–19; 1 En. 97:8–10). What is the significance of these resonances, and what function do they serve in the parable? Does Luke's parable engage these intertexts (or traditions represented by these intertexts), and, if so, how? Finally, what is one to make of the fact that each of these three intertexts is both sapiential and concerned with the interplay of death and possessions? Interpreters who recognize the parable's allusions to texts such as Qoh 8:15 or Sir 11:14–19 often fail either to acknowledge the diverse range of perspectives within wisdom texts or to explain how the parable's connections to such texts might influence an understanding of the parable.

This book demonstrates the multiple ways in which Luke's parable engages a Second Temple conversation regarding the interplay of death and possessions. This conversation frequently appears in sapiential texts. Reading the parable in concert with Second Temple texts whose focus is the intersection of death and possessions makes sense, given the allusions and echoes to wisdom texts within the parable (and its broader literary



context), and provides insight to the kinds of questions engendered by a close reading of the parable. Such insight advances the conversation more than that offered by readers who do not read the parable in light of texts whose focus is the interplay of death and possessions.

The operating assumption of this book is that Luke's parable of the Rich Fool is situated within a (largely sapiential) Second Temple conversation on death and possessions and cannot be read properly apart from its dialogue with such texts. Although the conversation on death and possessions is featured most prominently in sapiential texts, it also finds expression in texts not technically designated as "wisdom literature."<sup>10</sup> I will therefore treat some nonsapiential texts that devote significant attention to the interplay of death and possessions. A close reading of four Hellenistic Jewish texts (Qoheleth, Ben Sira, 1 Enoch, and Testament of Abraham) will explicate this conversation and its contested nature (chs. 2 and 3). Analyzing two Greco-Roman authors (Lucian and Seneca) who treat these twinned motifs will broaden and nuance our understanding of this conversation (ch. 4).

I will situate Luke's parable of the Rich Fool within this spectrum of texts, showing how the parable participates in, illustrates, appropriates, and reconfigures this contested conversation on the interplay of death and possessions (chs. 5–7).<sup>11</sup> I will contend that central to this conversation are concerns for the meaningful use of possessions given various uncontrollable facets of death (e.g., its inevitability and uncertain timing). I will conclude by considering two specific implications of this project for reading and understanding other Lukan parables.

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10. The phrase "sapiential conversation" is used throughout the book and reflects the fact that the concern in Second Temple texts with the interplay of death and possessions appears far more frequently in wisdom literature than in other literary genres. This concern, however, is not limited to texts officially designated "wisdom." As such, I do not intend the phrase "sapiential conversation" to be understood in an exclusive manner, but rather as an indication of the prevalence with which such texts appear in sapiential literature. Similarly, I use "Second Temple" regularly to refer to the time span in which most of the books that I explicate emerged. Although I do examine certain texts outside of this time span, (e.g., Lucian and certain ancient Egyptian literature), I cannot think of a more helpful term than "Second Temple."

11. This book treats the parable as it appears in its final form in Luke's Gospel. I do not inquire into the parable's *Sitz im Leben* in the life of Jesus or what the parable may have looked like in its pre-Lukan stage.

A chapter in my dissertation that treated the interplay of death and possessions in ancient Egyptian literature does not reappear in this book. I will, however, occasionally refer to perspectives on death and possessions in ancient Egyptian texts when they are germane either to Luke 12 or other texts I analyze. Ancient Egyptian literature gives sustained attention to the interplay of death and possessions and shares numerous perspectives related to death and possessions with Hellenistic Jewish texts, Greco-Roman texts, and Luke 12:13–34.<sup>12</sup> Egyptian culture, moreover, influenced Hellenistic Judaism and the general Hellenistic milieu out of which Luke's literary work developed.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, specific Egyptian

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12. On the role of death, see, e.g., Alan H. Gardiner, *The Attitude of the Ancient Egyptians to Death and the Dead* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935); Jan Zandee, *Death as an Enemy: According to Ancient Egyptian Conceptions* (SHR 5; Leiden: Brill, 1960); Alan Jeffrey Spencer, *Death in Ancient Egypt* (2nd ed.; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984); Philippe Derchain, "Death in Egyptian Religion," in *Mythologies* (ed. Yves Bonnefoy; 2 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1:111–15; Henk Milde, "'Going out into the Day': Ancient Egyptian Beliefs and Practices concerning Death," in *Hidden Futures: Death and Immortality in Ancient Egypt, Anatolia, the Classical, Biblical and Arabic-Islamic World* (ed. J. M. Bremmer, Th. P. J. van den Hout, and R. Peters; Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994), 15–34; Jan Assman, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (trans. David Lorton; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005).

13. See, e.g., John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 136–40; Christina Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt: Art, Identity, and Funerary Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Garth Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Jacco Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100–300 CE)* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Jan Quaegebeur, "Cultes égyptiens et grecs en Egypte hellénistique: L'exploitation des sources," in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World: Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Leuven, 24–26 May 1982* (ed. E. van't Dack, P. van Dessel, and W. van Guch; Leuven: Orientaliste, 1983), 303–24; Marjorie S. Venit, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria: The Theater of the Dead* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Artapanus's claims (that Abraham taught astronomy to Pharaoh and that Moses introduced the cult of Isis and invented the hydraulic lift and alphabet) show that some Jews argued for compatibility between aspects of Egyptian culture and Judaism (so Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 157). For a historical treatment of the Jews in Egypt, see Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (TSAJ 7; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985); J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora, from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996).

parallels have been noted in Luke's parables of the Rich Fool and Lazarus and the Rich Man.<sup>14</sup>

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14. On parallels with the Rich Fool, see Erich Klostermann and Hugo Gressmann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HNT 2.1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1919), 497; Christopher F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (TPINTC; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 522. On parallels with Lazarus and the Rich Man, see Hugo Gressmann, *Vom reichen Mann und armen Lazarus: Eine literargeschichtliche Studie* (Abhandlungen der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 1918, 7; Berlin: Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1918); Kendrick Grobel, "... Whose Name Was Neves," *NTS* 10 (1963–64): 373–82; Joseph. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (2 vols.; AB 28–28A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981–1985), 2:1126–27. Although most references to Egyptian texts will be from the Late Period, I will occasionally refer to earlier materials, since many texts contemporary to Luke-Acts, such as Papyrus Insinger, emerge from and are in conversation with a lengthy and influential trajectory.