

REV. DR. YURIY SHCHURKO
Lviv, Ukrainian Catholic University

The Term ζῆτέω in the Gospel of St. Luke: A Linguistic-Exegetical Study

Introduction

‘Searching’ or ‘quest’ belongs among the most important notions of biblical theology and of Christian spirituality. Every attentive reader of Scripture will notice that the relationship between God and humanity is described by these terms, starting with God looking for Adam in Gen. 3. Since the fall, humans lost the gift of harmony with God, never felt really happy, and therefore always looked for some sort of fulfilment and satisfaction. Our continuous goal is to find something that would quench our inner thirst and hunger, which is ultimately nothing else than a quest for God himself – even if it is not always clearly realized, conscious, and properly formulated. Only God can fill that «black hole» in the very centre of the human being.

The most astonishing discovery in our encounter with the Lord is the fact that God is the one who actually looks for human beings and the initiative is his, not ours. He is the one who loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4,9), and chose us before the foundation of the world (cf. Eph 1,4) – for it is God who is at work in us, enabling us both to will and to work for his good pleasure (cf. Phil 2,13).

Since the question addressed to the first man Adam in Eden: «Where are you?» (Gen. 3,9), and till this day, God is the one who looks for every human being. Since the fall, and to this day – humans also seek God.

For this reason, in this article, – which is a short summary of my doctoral dissertation defended at the Opole University (Poland) 3 years ago (15.12.2010) under the direction of Rev. Prof. Janusz Czernski, – I would like to dedicate more attention to the analysis of certain Scriptural passages that deal with the Divine search for human beings and vice versa. I hope also to what can these passages tell a modern

person about Christian God and our relationship with him. My analysis will be based exclusively on the occurrences of this (and related) terms in Luke.

Term ζητέω in the writings of the New Testament appears at 117 times. Of those 83 times it is present in the Gospel: 14 in Matthew, 10 in Mark, 25 times it is found in Luke and 34 times in John. In addition there are 20 cases of use of the verb in the case of St. Paul, once in a Letter to Hebrews, twice in the First Epistle of St. Peter, and once in Revelation. Given such a large number of texts, we will focus only on the Gospel of St. Luke. It is traditionally believed that Luke was a student and co-worker of St. Paul and probably the only person among the New Testament authors who did not belong to the people of Israel, but was born a Gentile. It seems that in Luke's text the notion of 'searching' is given special place and significance.

The subject and the main problem of our work will be to study the meaning of this verb in different contexts of the Gospel of St. Luke. Attention will be given only to those texts in which ζητέω has some kind of theological significance, and is consistent (or creates a connection) with fundamental theological issues, which we believe are present in Luke. Thus, the texts like Lk 5,17-26 in which the use of ζητέω seems to have merely physical, everyday meaning are not taken into account (καὶ ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν εἰσενεγκεῖν καὶ θείναι [αὐτὸν] ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ - v.18). In the text 11,24-26 in c. 24, it is about an evil spirit that came out of the man, looking for place of rest (διέρχεται δι' ἀνύδρων τόπων ζητοῦν ἀνάπαυσιν καὶ μὴ εὐρίσκον·), so the text will not be specifically analysed, but will be mentioned in the context of analysis of the passages 11,15-16 and 11, 29-32.

Thus we focus on the 21 occurrences of ζητέω in 16 texts from the Gospel of St. Luke. All these verbs are divided into four thematically related groups and then subject to a four-fold analysis. The first section will include *texts in which God is the subject of ζητέω*: 12,47-48; 13,6-9; 15,8-10; 19,9-10. The second part will deal with passages that speak of other people *looking for Christ in a positive aspect*: 2,48-49; 6,17-19; 19,2-4; 24,4-7. The third part contains *the texts that talk about the search for Christ in a negative aspect*: 9,7-9; 11,15-16.29-32; 19,47-48; 20,19; 22,1-6. At the end, fourth section is devoted to *the study of texts that speak of the kingdom of God as a subject ζητέω*: 11,9-10; 12,29-32.

To achieve our goal, we use the method of linguistic analysis, which is one of the methods of synchronic approach the studied text. Thus every text that contains a verb ζητέω will be analysed in these four stages:

- a. contextual analysis
- b. syntactic analysis (parse)
- c. semantic analysis
- d. pragmatic analysis

Contextual analysis involves finding the studied passage in a broader and narrower context of the Gospel.¹ At this stage we present different views on the vision of a passage in its context, and try to understand original idea of the Evangelist and the passages location in this text.

Syntactic analysis (parse) explores language forms of a separate text, and particularly relationships that exist between the individual elements in languages that appear in the text and the principles of inclusion of certain items in the text. Syntactic analysis aims to define structure of the text, the study of its unity and separation of smaller grammatical units. This method includes the following methodological steps: classification of the vocabulary and description of the parts of speech and grammatical forms, articulation of individual elements of sentence structure, characteristic of the style, the definition of macro- and microstructure of the text.²

Semantic analysis aims to study the meaning of words, sentences and whole texts, and seeks to understand the meaning of the text, and the individual statements and opinions present in it. Usually it is possible to distinguish between semantics of words and the semantics of the text. Semantics of words involves the study of a term taking into account its time, grammatical form, case, etc. The semantics of text explores the semantic relationships between different concepts, defines the semantic field and the semantic features of the text. The main textual features include definition of the semantic oppositions and semantic lines.³

A pragmatic analysis has the task to determine the intentions of the author and the text. Given this, pragmatic analysis always takes into account other texts related to the studied text. Two questions most clearly represent the intent of the author:

- a. what the author of this text wanted to communicate to his contemporary audience (situational context)?
- b. what the text might mean for modern readers (modern context)?⁴

Based on our investigation of the relevant texts, we can confirm that in the Gospel of Luke there exists a wide range of meanings contained in the verb ζῆτέω and its closest cognates. These meanings can be divided into several groups, based on

¹ H. LANGKAMMER, *Metodologia Nowego Testamentu*, Opole 1991, 127; W. WEREN, *Windows on Jesus. Methods in Gospel Exegesis*, London 1999, 23–32; S.E. PORTER, *Handbook to exegesis of the New Testament*, Leiden – New York – Köln 1997, 34–40; T. SÖDING, *Wege der Schriftauslegung. Methodenbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1998, 117–125.

² J. CZERSKI, *Metody interpretacji Nowego Testamentu*, Opole 1997, 125–131; H. LANGKAMMER, *Metodologia Nowego Testamentu*, 128–130; G.D. FEE, *New Testament Exegesis. Handbook for Students and Pastors*, Louisville – London – Leiden 2002, 71–78; W. EGGER, *Methodenlehre zum Neuen Testament. Einführung in linguistische und historisch-kritische Methoden*, Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1987, 77–90; E. PORTER, *Handbook to exegesis of the New Testament*, 112–129.

³ J. CZERSKI, *Metody interpretacji Nowego Testamentu*, 131–138; H. LANGKAMMER, *Metodologia Nowego Testamentu*, 130–139; W. EGGER, *Methodenlehre zum Neuen Testament*, 92–116.

⁴ J. CZERSKI, *Metody interpretacji Nowego Testamentu*, 138–141; W. EGGER, *Methodenlehre zum Neuen Testament*, 133–144; H. LANGKAMMER, *Metodologia Nowego Testamentu*, 141–143; D. HARRINGTON, *Interpreting the New Testament. A practical Guide*, Collegeville 1990, 124–134.

their subject (*who* seeks) and their context (*what* is sought, in what way, with what intentions). Different occurrences of the verb, of great depth of the positive experiences of God concerning man and his destiny as well and depth in the positive and negative sense, the person experiences about God drawn in Jesus of Nazareth. We have singled out 16 such passages.

1. God as subject of seeking (ζητέω)

The first group of texts is characterized by the fact that in its four passages it is God who is the subject of seeking (ζητέω). In all the four passages the verb ζητέω appears in different forms and reflects quite different shades of meaning of this word. At the same time what these texts share in common is the fact that in them the verb is used in the context of Jesus' parables of the Spared Fig Tree (13,6-9) and of the Lost coin (15,8-10) directly in the parables body, and in 12,47-48 in the conclusion to the parables of the Faithful and Unfaithful servants, told in 12,35-46. The verses 19,9-10 fall outside the parabolic usage, but rather conclude the story of Zacchaeus and at the same time are, in a sense, a 'bottom line' of the whole Gospel of Luke⁵.

In Lk 12,47-48 (Ἐκεῖνος δὲ ὁ δοῦλος ὁ γνοὺς τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐτοιμάσας ἢ ποιήσας πρὸς τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ δαρήσεται πολλὰς·⁴⁸ ὁ δὲ μὴ γνοὺς, ποιήσας δὲ ἄξια πληγῶν δαρήσεται ὀλίγας. παντὶ δὲ ᾧ ἐδόθη πολὺ, πολὺ ζητηθήσεται παρ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ᾧ παρέθεντο πολὺ, περισσότερον αἰτήσουσιν αὐτόν) which serve as a supplement to the parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful servants, the verb form *ind. fut. pass. 3 sing.* ζητηθήσεται – (so called *passivum divinum*) points out to God as the subject of action and bears the strength of warning and precaution: at the time of His coming God will look for the fruits of human life and demand an account for the gifts the person was entrusted. Due to this unambiguous warning, the verb bears a clear moral connotation, pointing the responsibility every one of us has for the gifts and charismata we received (come for Lev 26,18; Am 3,1-2)⁶.

The parable of the Spared Fig Tree (13,6-9 Ἐκεῖνος δὲ ὁ δοῦλος ὁ γνοὺς τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐτοιμάσας ἢ ποιήσας πρὸς τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ δαρήσεται πολλὰς·⁴⁸ ὁ δὲ μὴ γνοὺς, ποιήσας δὲ ἄξια πληγῶν δαρήσεται ὀλίγας. παντὶ δὲ ᾧ ἐδόθη πολὺ, πολὺ ζητηθήσεται παρ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ᾧ παρέθεντο πολὺ, περισσότερον αἰτήσουσιν αὐτόν) contains two instances of the use of ζητέω in the form of *part. praes. act. nom. masc. sing.* – ζητῶν suggesting God's continuing and active seeking of the fruits of human life, which emphasizes even more the need for every human

⁵ I.H. MARSHALL, *Luke – historian and theologian*, Exeter 1988, 116.

⁶ К. КИНЕР, *Библиейский культурно-исторический комментарий*, Ч.2 *Новый Завет*, (пер. с англ.), Санкт-Петербург 2005, 186.

person to be constantly ready to give an account before the Lord for the outcomes of one's life. These two occurrences of the active present participle point towards God's past and present seeking of the fruits of human life (ἦλθεν ζητῶν καρπὸν – v. 6b; ἔρχομαι ζητῶν καρπὸν – v. 7b).

In its turn the parable of the Lost coin (15,8-10 Ἡ τίς γυνὴ δραχμᾶς ἔχουσα δέκα ἐὰν ἀπολέσῃ δραχμὴν μίαν, οὐχὶ ἄπτει λύχνον καὶ σαροῖ τὴν οἰκίαν καὶ ζητεῖ ἐπιμελῶς ἕως οὗ εὕρῃ; ⁹ καὶ εὐροῦσα συγκαλεῖ τὰς φίλας καὶ γείτονας λέγουσα· συγχάριτέ μοι, ὅτι εὗρον τὴν δραχμὴν ἣν ἀπόλεσα. ¹⁰ οὕτως, λέγω ὑμῖν, γίνεται χαρὰ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ ἐνὶ ἁμαρτωλῶ μετανοοῦντι), with its form of *ind. praes. act. 3 sing.* – ζητεῖ emphasizes God's present action: God seeks sinners with special zeal, and does it continuously, till He finds them. Finally in the summary of the story which reflects the meeting of Jesus with Zacchaeus in 19,9-10 (εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι σήμερον σωτηρία τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ ἐγένετο, καθότι καὶ αὐτὸς υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ ἐστιν· ¹⁰ ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός), the form of *infinit. aor. act.* – ζητῆσαί expresses the perfect meaning of the God's past action, emphasizing the success of the 'seeking' on God's part and the effectiveness of God's action 'to seek and save that, which was lost'.

2. Human looking for Christ (positive aspects of ζητέω)

The second group of texts contains those verbs ζητέω, which point towards the positive aspect of Jesus' 'seeking'. The first three texts which represent searching of Jesus's parents, the crowd who flocked to Jesus, and the text which describe the Zacchaeus's searching for Jesus (2,48-49; 6,7-9; 19,2-4) contain ζητέω in the form of *imperfectum* that expresses the imperfect and repetitive action in the past. In the text about Christ's resurrection (24,4-7), ζητέω is used in the present tense.

Thus in the text which describe parental compliant and amazing Jesus's answer (2,48-49 καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐξεπλάγησαν, καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ· τέκνον, τί ἐποίησας ἡμῖν οὕτως; ἰδοὺ ὁ πατήρ σου καὶ γὰρ ὀδυνώμενοι ἐζητοῦμέν σε. ⁴⁹ καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοῦς· τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτέ με; οὐκ ᾔδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου δεῖ εἶναι με;) we have two instances of the use of ζητέω in the form of *ind. imperf. act. 1 pl.* ἐζητοῦμέν – *2 pl.* ἐζητεῖτε, that express a continuing process of the seeking of Jesus by his parents and their consequent unexpected encounter with the mystery of the Divine Sonship.⁷

In the statement about the crowd which searched for Jesus (6,17-19 Καὶ καταβὰς μετ' αὐτῶν ἔστη ἐπὶ τόπου πεδινοῦ, καὶ ὄχλος πολὺς μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ, καὶ πλῆθος πολὺ τοῦ λαοῦ ἀπὸ πάσης τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Ἱερουσὴμ καὶ τῆς παρίου Τύρου

⁷ J. DILLERSBERGER, *The Gospel of Saint Luke*, Westminster 1958, 118.

καὶ Σιδῶνος, ¹⁸ οἱ ἤλθον ἀκοῦσαι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰαθῆναι ἀπὸ τῶν νόσων αὐτῶν· καὶ οἱ ἐνοχλοῦμενοι ἀπὸ πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων ἐθεραπεύοντο, ¹⁹ καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἐζήτησεν ἄπτεσθαι αὐτοῦ, ὅτι δύναμις παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἐξήρχετο καὶ ἰάτο πάντας) the form of *ind. imperf. act. 3 pl.* – ἐζήτησεν, expresses the deep need for Jesus on the part of the people: every time Jesus was near they sought Him, touch Him and receive healing.

In the story of Zacchaeus in 19,2-4 (Καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ ὀνόματι καλούμενος Ζακχαῖος, καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν ἀρχιτελώνης καὶ αὐτὸς πλούσιος· ³ καὶ ἐζήτηει ἰδεῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τίς ἐστιν καὶ οὐκ ἠδύνατο ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου, ὅτι τῇ ἡλικίᾳ μικρὸς ἦν. ⁴ καὶ προδραμῶν εἰς τὸ ἔμπροσθεν ἀνέβη ἐπὶ συκομορέαν ἵνα ἴδῃ αὐτὸν ὅτι ἐκείνης ἤμελλεν διέρχεσθαι) the form of *ind. imperf. act. 3 sing.* – ἐζήτηει, as the context would suggest, conveys both, Zacchaeus’ internal feelings and external actions: he longed for the encounter with Jesus and sought to arrange it. The form of the verb ἰδεῖν (*inf. aor. act. from ὁράω*) underlines the continuing character of Zacchaeus’ endeavors directed towards a single moment – to ‘see’ Jesus.

The text about the report of two angels to the terrified women near empty tomb of Jesus in 24,4-7 (καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἀπορεῖσθαι αὐτὰς περὶ τούτου καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο ἐπέστησαν αὐταῖς ἐν ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπτούσῃ. ⁵ ἐμφόβων δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν καὶ κλινουσῶν τὰ πρόσωπα εἰς τὴν γῆν εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτάς· τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν· ⁶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἀλλὰ ἠγέρθη. μνήσθητε ὡς ἐλάλησεν ὑμῖν ἔτι ὢν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ ⁷ λέγων τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὅτι δεῖ παραδοθῆναι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων ἀμαρτωλῶν καὶ σταυρωθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστῆναι), quite symbolically uses the form of *ind. praes. act. 2 pl.* – ζητεῖτε, pointing towards the present action – the myrrh-bearing women’s unexpected encounter with a joyful news about the Jesus risen from the dead. Luke beautifully describes how everyone seeking Jesus receives at the encounter much more, than he or she ever dreamt to receive.

3. Human looking for Christ (negative aspects of ζητέω)

The third and the largest group of texts unites the instances of the use of ‘seeking’ of Jesus with negative, hostile intentions. In the six texts we find five instances of the *imperfectum*: Herod’s search for Jesus, search for the sign from Jesus by Israelites leaders, two texts reflects search to kill Jesus and Juda’s search how to betray Jesus (9,7-9; 11,15-16; 19,47-48; 22,1-6), one of the *praesens* in the text where Jesus affirm that these people search for a sign (11,29-32), and one of the *aorystum* in a summary by which Luke reflects reactions of the Jewish religious leaders on the Jesus’ parable of the wicked vinedressers (20,19). The texts reflect situations in which human beings are pushed by unjust and evil motives.

In the 9,7-9 (Ἦκουσεν δὲ Ἡρώδης ὁ τετραάρχης τὰ γινόμενα πάντα καὶ διηπόρει διὰ τὸ λέγεσθαι ὑπὸ τινων ὅτι Ἰωάννης ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν, ⁸ ὑπὸ τινων δὲ ὅτι Ἡλίας ἐφάνη, ἄλλων δὲ ὅτι προφήτης τις τῶν ἀρχαίων ἀνέστη. ⁹ εἶπεν δὲ Ἡρώδης· Ἰωάννην ἐγὼ ἀπεκεφάλισα· τίς δὲ ἐστὶν οὗτος περὶ οὗ ἀκούω τοιαῦτα; καὶ ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν αὐτόν.) the form of *ind. imperf. act. 3 sing.* – ἐζήτει expresses Herod's seeking 'to see' (ἰδεῖν) Jesus, which in the light of Lk 13,31 can be perceived as, on the one hand, an endeavor to kill Jesus, and on the other hand, like in Lk 23,6-12 can be seen as a 'seeking' of a miracle for the sake of entertainment. In the 11,15-16 (τινὲς δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶπον· ἐν Βεελζεβούλ τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια· ¹⁶ ἕτεροι δὲ πειράζοντες σημεῖον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐζήτουν παρ' αὐτοῦ.) the form of *ind. imperf. act. 3 pl.* – ἐζήτουν (sought, demanded, longed for) points towards a continuous aggressive stance of Israel's leaders against Jesus – πειράζοντες σημεῖον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐζήτουν παρ' αὐτοῦ.

In 11,29-32 (Τῶν δὲ ὄχλων ἐπαθροισζομένων ἤρξατο λέγειν· ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη γενεὰ πονηρὰ ἐστίν· σημεῖον ζητεῖ, καὶ σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωανᾶ. ³⁰ καθὼς γὰρ ἐγένετο Ἰωανᾶς τοῖς Νινευίταις σημεῖον, οὕτως ἔσται καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ. ³¹ βασίλισσα νότου ἐγερθήσεται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινεῖ αὐτούς, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς ἀκοῦσαι τὴν σοφίαν Σολομῶνος, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Σολομῶνος ὤδε. ³² ἄνδρες Νινευῖται ἀναστήσονται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινούσιν αὐτήν· ὅτι μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωανᾶ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Ἰωανᾶ ὤδε.) the form of *ind. praes. act. 3 sing.* – ζητέω signifies and action, which, together with the noun σημεῖον bears a blasphemous and offensive sense and expresses the position of a part of Jewish leadership regarding Jesus.

In 19,47-48 (Καὶ ἦν διδάσκων τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ. οἱ δὲ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν ἀπολέσαι καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι τοῦ λαοῦ, ⁴⁸ καὶ οὐχ εὗρισκον τὸ τί ποιήσωσιν, ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἅπας ἐξεκρέματο αὐτοῦ ἀκούων.) the form of *ind. imperf. act. 3 pl.* – ἐζήτουν, in compound with αὐτὸν ἀπόλεσα expresses evil intentions of the high priests and scribes, which they could not carry out immediately only due to the presence of the people.

In 20,19 (Καὶ ἐζήτησαν οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ἐπιβαλεῖν ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ, καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν τὸν λαόν, ἔγνωσαν γὰρ ὅτι πρὸς αὐτούς εἶπεν τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην.) the form of *ind. aor. act. 3 pl.* – ἐζήτησαν carries the forth of the negative reaction of the high-priests and scribes to Jesus' parable, as well as the force of their violent plans (ἐπιβαλεῖν ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ.), again unrealized due to the presence of the people.

Finally, in 22,1-6 (Ἦγγιζεν δὲ ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν ἀζύμων ἢ λεγομένη πάσχα. ² καὶ ἐζήτουν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς τὸ πῶς ἀνέλωσιν αὐτόν, ἐφοβούντο γὰρ τὸν λαόν. ³ Εἰσηλθεν δὲ σατανᾶς εἰς Ἰούδαν τὸν καλούμενον Ἰσκαριώτην, ὄντα ἐκ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τῶν δώδεκα· ⁴ καὶ ἀπελθὼν συνελάλησεν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν καὶ στρατηγοῖς

τὸ πῶς αὐτοῖς παραδῶ αὐτόν. ⁵ καὶ ἐχάρησαν καὶ συνέθεντο αὐτῷ ἀργύριον δοῦναι. ⁶ καὶ ἐξωμολόγησεν, καὶ ἐζήτηε εὐκαιρίαν τοῦ παραδοῦναι αὐτόν ἄτερ ὄχλου αὐτοῖς.) in both instances the verb ζητέω characterizes the negative stance of Judas and the Jewish leadership and expresses its ‘incompleteness’ and repetitive character – ἐζήτηον (v. 2a), ἐζήτηε (v. 6b). This outlines both Judas’ evil intention and readiness to hand over Jesus (παραδοῦναι αὐτόν), and the ‘seeking’ on the part of the elders to kill Jesus (τὸ πῶς ἀνέλωσιν αὐτόν). Again, in both cases the people serves as an obstacle for the realization of these plans.

4. Kingdom of Heaven – the subject of ζητέω

The fourth, and the last, group contains four instances of the use of ζητέω in two texts. In 11,9-10 (Κἀγὼ ὑμῖν λέγω, αἰτεῖτε καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν, ζητεῖτε καὶ εὕρησεται, κρούετε καὶ ἀνοιγήσεται ὑμῖν. ¹⁰ πᾶς γὰρ ὁ αἰτῶν λαμβάνει καὶ ὁ ζητῶν εὕρισκει καὶ τῷ κρούοντι ἀνοιγ[ήσ]εται.) in both cases the use of the verb ζητέω, conveying Jesus’ words, serves as an exhortation to prayerful watchfulness of the disciples awaiting the coming of the Kingdom. The form of *imperat. praes. act. 2 pl.* – ζητεῖτε expresses an order and exhortation to pray to the Father for the coming of the Kingdom. The form of *part. praes. act. nom. masc. sing.* – ζητῶν points towards continuous action in the present and fulfills the function of the promise that everyone who persistently and constantly remains in such a disposition will attain to a positive result (ὁ ζητῶν εὕρισκει).

In 12,29-32 (καὶ ὑμεῖς μὴ ζητεῖτε τί φάγητε καὶ τί πίητε καὶ μὴ μετεωρίζεσθε. ³⁰ ταῦτα γὰρ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τοῦ κόσμου ἐπιζητοῦσιν, ὑμῶν δὲ ὁ πατὴρ οἶδεν ὅτι χρῆζετε τούτων. ³¹ πλὴν ζητεῖτε τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν. ³² Μὴ φοβοῦ, τὸ μικρὸν ποιμνιον, ὅτι εὐδόκησεν ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν δοῦναι ὑμῖν τὴν βασιλείαν) we find two instances of the use of ζητέω with seemingly contrary meanings: in the first instance the form of *imperat. praes. act. 2 pl.* together with the negative particle – μὴ ζητεῖτε – serves as a prohibition or a warning before paying too much attention to temporary and passing things; in the second instance the form of *imperat. praes. act. 2 pl.* together with the adverb – πλὴν ζητεῖτε, – expresses an exhortation – and an order, – to seek and to desire the Kingdom. In this passage, Luke focuses our attention on the Lord’s most important order to his disciples: the seeking of the Kingdom of Heaven has to be the absolute priority of our life.

Conclusions

In his Gospel Luke wants to show God, who seeks for sinners with special zeal, and does it continuously, until He finds them. The evangelist emphasizes the success of the ‘seeking’ on God’s part and the effectiveness of God’s action ‘to seek and save that, which was lost’.

On the other hand, in the time of His coming God will look for the fruits of human life and demand an account for the gifts the person was entrusted. Luke points out the responsibility every one of us has for the gifts and charismata we received. Since God continuously and actively seeks the fruits of human life, that fact emphasizes even more the need for every human person to be constantly ready to give an account before the Lord for the results of one’s life.

Luke also expresses the deep need for Jesus on the part of the people: every time Jesus was near, they sought Him, touched Him and received healing. Some of these people, like Zaccheus unexpectedly discovered, that this is Jesus who really looks for them.

Presenting the largest group of texts which reflect situations into which human beings are pushed by unjust and evil motives in relations to Jesus, Luke warns his readers from imitation of such kind of behavior.

The evangelist invites and encourages his readers to continuing process of seeking Jesus, since he is sure that in that way we, like parents of Jesus, may experience unexpected encounter with the mystery of the Divine Sonship of the son of Mary. On the last pages of his Gospel, Luke affirms that if we are able to make a step towards Jesus, like the myrrh-bearing women, we may experience an encounter with a joyful news about the Jesus risen from the dead. Luke beautifully describes how everyone seeking Jesus receives at the encounter much more, than he or she ever dreamt to receive.

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STRESZCZENIE

W niniejszym artykule zostało postawione pytanie o znaczenie czasownika ζητέω w różnych kontekstach Ewangelii św. Łukasza ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem podmiotu działania określonego jako ζητέω. Aby móc dokonać odpowiednich analiz, teksty, które zawierają jakiegokolwiek teologiczne znaczenie tego pojęcia, zostały usystematyzowane w cztery grupy tematyczne, którym odpowiadają poszczególne rozdziały.

Pierwsza grupa tekstów to ta, w której Bóg jest podmiotem ζητέω (12,47-48; 13,6-9; 15,8-10; 19,9-10). W drugiej grupie tekstów występują czasowniki, które wskazują na pozytywny aspekt poszukiwania Jezusa (2,48-49; 6,17-19; 19,2-4; 24,4-7). Trzeci paragraf zawiera największą grupę tekstów, które określają negatywny aspekt poszukiwania Jezusa (9,7-9; 11,15-16; 11,29-32; 19,47-48; 20,19; 22,1-6). Ostatni czwarty paragraf zawiera aż cztery różne zastosowania czasownika ζητέω. Odnajdujemy go w dwóch tekstach mówiąc o Królestwie Bożym (11,9-10; 12,29-32). Aby osiągnąć cel, użyliśmy metody analizy lingwistycznej, który składa się z czterech etapów: a). analiza kontekstualna; b). analiza syntaktyczna; c). analiza semantyczna; d). analiza pragmatyczna, zawierająca kontekst sytuacyjny i kontekst współczesny.

Po przeprowadzonych badaniach dochodzimy do wniosku, że w Ewangelii wg. św. Łukasza jest cały szereg bardzo różnorodnych znaczeń czasownika ζητέω. Sens tego czasownika uzależniony jest od kontekstu oraz podmiot działania. Może wyrażać całkiem przeciwne uczucia i przeżycia. Zastosowanie tego czasownika przez autora natchnionego w różnych okolicznościach, demonstuje głęboką troskę Boga o człowieka i jego los. Ukazuje nam również pozytywne jak i negatywne uczucia człowieka względem Boga wcielonego w Jezusie z Nazaretu.