
In the preface of his Gospel Luke says that he is going to write ‘in an orderly account’ (καθεξῆς). However, scholars have no consensus about the kind of order Luke is seeking. This article aims to ascertain the meaning of καθεξῆς through a detailed study of this word, which includes a study of its usages in the Bible, its etymology, related words, and its meaning in contemporary Greek usages. This article proposes that καθεξῆς most likely refers to chronological order.

Introduction

Luke\textsuperscript{1} states in the preface of his Gospel that he writes it ‘in an orderly account’ (καθεξῆς – 1:3b), but he does not explain what an orderly account means. If καθεξῆς means chronological order, a study of the chronology therein may be important to understand the sequence of events in the Gospel in totality. To study a narrative account, attention may have to be paid to the previous narrative accounts since these accounts may provide additional background information, particularly on the timing of the events. But if καθεξῆς means a logical order, a study of the logic Luke uses may be the key to understand the Gospel. To study a narrative account, we may have to study the reason why Luke places that account in that particular position in the Gospel and what relevance that account has to Luke’s overall logic. Since different beliefs in the writing order may result in different study approaches which may in turn affect the overall understanding of the Gospel and the individual narrative accounts, a study of the writing order Luke uses for his Gospel seems important. This article includes the following sections: Firstly, after summarising the different scholarly views, the article will study all the usages of καθεξῆς in the Bible and ascertain its probable meaning in each occurrence, and will categorise them compared to the categories of meaning shown in BDAG (2000). After that, this article will discuss its etymology to ascertain whether the meaning of its root words impacts καθεξῆς. Thirdly, this article will study the related words (e.g. synonyms and antonyms) and phrases which share καθεξῆς’ root words to see whether their meanings shed light on the meaning of καθεξῆς. Fourthly, the meanings of καθεξῆς will be discussed in contemporary ancient Greek usages and then be categorised as in section one. The article will end with a conclusion.

Views of different scholars

Scholars have different opinions about Luke’s writing order. There are at least six different opinion categories among scholars:

- **Chronological**: Easton (1926:2) and Lockwood (1995:101–104);
- **literary order appropriate to the Gospel**: Alexander (1993:136); Bovon (2002:2); Cadbury (1999:345–346); Ellis (1974:66); Geldenhuys (1975:53); Green (1997:44); Moessner (1999:84–123); Nolland (1989:9); Talbert (2002:9) and Thompson (1972:45);
- **broadly chronological**: Bock (2004:62); Bovon\textsuperscript{2} (2002:22); Creed (1960:5); Felix (1997:61–82); Hendriksen (1978:57); Marshall (1978:43); Plummer (1953:5); and Robertson (1920:53);
- **salvation-historical**: Bock\textsuperscript{3} (2004:61); Bovon (2002:22); Snee (1971:40–43); and Tannehill (1986:10);
- **logical**: Morris (1995:73–74); and Stein (2001:65);


2. This scholar supports more than one view.

3. This scholar also supports more than one view.
The usages of καθεξῆς in the Bible

In Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek (Montanari 2015:1002) καθεξῆς indicates ‘in succession, one after another, in order’. According to BDAG (2000:490) καθεξῆς has a similar but more elaborative meaning, namely ‘pertinent to being in sequence in (1) time, (2) space, or (3) logic’. In the Bible καθεξῆς usually refers to sequence of time, and when Luke uses καθεξῆς to describe time, he describes chronological order, as will be demonstrated.

καθεξῆς appears only five times in the New Testament and does not appear in the Septuagint. All five occurrences are by Luke in his Gospel and in Acts. Luke 8:1 describes the beginning of a new episode where Jesus travels with the 12 apostles to towns and villages to preach the gospel, after he has forgiven the sins of a woman in the Pharisee Simon’s house (Lk 7:36–50): ‘and it happened in the following (days; ἐν τῷ καθεξῆς) also He himself went about through city and village while preaching and bringing good news (about) the kingdom of God and the twelve (were) with Him’. καθεξῆς describes a sequence of days in which Jesus’ traveling and preaching happens; it also relates the current event in Luke 8:1 to the previous event of 7:36–50 in the sense that the current event happens right after the previous event. It therefore may be categorised as time.

Acts 3:24 is a statement Peter made in his second sermon in Acts: ‘and also all the prophets from Samuel and the ones that follow (τῶν καθεξῆς)’ as many as spoke and proclaimed these days’. καθεξῆς here means that follow or following. It describes the prophets who come after Samuel in the order of their appearances in history, which probably refers to chronological order, and therefore fits the category of time. Acts 11:4 describes Peter when he tries to explain to the circumcised believers in Jerusalem the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles at Cornelius’ house: ‘But after starting Peter explained to them in chronological order saying’ (εξετίθετο αὐτοῖς καθεξῆς λέγων). καθεξῆς refers to in chronological order here because according to the biblical content that follows, Peter describes events in the order in which they happened: he first sees a vision (Ac 11:5–10), then the Holy Spirit tells him to follow the messengers sent by Cornelius (11:11–12), Cornelius tells him that he is instructed by an angel to send for him (11:13–14), and finally he begins to preach and the Holy Spirit falls on those who listen (11:15). Therefore, this article categorises it as time.

Acts 18:23 describes what Paul does after he has visited Antioch (18:22) on one of his missionary trips: ‘And after spending some time he went out while passing through in order the Galatian country and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples’ (διερχόμενος καθεξῆς). Later in his journey Paul reaches Ephesus (19:1). According to the geographical locations of Antioch, Galatia, Phrygia and Ephesus, Antioch is east of Galatia, Galatia east of Phrygia, and Phrygia east of Ephesus. It seems that Paul is gradually traveling west away from Antioch and towards Ephesus. If this is true, καθεξῆς here means ‘in the order from the cities which are closer in distance west of Antioch (i.e. those cities in the Galatian country) to the ones further away west of it (i.e. those in Phrygia)’, which appears to be an order of increasing geographical distance. Therefore, this article categorises it as spatial.

The meaning of καθεξῆς in Luke’s four uses, viz. in Luke 8:1, Acts 3:24, 11:4 and 18:23 seems to fall into two categories. In Luke 8:1, Acts 3:24 and 11:4 it refers to time, and in Acts 18:23 it refers to spatial. The unit of measure is time or distance. καθεξῆς in Luke 1:3 most likely falls under the time category, as Luke uses this word to describe a particular order for presenting the events about Jesus. Since this order is the same as that in Luke 8:1, Acts 3:24 and 11:4, they all refer to chronological order.

The etymology of καθεξῆς

In this section, a study of the etymology of καθεξῆς will be conducted to understand the meanings of its root words and the impact on the meaning of καθεξῆς when the root words come together. ‘Etymology’ in Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary (CCD; 2003) means ‘the study of the origins … of words’. Silva (1994:43–51) believes that the root words of a specific word may not necessarily indicate the real meaning of that word unless the biblical writer intends to use the word according to the meanings of its root words; and such an intention can be demonstrated through the notion of transparency. Silva (ibid:48) further explains that ‘the notion of transparency is applied rather broadly to all those words that are motivated, that is, words that have some natural relation to their meaning’. One of the examples Silva gives is the word leader, ‘for someone who knows what to lead means and what the suffix -er stands for can easily arrive at the meaning of the word’ (ibid:48). Silva (ibid:50) also stresses the ultimate importance of the biblical context: only when the meaning of a word derived from etymology can nicely fit into the biblical context, that the meaning would be meaningful in that specific context. καθεξῆς seems to be transparent because on the surface it is a compound consisting of two components (or root words): κατά (the short form of κατά) and καθές. Since καθές means sequence in its biblical usages (see my discussion on καθές below – BWWF), it seems to imply that καθεξῆς is related to some kind of sequence. The meaning of sequence also seems to fit perfectly in the biblical context of Luke 1:3, and it also agrees with the meanings of καθεξῆς in its four other usages in Luke 8:1, Acts 3:24, 11:4 and 18:23, which also indicate sequence. Accordingly, the study of etymology of καθεξῆς seems important. This section shows that καθεξῆς...
likely means next down to the end, and when Luke writes his Gospel in this manner, he probably writes in chronological order.

There are at least two different opinions about the root words (i.e., the origins) of καθεξῆς. According to Thayer, (1930:313) καθαρά and ἐξῆς (adverb) are the two root words that form καθεξῆς, while Kohlenberger III et al. (1995:486) opine that καθαρά and ἐγγό (verb) are the two root words of καθεξῆς. Thayer (1930:223) believes that ἐξῆς and ἐγγό are related and ἐξῆς comes from the future form of ἐγγό (ἐγγό). This article will cover all three words: καθαρά, ἐξῆς and ἐγγό.

Καθαρά is a preposition used extensively in the Greek Bible. There are 488 usages in the NT and 1 871 usages in the Septuagint.8 According to BDAG (2000:511–513), καθαρά has quite a number of meanings. When it is put together with a genitive, it can mean down from, down upon, down against, throughout or into. With an accusative, it can mean in, through, during, according to, or for Meanings above such as ‘down from, down upon, down against, into and in all indicate a downward motion. According to LSJ (1996:882–884), when καθαρά is put together with a genitive it can mean down from, down upon or over, toward, or against, while with an accusative, it can mean of motion downwards, throughout, opposite, in accordance with, concerning, or nearly, about. The meanings given by LSJ are similar to that of BDAG in the sense that many possible meanings indicate a downward motion. LSJ specifically mentions that this preposition can indicate a downward motion when put together with either a genitive or an accusative. Moreover, regarding καθαρά, Robertson (1934:605–606) also agrees that ‘the root-meaning of the preposition is not perfectly clear, though “down” seems to be the idea ... we sometimes find ... the genitive (means) down upon, and the accusative (means) down along.’ Robertson also mentions that when καθαρά is combined with other words, ‘often καθαρά occurs with “perfective” force’. Based on the above observations it is likely that καθαρά, when combined with ἐξῆς to form καθεξῆς gives a meaning of down (or indicates a downward motion) and at the same time gives a perfective force to the word, which means down to the end.

Another root of καθεξῆς is the verb ἐγγό. The word is frequently used in the Greek Bible and in the NT alone it is used 708 times.9 According to Liddell, Scott & Jones (1996:749–751) ἐγγό commonly means to have or to hold. It can also mean ‘cling to’, ‘come next to’, ‘follow closely’, ‘neighboring’ or ‘next’. BDAG (2000:420–422) agrees with LSJ that if ἐγγό is used with a spatial aspect it can mean to be next to something’ or ‘neighboring’, and if used with a temporal aspect it can mean ‘to be next’ or ‘immediately following’. These meanings are very similar to the meaning of the adverb ἐξῆς discussed below.

Contrary to καθαρά, the adverb ἐξῆς is not common in the Greek Bible. According to BDAG (2000:349), it means ‘next in a series’ or ‘in the next place’, and according to LSJ (1996:594) the more important meanings of the word are ‘next’, if used to indicate time; ‘next to’ or ‘next in order to’, if used to indicate logical connection; and ‘next place’, if used to indicate place. It is used only five times in the NT, solely by Luke (Lk 7:11; 9:37; Ac 21:1; 25:17; 27:18), and appears six times in the Septuagint (Ex 10:1; Dt 2:34; 3:6; Jdg 20:48; 2 Macc 7:8; 3 Macc 1:9). This article studies the meaning of ἐξῆς in each of the above 11 occurrences and categorizes them according to LSJ’s three major categories mentioned above.10

Luke 7:11 describes Jesus and his apostles going to a town called Nain. In the context ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἐξῆς means literally: ‘it happened in the next’. As no noun comes after ἐξῆς, it is not clear whether Luke wants to imply ἄγων (time – i.e. next time or soon afterwards) or ἡμέρα (day – i.e. next day) as the noun in this phrase, and Luke mentions neither ἄγων nor ἡμέρα earlier. BDAG (2000:349) concludes that it should be time and reads ‘soon afterwards’, while LSJ (1996:594) suggests that it should be ‘day’ and reads ‘in the next day’. Since ἡμέρα is in the masculine or neuter form which matches the masculine form of ἄγων, and ἡμέρα is in the feminine form, Fung (2017) prefers ἄγων to ἡμέρα. Therefore, this article translates this verse as ‘And it happened soon afterwards He went into a city called Nain and his disciples and a great crowd went with Him.’ Based on the context, here the word ἐξῆς means next and is related to time.

At the beginning of Luke 9:37 Luke uses ἐξῆς in a phrase which is very similar to the phrase in 7:11. Luke 9:37 says that the next day, when Jesus and the apostles come down from the mountain, a great crowd meets Him. ἐγένετο δὲ τῇ ἐξῆς ἡμέρᾳ may be translated as ‘and it happened in the next day’. Again ἐξῆς (next) is related to time. The meaning is similar to the phrase ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἐξῆς (‘it happened in the next time’ or ‘soon afterwards’) used in 7:11 which shares the same construction. In Acts 21:1b Luke is describing one of Paul’s missionary trips: τῇ δὲ ἐξῆς εἰς τὴν Ρώμην καὶ κατεβαίνειν εἰς Πατάραν. Again Luke does not supply the noun for τῇ .... ἐξῆς. Similar to the logic mentioned above, this article translates the phrase as ‘in the next (day) into Rhodes and into Patara’ as an implied ἡμέρα in the feminine matches the feminine τῇ. The phrase is similar to τῇ ἐξῆς ἡμέρᾳ used in Luke 9:37 and therefore the meaning of ἐξῆς, next, is likely related to time. In Acts 25:17 Governor Festus tells King Agrippa that he has dealt promptly with Paul’s case after becoming governor: ‘Then after they (the Jewish leaders who were against Paul) came together here, after making no delay, in the next (day) (τῇ ἐξῆς), after sitting on the judgment seat, I ordered the man to be brought in.’ Here τῇ ἐξῆς is the same as in Luke 9:37 and Acts 21:1, and the context seems to support ἐξῆς being related to time and means ‘next’. Acts 27:18 describes the ship Paul is on, facing a big storm: ‘and while we were being violently tossed in

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8. Numbers are indicated by the search engine of Bibleworks, v. 7. As the usages are numerous, this article will again resort to BDAG and LSJ for guidance.

9. See Kohlenberger III et al. (1995:n.2398). As the usages are numerous, this article will again resort to BDAG and LSJ for guidance.

10. Refer to Appendix 2 for the meanings of ἐξῆς.
the next (day) (τῇ ἑξῆς) we were throwing cargo overboard’. Again, Luke appears to use the feminine τῇ ἑξῆς to describe time and to imply the ‘next’ day. In summary, in all five usages of ἑξῆς, Luke does not use the word separately but always with a dative article (either τῷ or τῇ). He uses ἑξῆς to describe time sequence which means either ‘the next time’ or ‘the next day’. Luke seems to understand ἑξῆς, when used to describe time sequence, as meaning next. This agrees with LSJ’s observation that if ἑξῆς is used to indicate time, it means ‘next’.

In the Septuagint ἑξῆς is used six times. In Exodus 10:1 God tells Moses to approach Pharaoh after the seventh plague and God will harden the hearts of Pharaoh and his servants so that he can perform signs amongst the Egyptians. According to the context of 10:1b, ἑξῆς ἐπέλθῃ τὰ σημεῖα τοῦ σημεῖα represents the remaining three plagues: those that will still come, but not those already been experienced. God has decided to send the remaining plagues on Egypt and this is the reason God asks Moses to approach Pharaoh. Therefore 10:1b may be translated as: ‘for I have hardened his heart and (the heart) of his servants so that these successive signs may come upon them’. ἑξῆς refers to successive signs which will happen in a time sequence.

In both Deuteronomy 2:34 and 3:6 ἑξῆς is used to describe how the Israelites destroy the cities they have conquered in Canaan (ἐξολοθρεύσαμεν πᾶσαν πόλιν ἑξῆς). This article agrees with Brenton (1998–1999) that ἑξῆς should be translated as in succession. ἑξῆς seems to indicate a spatial sequence for the cities which are destroyed by the Israelites. Judges 20:48 describes how the Israelites destroy the cities and the people of the Benjaminites. Judges 20:48b may be translated literally as: ‘and they smote them with the edge of sword from (the) next city to the (last) animal, to all things which were found …’ (ἀπὸ κτήνους ἑκατόν ἕως ἐξωλεθρεύσαμεν πᾶσαν πόλιν ἑξῆς). Again, ἑξῆς is used to describe the spatial sequence of the cities of the Benjaminites which are destroyed one by one.

Ἐξῆς is used in 2 Maccabees 7:8, which describes the seven brothers killed one by one by King Antiochus as he tries to force them to give up their Jewish beliefs. It may be translated as ‘and he, having answered in the language of his father, replied: No! For this very reason also he received the next torture as the first (brother)’ (οὗτος τὴν ἑξῆς ἔλαβεν βάσανον ὡς ὁ πρῶτος). ἑξῆς describes the death of the brothers in a time sequence. In 3 Maccabees 1:9 ἑξῆς describes Ptolemy entering Jerusalem: ‘and after (Ptolemy) arriving in Jerusalem and after sacrificing to the great God and after paying gifts and after doing something of the next acts in the place’ (καὶ τῶν ἑξῆς τι τοῦ τόπου ποιήσας). ἑξῆς describes a sequence of acts done by Ptolemy in chronological order according to their levels of importance in the Jewish custom. Sacrificing to the great God seems to be the most important act; paying gifts apparently is the next most important one, and the next acts likely are the least important ones, so the author does not even describe them. Therefore this article categorises it as a chronological sequence of events which is related to hierarchy of significance.

From the above, the meanings of ἑξῆς in the Septuagint can be divided into three categories. When it indicates a time sequence (Ex 10:1; 2 Macc 7:8) it means next. When it indicates a spatial sequence (Dt 2:34; 3:6; Jdg 20:48) or a sequence which involves hierarchy of significance (3 Macc 1:9) it means next or or next in order to.

In summary, considering the meanings of its root words, κατά and ἑξῆς or ἐξο, καθεξῆς probably has the meaning of next or next in order to (from ἐξο or ἑξῆς) and down (from κατά). With the perfective force provided by κατά, καθεξῆς likely means next down to the end or next in order to, and down to the end. Similarly, in Luke 1:3 Luke intends to write one event after another according to their time of happening (next, or next in order to and down) for everything he has investigated (to the end). By using καθεξῆς, Luke suggests that he writes his Gospel in chronological order.

The words related to καθεξῆς
In this section the article will explore the meanings of the words related to καθεξῆς and also the phrases in the NT and the Septuagint which contain the root words of καθεξῆς. To understand whether a word conveys a concept (and in this case whether καθεξῆς conveys the concept of sequence or chronological order), Long (2005:146) suggests that it is problematic only to study the word: ‘in reality, a single theme may be represented by several different words or phrases, and the totality of a certain truth/theme may not be represented in one word’, and he proposes further that one also has to study the word’s cognates (words built from the same Greek root), synonyms (other words having similar meanings), and even antonyms (words with the opposite meaning). Therefore, comparing the meaning of these words and phrases may yield a more accurate understanding of the meaning of καθεξῆς in Luke 1:3. For the first part of this exercise, related or cognate words are defined as follows: firstly, words which have the same roots as καθεξῆς, i.e. words formed by κατά and ἑξῆς or κατά and ἐξο; secondly words in the same word family as classified by GECNT, including antonyms (words opposite in meaning to καθεξῆς) and synonyms (words with meaning similar to καθεξῆς); and thirdly, words indicated by BDAG or LSJ as having a meaning similar to καθεξῆς. For the second part, related phrases are defined as follows: A related phrase should include either κατά or its related form καθ and then ἑξῆς in proper sequence, or secondly κατά or its related form καθ and then ἐξο or its related forms in proper sequence.

Using these guidelines, cognate words are κατέχω, καθεξῆς, ἐκάθεξις, ἐκαθεξεῖς. However, a detailed analysis of κατέχω,
καθεξῆς,11 ἀνοχή12 and related phrases13 do not provide any helpful information as to the meaning of καθεξῆς. They pick up the meaning of to have from ἐγὼ instead of next. LSJ (1996:852) and BDAG (2000:489) do list τῷ ἔχω, which can be used interchangeably with καθεξῆς. It means in order, one after another, in a row, and next to, successively, continuously. If used to describe time (e.g. τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐπίκεισθε meaning three successive days), it means thereupon and immediately afterwards.14 Middle and Liddell in the TLG database also define this word as ‘in succession, without exception, of time’. Its meanings of successively, continuously and in succession, without exception, of time seem to support the idea that καθεξῆς can mean in chronological order.

The meaning of καθεξῆς in contemporary Greek usage

In this section the article studies καθεξῆς in contemporary Greek usage to ascertain its possible meaning(s) during the time of Luke: firstly all uses of καθεξῆς cited by BDAG (2000) and LSJ, and in the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, Josephus and Philo; secondly all uses in the papyri; and thirdly all additional uses from the last century BCE to CE first century in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) electronic data bank.15 This article categorises the meaning of each usage according to the three categories mentioned earlier, i.e. either a sequence related to time, distance or logic or hierarchy of significance.16 This article discovered that καθεξῆς does not refer to any logical order, but to a sequence which means ‘next down to the end’ referring to a sequence of time, or space, or a hierarchy of significance.

References cited in BDAG, LSJ and Pseudepigrapha

No usage of καθεξῆς was found in Josephus, Philo or the Apocrypha, but eight usages of καθεξῆς appear in BDAG, LSJ and the Pseudepigrapha. These include Plutarch’s Moralia, Aelian’s Historical miscellany, Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas Pertinentes, Oppianus Apamensis Epicus’ Syneggetica, Testament of Judah, Apocalypse of Moses, Martyrodim of Polycarp and I Clement.17

Plutarch’s Moralia (1969, 8:§615b)18

This describes a group singing and the use of a myrtle branch in the group:

but others say the myrtle branch is not to proceed in the order from one to one’s neighbor in the same couch, but is to pass across according to each (position) from couch to couch.

Paul A. Clement (ed. Lake 1912–1913) translates καθεξῆς as ‘from each guest to his neighbor in orderly sequence’. The way the myrtle branch proceeds is described later in more detail by Plutarch in the same paragraph. Clement translates it as follows:

that the first man to sing sent it over to the first man on the second couch, and the latter to the first man on the third couch, then the second man to the second on the neighboring couch, and so on; so, they say, it seems that the song was named στάδιον because of the intricate and twisted character of its path.

Plutarch does not treat the way the branch is actually passed along as καθεξῆς; though it is also a logical order. καθεξῆς in Plutarch’s understanding, seems to mean a spatial sequence which features the characteristic ‘next down to the end’ (meaning of καθεξῆς found in its etymology); while next refers to the neighbour closest to its predecessor in the unit of measure explicitly mentioned or implied, and shares the same subject under discussion19 with its predecessor. (In a time sequence, unit of measure refers to time; in a spatial sequence, unit of measure refers to distance; in a sequence of hierarchy of importance, unit of measure refers to level of importance.) In this case, next refers to the next person sitting on the same couch – the one who is the closest in distance (unit of measure) to the predecessor and they share the same couch (subject under discussion). The branch is passed from the first person on a couch to the second (next) person on the same couch and then to the third (again: next) and all the way (down) until it reaches the last person on the couch (to the end). Therefore, καθεξῆς does not refer to logical order; it refers to a spatial sequence which has the characteristic ‘next down to the end’.

References

11. In the study of words related to καθεξῆς, κατάκερας is identified as having the same root words (κατά and ἐκ). An analysis of the meanings of all the 68 appearances (from GECNT and Hatch & Redpath 1998) of κατάκερας and its related forms in the NT and the Septuagint finds that the meaning of the word is not relevant to καθεξῆς. This word seems only to pick up the meaning of to have and to hold from ἐκ (instead of the meaning next) and means hold, hold back, hold fast, suppress or bound, or et cetera. There is another word, καθεξῆς, which according to LSJ (1996:852), is derived from κατάκερας and probably shares the same roots. This word does not appear in either the NT or the Septuagint. According to LSJ it has a meaning similar to κατάκερας and is also irrelevant to the meaning of καθεξῆς.

12. In the study of words that belong to the same word family as καθεξῆς κατάκερας GECD does not show any related words for καθεξῆς. It only indicates that κατά and ἐκ are the two root words for καθεξῆς [and as mentioned above, Thayer opines that κατά and ἐκ are the two root words]. Therefore, this exercise focused on the root words ἐκ and κατά, which provide the meaning next to καθεξῆς. While GECD indicates that the only related word for καθεξῆς is ἐκπέφανον, there are 48 related words for ἐκπέφανον. A detailed study of all these words (which include καθεξῆς, κατάκερας and ἐκπέφανον) shows that the only seemingly relevant word is ἐγεῖκος, which is formed by the root words ἐκ (meaning: up; the opposite of κατά: meaning down) and ἐκ. However, a study of ἐγεῖκος shows that it picks up the meaning of to hold and to have rather than the meaning of next from ἐκ, and means holding back or forbearance, which is irrelevant to the meaning of καθεξῆς.

13. Using the search engine of Bibleworks v 7, searches for the following related phrases were conducted for both the NT and the Septuagiant. (1) κατά (or καθέ) καθεξῆς phrased together in proper sequence; and (2) κατά (or καθέ) καθεξῆς phrased together in proper sequence; and (3) κατά (or καθέ) καθεξῆς phrased together in proper sequence. (4) κατά (or καθέ) καθεξῆς phrased together in proper sequence. Nothing relevant to the meaning of καθεξῆς is found. Another search was conducted for any of the above four combinations not phrased together, but appearing as close neighbours in the same verse. Again, nothing relevant to the meaning of καθεξῆς was found.


15. No usage of καθεξῆς is found in several reputable additional references. These references include: Deissmann (1995); Grenfell and Hunt (1898–1994; all 18 volumes, except volume 4 which cannot be located, were checked); Horsley (1981–1989); and Moulton and Milligan (1930:§2517).

16. The categorisations of the meanings of καθεξῆς in this section and in the study of καθεξῆς in the Bible are summarised in Appendix 1 for easy reference.

17. For those who have an English translation: this article quotes the paragraph where καθεξῆς is used to understand the context, and if necessary, this article provides the author’s (Fung’s) translation of the sentence to understand more specifically what the word means. For usages without an English translation; the author (Fung) conducts his own translation to ascertain the correct meaning of καθεξῆς in context.


19. ‘Same subject under discussion’ refers to the same background shared by the two, for example ‘acts by the same person’ where person is the common background shared by the acts.
Aelian’s Historical miscellany (1997, 8:§7)
This describes a large wedding conducted during the time of Alexander the Great. N.G. Wilson has rightly translated the passage as follows: ‘When Alexander captured Darius he celebrated his own marriage and that of his friends. The number of people marrying was ninety … For five days in succession he celebrated the weddings (πάντα δὲ ἡμέρας καθεξῆς τοῖς γάμοσι θὰνεο) ...’ Aelian used καθεξῆς to describe how these five days are organised: it is five days in a row from the first day of the wedding to the second (next) day and all the way (down) to the fifth day (to the end). Καθεξῆς here also features the characteristic of ‘next down to the end’, with next referring to the next day, the one closest in time (the unit of measure) to the previous day in the same wedding (subject under discussion). Καθεξῆς refers to a sequence which describes time.

Inscriptions Graecae ad res Romanas Pertinentes
(‘Greek inscriptions relating to Roman affairs’ IGR IV [1927,1432:§9])
The phrase describes the names of contest winners engraved in an inscription. The Greek may be translated as ‘the contests after having written under an inscription: Smyrna, Olympia in the sixth and tenth, Hadrian Rome second, Puteoli second, Neapolis third, Actia second, the body of men-at arms from Argos, Nemea third, all (winners) in their winning order’ (πάντας καθεξῆς). Καθεξῆς here refers to the order of winning contestants (viz. champion, first runner up, etc.). Καθεξῆς describes a hierarchy of significance of the success of the performance of the cities in the contests, beginning with the cities which won first prize, then the cities which won second prize (next), and so on (down) until all the winners are described (to the end). Καθεξῆς here refers to the next award of importance (unit of measure) in the same contest (subject under discussion).

Oppianus Apamensis Epicus’ Cynegetica 3.5920
It describes the several pregnancies of a lionness. A.W. Mair (Oppianus 1928) translates the passage as follows:

Five times doth the lioness lose her zone in birth, and idle truly is the report that she bears but one. Five she bears the first time, but next she travails with four cubs; then next in order (κατά θ’ ἐξείης) from her third labor spring three; from her fourth spring twin young; and last from her womb of noble progeny the mother brings forth the glorious Lion King.

Κατά θ’ ἐξείης, which includes the two root words κατά and ἐξείης, may be translated as down next or next down.21 Similar to καθεξῆς, this phrase describes a sequence meaning ‘next down to the end’. It describes the number of cubs born each time – the first time five are born, then the second (next) time four, and so on (down) until the fifth time (to the end) only one is born. Next here refers to pregnancy of next time (unit of measure) by the same lioness (subject under discussion). This phrase refers to a time sequence.

21 θ’ is not translated, following the practice as in Psalm 119:65, where the alphabet θ’ is also not translated.

Testament of Judah 25:122
Judah describes what will happen after all twelve sons of Jacob have been resurrected R.H. Charles (1913, 2:324) translates this verse as follows:

And after these things shall Abraham and Isaac and Jacob arise unto life, and I and my brethren shall be chief of the tribes of Israel: Levi first, I the second, Joseph third, Benjamin fourth, Simeon fifth, Issachar sixth, and so all in order (σάντως καθεξῆς).

The order here is not time because it does not follow the birth order of the patriarchs in the Bible. It seems that καθεξῆς here describes the order of the twelve patriarchs according to how blessed (by God) they are. The most blessed one is described first, and then the second in order (next) is described, and so on until the least blessed is described (down to the end). Next here refers to the patriarch who is next most important (unit of measure) in the view of God (subject of discussion). The order is a sequence of hierarchy of significance indicating the priority of importance of the patriarchs.

Apocalypse Moses 8:223
Here God tells Adam, after he has eaten from the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden, that God will bring 72 strokes upon his body. The author then describes the first (about the eye) and the second (about the ear) strokes and then writes ‘and likewise in turn (καθεξῆς) all the strokes shall befall thee’. This article translates καθεξῆς as successively. The context seems to indicate that God will impose the strokes one by one upon Adam’s body, and if so, καθεξῆς indicates time sequence or chronological order.

The martyrdom of Polycarp 22:424
Included is a final comment by the author, which Roberts and Donaldson (1885–1896:n.p.) translate as follows: ‘And I again, Pionius, wrote them from the previously written copy, having carefully searched into them ... even as I shall show in what follows ...’ (ἐν τῷ καθεξῆς). Holmes (1999:245) translates the Greek phrase as, ‘as I will explain in the sequel’. Καθεξῆς here is used as a noun to describe another book, probably the sequel to the current book. Next here likely refers to the next book (unit of measure) in a spatial sequence written by the same writer (subject under discussion). Καθεξῆς refers to a spatial sequence concerning the next book the author will write.

1 Clement 37:3
Clement (ed. Lake 1912–1913:n.p.) encourages fellow Christians to follow the command of the Lord. Roberts and Donaldson (1885–1896:n.p.) translate it as follows:

Let us then, men and brethren, with all energy act the part of soldiers, in accordance with His holy commandments. Let us consider those who serve under our generals, with what order, obedience, and submissiveness they perform the things which
are commanded them. All are not prefects, nor commanders of a thousand, nor of a hundred, nor of fifty, nor the like (to καθεξῆς), but each one in his own rank performs the things commanded by the king and the generals.

Holmes (1999:71) translates the phrase in Greek as ‘Not all are prefects or tribunes or centurions or captains of fifty and so forth.’ My own (Fung’s) translation is: ‘not all are commanders, nor captains over a thousand, nor centurions, nor leaders of a company of fifty, nor those in (the) order commanding fewer people’. Here this article treats τὸ καθεξῆς as a collective noun and καθεξῆς as an adjective modifying it. The context describes an order beginning from the commander who commands the greatest number of soldiers down to the leaders who command the smallest number. Καθεξῆς is used to describe those who command even fewer soldiers but are not explicitly mentioned by Clement. It seems that if they are mentioned, they appear to be mentioned in the order of decreasing number of soldiers commanded. Καθεξῆς’s meaning ‘next down to the end’ also fits here where next refers to the leader who commands the next smaller number of soldiers (unit of measure) in the same army (subject under discussion). Καθεξῆς describes a sequence of hierarchy of significance of decreasing number of people commanded.

References cited in TLG
A search of TLG lists four usages of καθεξῆς between the last century BCE and CE first century.25

Antiochus Astrol., Fragmenta (e cod. Monac. 7, 7:114, lines 4 to 14)
In this document the context seems to describe an ancient chronological system:

And the investigation of the one who acts and who turns about is this: whenever the appointed time of Cronus (Father of Zeus) may become the day, we say; it turns about the whole day and acts the first hour and while it is turning about and acting, it gives the second hour to Zeus and we say the second hour of Cronus … Likewise we say the fourth hour of the Sun, the fifth of the Aphrodite, the sixth of the Hermes and the seventh of the Moon, we say when Cronus is turning about, after appointed time of the day also becomes the one who acts. Then again the eighth hour turns about and acts, and the sequence of the future is thus in order, indeed the sun turns about the first day and acts the first hour, and the moon the second (hour) likewise …

Καθεξῆς is used here to describe time. Although in the passage the way time proceeds is seemingly described in chronological order, this does not necessarily imply that the sequence of the future is also in chronological order, as the sequence of the future is not clearly explained in the context. But if the sequence of the future is the same sequence as described earlier, καθεξῆς probably refers to chronological order.

Onasander Tact., Strategicus (30:Τ)
Here the context seems to describe how to choose a commander for an army:

As it is necessary to conclude by way of syllogism the commander before the battle, why ought he to meet during the encounter with the certain one and why with the other and thus one after the other to examine closely his own captains towards the ones of the opponents?

In this passage καθεξῆς is used to describe the method of how to interview people (i.e. ‘one after the other’, or ‘one by one’). The passage seems to indicate a kind of logical sequence, though the context does not explain in detail what this sequence is. Καθεξῆς’s meaning, ‘next down to the end’ also fits here – if the interview is done, the eligible ones will be interviewed according to a logical order until the last one is interviewed. It likely implies a sequential hierarchy of significance.

Vitae Aesopi, Vita Aesopi Westermanniana (40, lines 7–8)
Here is a description of a conversation between a master and a subordinate:

You have commanded me to hear everything, and to do those things. You did not say: Throw water into the pit and wash my feet and place the sandals and everything in their appropriate place.

Καθεξῆς describes ‘the appropriate locations for the subjects which should be placed’. It indicates some kind of spatial sequence. Καθεξῆς’s meaning ‘next down to the end’ fits here – the items will be placed one by one according to a spatial order until the last one is placed, though the type of spatial order is not specified.

Heron’s Geodesia [Sp.] (6:2, lines 1-5)
It describes sowing. It is necessary to know that a peck measure fit for sowing contains 40 litra, and every one litra sows a land of 5 fathoms. For width and length of 5 fathoms while doing 1 litre, also in (the following) order:

Width and length of 10 fathoms while doing 2 litres
Width and length of 15 fathoms while doing 3 litres
Width and length of 20 fathoms while doing 4 litres...

Καθεξῆς describes the area of land which can be sown with the increasing number of litres used. Καθεξῆς’s meaning ‘next down to the end’ is appropriate here – the description continues through the maximum number of litres that can be used. Next here refers to the next additional litre (unit of measure) used for the extra area of land sown (subject of discussion). Καθεξῆς here is categorised as a spatial sequence.

In summary, the study of καθεξῆς in contemporary Greek usages indicates that it does not usually refer to just any logical order. Plutarch’s Moralia shows that the way the myrtle branch passes along is not considered as καθεξῆς. Καθεξῆς likely means ‘next down to the end’ with next being the neighbour closest to the one before in the unit of measure explicitly mentioned or implied, and it shares the same subject under discussion with the one before. Of the 16
references of καθεξῆς studied,27 7 (43.8%) refer to time sequence, 5 (31.2%) spatial sequence, and 4 (25%) hierarchy of significance. Time sequence is the most common meaning of καθεξῆς, and when it refers to time sequence, it always refers to chronological order.

Conclusion

There are several observations about the potential meaning of καθεξῆς which seem to support the conclusion that καθεξῆς in Luke 1:3 most likely refers to ‘chronological order’. They are as follows:

Based on a study of the etymology of καθεξῆς, the word likely has a meaning of ‘next down to the end’ or ‘next in order to, down to the end’. Therefore, if this is applied to Luke 1:3, καθεξῆς probably means that Luke writes one event after another according to their time of happening (‘next in order to’) for everything he has investigated (‘down to the end’) – signifying that Luke most likely writes in chronological order.

Based on a study of contemporary Greek usages of καθεξῆς, καθεξῆς does not refer to just any logical order. καθεξῆς refers to a sequence and the next in its ‘next down to the end’ definition refers to the neighbour closest to the predecessor in the unit of measure explicitly mentioned or implied in the context, and it shares the same subject under discussion with the predecessor. Most references are to time, and secondarily to space. The least frequent references to logic are references to hierarchy of significance.

If Luke’s understanding of the potential meaning of καθεξῆς is the same as that of his contemporaries, καθεξῆς likely refers to a sequence which has the meaning ‘next down to the end’, with next referring to the next act or teaching closest in time (the unit of measure) to the one previously conducted by Jesus (subject under discussion), implying chronological order.

Besides Luke 1:3, καθεξῆς occurs four times only in Luke and Acts in the NT, and the usages in Luke 8:1, Acts 3:24 and 11:4 (i.e. 75%) refer to time sequence. Root components of καθεξῆς are also helpful in understanding the word. The roots καθ and ἐξεῖν, literally have to do with ‘next down to the end’ or ‘next in order to, down to the end’. A sequence or order seems to be the basic idea of the root ἐξεῖν. In this research, the author (Fung) finds sequencing that is organised by time, space or hierarchy of importance.28 Nevertheless, Luke always uses ἐξεῖν to describe a time sequence, whether referring generally to time or specifically to hour. In the Septuagint ἐξεῖν is used for time, space, and hierarchy of significance. καθεξῆς does occur outside the Bible in contemporary Greek examples, where it is used to describe sequence of time, space (physical proximity) and hierarchy of significance. Thus, any of these possibilities can occur in the Gospel. Nevertheless, Luke himself used ἐξεῖν only with time. In addition, since καθεξῆς is used of a whole gospel, space or physical proximity seems not to be a relevant category. The biblical references would argue more for chronology, while the contemporary Greek references would prefer chronology, as well, though hierarchy of significance is possible. Some scholars have suggested that καθεξῆς has to do with thematic logic. However, in the evidence of this study, thematic sequencing does not appear to be an aspect of καθεξῆς. The study shows that BDAG (2000:490) is correct in referring καθεξῆς first to time; καθεξῆς also refers to space or logic (i.e. hierarchy of significance), but those categories are less frequent.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships which may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors’ contributions

B.W.W.F. prepared the article under the supervision of A.B.S. and F.P.V.

References

BDAG, 2000, see Bauer
### Appendix 1

**TABLE 1-A1:** Categorisation of the meanings of ἑξῆς found in the NT, the Septuagint, and contemporary Greek usages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical/other reference</th>
<th>Meaning of ἑξῆς</th>
<th>Category (usage to describe ...)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luke 8:1</td>
<td>Following (days) – describes the time frame in which the event in 8:1 happened – in the period of time immediately after the event of 7:36–50.</td>
<td>Sequence – time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 3:24</td>
<td>Following (prophets) – describes the prophets who come after Samuel in order of their appearance in history, probably refers to chronological order.</td>
<td>Sequence – time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 11:4</td>
<td>Chronological order – Paul explains the events in the order in which they happened.</td>
<td>Sequence – time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynegeticus 3.59</td>
<td>Chronological order of the number of cubs born in each pregnancy – describes the number of cubs, which is decreasing from five to four, four to three, three to two and two to one.</td>
<td>Sequence – time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical miscellany 8:7</td>
<td>Next (death) – describes the death of the seven brothers killed by King Antiochus in a time sequence.</td>
<td>Sequence – time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmenta</td>
<td>The meaning of ἑξῆς is unclear in the text, but if it refers to the sequence the context has described earlier, it probably means chronological order.</td>
<td>Sequence – time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ApocMos 8</td>
<td>The 72 different body parts of Adam upon which God’s punishments will fall. Likely in a chronological manner.</td>
<td>Sequence – time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MarPol 12:3</td>
<td>Sequel of a book – describes the next book the author will write.</td>
<td>Sequence – spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 18:23</td>
<td>Increasing numerical order of spatial distance – in an order of cities with increasing geographical distance from Antioch.</td>
<td>Sequence – spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moralia 2.615b</td>
<td>Sequential order of the people sitting on the same couch: from the first person on a couch to the second one on the same couch to the third one and so on until the last person on the couch is reached.</td>
<td>Sequence – spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita Aesopi Westermanniana</td>
<td>The appropriate locations for the subjects to be placed. Some kind of spatial order.</td>
<td>Sequence – spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geodaesia</td>
<td>In sequential order – the size of land which can be sown with respect to the increasing number of litres used.</td>
<td>Sequence – spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testjud 25:1</td>
<td>In sequence order of importance in God’s view – the order of the twelve patriarchs according to how blessed (by God) they are; the most blessed comes first, down to the least blessed.</td>
<td>Sequence – hierarchy of significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Clement 37:3</td>
<td>In decreasing number of soldiers commanded – in an order beginning with those who command more soldiers down to those who command fewer.</td>
<td>Sequence – hierarchy of significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGR IV 1432.9</td>
<td>In sequential order – the order of winners of contests: champion, first runner-up, second-runner up, et cetera.</td>
<td>Sequence – hierarchy of significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategicus</td>
<td>A logical sequence describing the method of interviewing people. The sequence is likely one of hierarchy of significance.</td>
<td>Sequence – hierarchy of significance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix 2

**TABLE 1-A2:** Categorisation of the meanings of καθεξῆς found in the NT and the Septuagint.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical reference</th>
<th>Meaning of καθεξῆς</th>
<th>Usage to describe ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luke 7:11</td>
<td>Following (days) – describes the event in 7:11 happened – soon after the event described in 7:1–10 (Jesus healing the servant of a centurion).</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 9:37</td>
<td>Next (day) – describes the time when the event in 9:37 happened – on the next day of 9:28–36 (Jesus’ transfiguration).</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 21:1b</td>
<td>Next (day) – describes the itinerary of one of Paul’s missionary trips.</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 25:17</td>
<td>Next (day) – Governor Festus says that he has dealt with Paul’s case promptly, on the next day after he receives a complaint from the Jewish leaders.</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 27:18</td>
<td>Next (day) – the people on the boat begin to throw the cargo overboard on the next day after they encountered a storm.</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 10:1</td>
<td>Next (plagues) – describes the remaining three plagues the Egyptians will face in a time sequence.</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Maccabees 7:8</td>
<td>Next (death) – describes the death of the seven brothers killed by King Antiochus in a time sequence.</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuteronomy 2:34</td>
<td>(City) in succession – describes the spatial sequence for the cities which are destroyed by the Israelites.</td>
<td>Spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuteronomy 3:6</td>
<td>(City) in succession – same as above.</td>
<td>Spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges 20:48</td>
<td>(City) in succession – same as above.</td>
<td>Spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Maccabees 1:9</td>
<td>Next (acts) – describes the hierarchy of significance of the acts performed by Ptolemy.</td>
<td>Hierarchy of significance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>