



**Collin Blake Bullard**

***Jesus and the Thoughts of Many Hearts: Implicit Christology and Jesus' Knowledge in the Gospel of Luke***

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This volume is a revised version of Collin Blake Bullard's 2013 dissertation, supervised by Simon Gathercole at Cambridge. Its subject is the Lukan motif of Jesus's privileged access to the "thoughts" of those he encounters in the Third Gospel, especially those with whom he comes into opposition. In a nutshell, the argument is that Luke's Jesus can bring the "thoughts of many hearts" to light, which is a special and notable characteristic of the Jewish God, with the consequence that Luke's Jesus is closer to sharing his identity with that God.

Bullard uses redaction and narrative criticism in his argument that Luke's Jesus possesses the ability to reveal thoughts by virtue of his identity as Lord. While the ability is apparently assumed of Jesus also in Mark and Matthew, Luke goes further than either of his synoptic counterparts in developing the motif. Furthermore, comparing Lukan and Matthean redaction in parallel passages shows how a common store of material could be developed differently to suit different agendas in Matthew and Luke. Bullard proposes that the Lukan agenda in this respect is set by the prophecy of Simeon at Luke 2:34–35, which speaks to Jesus's destiny: "This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts [*dialogismoi*] of many will be revealed." Bullard indicates that studies of Simeon's prophecy have not satisfactorily connected its final line to subsequent narrative representations of inner

thoughts revealed in the presence of the Lukan Jesus and that studies of the motif in Luke are generally limited to passing remarks connecting it to a handful of ancient texts and figures roughly contemporary with the activity of the gospel writers. These typically include figures such as the priest of Isis in Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, anonymous magicians in the Greek Magical Papyri, and especially Apollonius of Tyana as represented in the third-century *Vita Apollonii* by Philostratus. What has been missing, and what Bullard provides, is an exhaustive account of the motif in Luke. With Simeon's prophecy as his anchor, Bullard traces a narrative-critical account of the motif through the Third Gospel, the upshot of which is that Luke implies (hence the "implied Christology" featured in the book's subtitle) that Jesus is *kyrios*.

The book is divided into three chapters prefaced by a substantive introduction and followed by a summary conclusion. The introduction collects and associates the passages in Luke that best illustrate the "knowledge of thoughts" phenomenon, surveys the history of scholarship on two topics (Jesus's knowledge of thoughts and Simeon's oracle), and previews the coming chapters. Chapter 1 is mainly concerned with the knowledge of thoughts motif in Greco-Roman sources, on the one hand, and Jewish sources, on the other. Against intimations in earlier scholarship that the motif in Luke is a "Hellenistic touch," Bullard argues that knowledge of thoughts is equivalent to "knowledge of hearts" and a special prerogative of the Jewish God (see Luke 1:51; 16:15) and so an integral feature of Luke's Christology.

Chapter 2 follows Luke Timothy Johnson in reading Simeon's oracle as "programmatic prophecy," that is, a prophecy that introduces a major theme. Here the theme is, of course, the opposition and conflict that would result from Jesus's ministry. The revelation of thoughts, Bullard contends, are thus positioned to function as a chief mechanism in bringing that opposition and conflict to light.

Chapter 3, constituting about half of the book by page count, offers close readings of six passages in the gospel in which the motif appears (the healing of the paralytic in 5:17–26; the man with the withered hand in 6:6–11; the exchange with Simon the Pharisee in 7:36–50; the disciples' question of who is the greatest in 9:46–48; the Beelzebul controversy in 11:14–32; and the "woes" against the Pharisees and scribes in 11:37–54) as well as shorter remarks on the Nazareth sermon (4:16–30), the parable of the good Samaritan (10:25–37), the parable of the rich farmer (12:16–20), Jesus dining with the Pharisees (14:1–6), God's knowledge of the heart (16:14–15), and taxes to Caesar (20:20–26). This sprawling chapter then moves into narrative-critical remarks about the introductions to speeches, remarks on the special Lukan parables, analyses of the appearance of Jesus to his disciples at the end of Luke (24:36–43) and the prayer of the disciples in Acts 1:24, then concludes with a section proposing that Luke's development of the motif was informed specifically

by verse 11 of Ps 94 [93 LXX], where the Lord knows thoughts (*dialogismoi* in the LXX, as in Simeon's oracle of Jesus). Luke's presentation of Jesus as Lord will ipso facto have involved Jesus's knowledge of thoughts. The point, Bullard is careful to emphasize, is not that Luke set out to prove that Jesus in his capacity as Lord knows thoughts. Rather, "some of Luke's latent assumptions concerning Jesus' knowledge of thoughts are evident in the way in which Luke incorporated the theme into the Gospel narrative" (174). The short conclusion to the book summarizes its findings under four headings: "Ancient Context," "Jesus as Revealer," "Jesus as Judge," and "Jesus' Knowledge of Thoughts as a Divine Ability." The upshot of the first is that Luke has not integrated the motif as a "light Hellenistic touch" from a *theios anēr* typology; the second and third points connect knowledge of thoughts to revealing and judging as kyriotic functions attributed to the Lukan Jesus; and the fourth heading speaks for itself. Bullard's argument is that the revelation of thoughts is a divine quality in Luke, not a remarkable human ability and not (at least not primarily) a prophetic characteristic.

Bullard's well-organized study carefully identifies a research question that had been widely noted but never addressed in a monograph-length study. He collects and engages a broad range of secondary scholarship on Luke, much of it in French and German, and models the fruitful results of coordinated redaction- and narrative-critical scholarship. He schematizes possible ways making sense of the motif (a supernatural human ability? a prophetic ability? a divine ability?) and takes a clear and consistent stand on how best to account for the data (knowledge of thoughts is a divine ability). The book will be of interest to those working on the history of prophecy, on preliterate Jesus traditions, on the *theios anēr* question, and especially to those whose interest is Lukan Christology. The book is well footnoted, providing an extensive record of Bullard's journey of discovery and opportunities for the interested reader to carry on the investigation. Readers who are interested in Bullard's work should also be alerted to Michal Beth Dinkler's "The Thoughts of Many Hearts Shall Be Revealed': Listening In on Lukan Interior Monologues" (*JBL* 134 [2015]: 373–99), which must have appeared just a little too late for Bullard to engage in his book.

Although Bullard does not make them the focus of his exegetical labors, some of his most potent insights have to do with Lukan passages that have troubled early scholarship because of apparent inconsistencies in what happens at the level of story (the things said and done by characters on the scene) and what Jesus says in response. Jesus's responses are shown to be made *not* to the things said or done but rather at exposing and confronting the unspoken thoughts and motives that lay behind the words and actions of his interlocutors. A banner example is in Jesus's exchange with the lawyer who comes to test Jesus in Luke 10. Many have pointed out that Jesus's answer, with its so-called parable of the good Samaritan, does not answer the man's question, "Who is my neighbor?"

(10:29b). What Jesus's response *does* answer is the man's unspoken motive—relayed by the narrator to the audience—"wishing to justify himself" (10:29a). When the parable is read as an answer to this unspoken motive—the "thought of the man's heart"—Jesus's parable becomes an exposé of the man's self-justifying machinations, aligning him with those in the parable who want to limit the scope of their obligation to love and establish their own righteousness in the process (142).

As might be expected in a monograph that is, by the author's own admission, designed to explore the title's subject ad nauseum (139), Bullard's reader must be prepared for a certain amount of repetition. Bullard is to be commended, though, for his conscious attempts to limit repetition in his third chapter, where he follows the same schema (presentation of Jesus's knowledge, Luke's redaction of the passage, resonance of the passage with Simeon's oracle, and implicit Christology) in each of the chief passages up for analysis. Despite some unavoidable repetitions in this section, Bullard says something new in connection to each pericope.

Although the target audience for this book is never identified explicitly, it must overlap substantially with the audience of the dissertation. Nonspecialists may be hampered, for example, by the fact that Greek citations are usually left untranslated. There is occasional slippage into word studies and statistics for vocabulary frequency in Luke or the New Testament, not all of it illuminating. There is also a great deal of summarizing what mainstream commentators (especially Bock, Bovon, Fitzmyer, Johnson, Green, Marshall, Noland, Plummer) say about the passages that Bullard takes up. These are sometimes helpful only indirectly—that is, when they show how the commentators' questions have little or nothing to do with Bullard's topic. There is a generally unquestioned, pervasive, problematic assumption in the book that a "Jewish" or "Jewish Christian" context exists (represented by the "OT" and "STJ"—the latter for "Second Temple Jewish literature") as meaningfully distinct from the "Greco-Roman" or "Hellenistic" context. A primary goal of the book is to determine which of the two contexts is the more appropriate background for understanding the presence of the thoughts of hearts motif in Luke (16). But this is too simple, too reminiscent of scholarship insensitive to the Hellenism in all Second Temple Jewish literature, most obviously in texts such as the Maccabean, Josephan, or Philonic corpora.

Bullard commendably attends to the differences between story and discourse, the role of the narrator and the knowledges of readers and characters, and diverging points of view but fails to engage literary-critical scholarship on narrative representations of cognition, so readers who come to this book looking for engagement with cognitive narratology or any of the varieties of scholarship under the umbrella term *cognitive science of religion* will be largely disappointed. Bullard's finding that Lukan thought representations

generally function for the audience, not for the benefit of characters in the story, deserves more attention in conversation with critical scholarship on the narrative functions of thought representations undertaken by theorists such as Dorrit Cohn, Alan Palmer, and Lisa Zunshine. Bullard draws a contrast between Luke and the Fourth Gospel, where characters respond on the level of story to Jesus's preternatural ability to know thoughts (175–76), which would be well worth exploring in dialogue with narratological work on the functions thought representations can perform in various narrative genres, ancient and modern. Another missed opportunity is consideration of Lukan interior monologues in relation to ongoing conversations in classical and biblical scholarship about interiority and the nature of the self in antiquity (on which, see the Dinkler article noted above). If Bullard's project is not positioned to make major contributions to the study of the self or cognition in New Testament narrative criticism, however, it does an admirable job of complementing theological studies of Lukan Christology such as C. Kavin Rowe's *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke*, which is cited appreciatively and often throughout the book.