

## Who Do People Say That I Am: Jesus as Prophet in Luke

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### Introduction

Scholars generally affirm the prophetic role of Jesus in Luke. However, whether Jesus is *the* eschatological prophet is still subject to debate. How did Jesus' words and actions fulfill the Jewish expectation of an eschatological prophet? If he is the final prophet, how did he discharge that role? What was his prophetic message? The question is not whether Jesus was prophet *or* messiah, but how Jesus was the eschatological prophetic messiah. To address this question, I will attempt to show how Luke portrays Jesus' prophetic role, which links inseparably with his overriding messianic function. Our task is to study functionally, exegetically, and theologically those words, actions, and OT allusions that demonstrate Jesus as prophet.<sup>1</sup> By this approach, we could then see a clearer picture of Jesus as prophet in Luke. In what follows, I will first draw out features of the eschatological prophet of Jewish hope and then compare the trajectories of second temple apocalyptic and the third gospel.

#### **“He Shall Teach Righteousness at the End of Days” (CD 6.11)**

The prophet of Jewish apocalyptic anticipation comes at the end of ages to restore Israel and the nations back to Yahweh. He is called, “the unique prophet [μονογενούς προφήτου]” (T. Benj. 9:2).<sup>2</sup> After the temple in Jerusalem is destroyed in judgment, a new “latter temple” will be built there. When the twelve tribes and all nations gather in this end-time temple, the μονογενούς prophet will appear. This one and only prophet enters the first temple, suffers, “be raised up on wood” and shall ascend to heaven from Hades (T. Benj. 9:3).<sup>3</sup> An apocalyptic agent from Levi and Judah is also described as “the Lord’s salvation” (T. Dan. 5:10). Bringing redemption, he is called, “a Savor for Israel” (T. Gad 8:1). If these two figures are the same, then the apocalyptic prophet is the anointed redeemer as well.

In the double messiah motif of the Testaments, the anointed priest from Levi is considered superior to the messianic king from Judah in heavenly matters (T. Jud. 21:2-4).<sup>4</sup> As the recipient of “all the words of the Lord” (T. Lev. 18:2), he will be the final arbiter of the Law. He imposes “the judgment of truth over the earth.” He is like a star that kindles “the light of knowledge as day is illumined by the sun.” Alluding to Isa. 11:2, the “spirit of understanding” shall rest upon him (T. Lev. 18:2-3, 7). In this light, the writer appears to depict him as the inerrant and infallible prophet. Like the eternal rule of the Judaic king-messiah, his priesthood endures eternal. Echoing Psalm 110:4, “there shall be no successor for him from generation to generation forever” (T. Levi 18:8). In the final form of the Testaments, the dual messiah motifs

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<sup>1</sup> David Ravens, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 124.

<sup>2</sup> All quotations of *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* are taken from H. C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 782-828. The Greek text for T. Benjamin is taken from M. de Jonge, *Testamenta XII Patriarchum* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1964).

<sup>3</sup> Kee notes the most explicit Christian interpolation of this text. Kee, “Testaments,” *Pseudepigrapha*, 827.

<sup>4</sup> This section is adapted from Henry S. A. Trocino Jr., *Mighty Messiah: The Hope of a Militant Messiah as the Goal of History in Intertestamental Apocalyptic Literature* (paper submitted for Second Temple Judaism, January 27, 2010).

merge into a single eschatological prophetic-messianic figure associated with both Levi and Judah.<sup>5</sup>

At Qumran, the belief in a final prophet is all the more eschatologically charged. The Essene sect lived in heightened anticipation of the end as presaged by the prophets. Alluding to Num. 24:17, CD 7.18 in the *Damascus Document* corresponds to the star imagery (cf. T. Levi 18:2). “And the star is the Interpreter of the law, who will come to Damascus, as is written: A star moves out of Jacob, and a sceptre arises out of Israel [Num. 24:17]” (CD 7.18).<sup>6</sup> The star is the prophetic priest of the end times, and the scepter, the kingly messiah of Israel.

Echoing Deut. 18:15, 1QS 9.10-11 in the *Rule of the Community* projects the coming of the final prophet together with the messiahs of Aaron and Israel (cf. 4 Ezra 2:17). In the *Rule of the Congregation*, as in the Testaments, the eschatological prophet-priest works together with the messiah-king in the end-times (1QSa 2.11-12). Quoting Deut. 18:18-19, 4QTest 12 refers to “a prophet from among their brothers, like you [Moses]” and “a star” that has “departed from Jacob.” Like the priestly messiah in the Testaments, the priest-prophet of Qumran is superior to the king-messiah in legal matters. The king defers to priestly authority, as Geza Vermes notes. “According to what they teach him [king], he will judge” (4QpIsa 3:24). He “teaches justice at the end of days” (CD 6.11). Thus, the eschatological prophet is also an eschatological teacher.<sup>7</sup>

The *Messianic Apocalypse* applies Isa. 61 to a coming figure, combining Isa. 61 with Mal. 4:5-6 in the text (4QMes 2, 2.6, 8, 12; 2, 3). It foretells of the messiah who “[makes] the dead of his people [ri]se” (4QMes 5, 2.6; cf. 2, 2.13). J. J. Collins argues convincingly for Elijah as the eschatological prophet in this text. Only Elijah raises the dead (1 Ki. 17), not the royal messiah. As the prophetic figure in 1 and 2 Kings, Elijah must be the eschatological prophet of 4QMes, Collins concludes.<sup>8</sup> J. C. Poirier agrees that the figure of 4QMes is Elijah, but as priest, not as prophet, citing the priestly interpretation of Isa. 61:6 by the Qumranites in 1QIsa.<sup>9</sup> There is no mention of Elijah anywhere in fragment two, the best preserved of all eleven fragments,<sup>10</sup> or in fragments five and eight.<sup>11</sup> At best, Elijah is inferred from the text. If the Essenes attribute to Elijah the coming dead-raising messianic ministry, then the coming messiah may be the Elijah-like prophet, priest, or a priestly (mediatory) prophet like Moses. That this messianic task is at the end of the age categorizes the coming messiah as an eschatological Elijah-like prophet.

In sum, the apocalyptic prophet of Jewish expectation is the prophesied Elijah who is to return and prepare the way for the messiah (Mal. 4:5).<sup>12</sup> He is expected to be a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:18-19). The Jews of the Hasmonean period anticipated “a trustworthy prophet”

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<sup>5</sup> J. J. Collins, “Testaments,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. Michael E. Stone (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1984), 339.

<sup>6</sup> All quotations of the Qumran scrolls are taken from Florentino Garcia Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 86.

<sup>8</sup> John J. Collins, “The Works of the Messiah,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 1 (1994): 98-112.

<sup>9</sup> John C. Poirier, “Jesus as an Elijanic Figure in Luke 4:16-30,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71 no. 2 (Apr 2009): 357-358.

<sup>10</sup> Vermes, *Scrolls*, 391.

<sup>11</sup> Garcia Martinez, *Qumran*, 394-395.

<sup>12</sup> Contra—Ben Witherington III, following J. A. Fitzmyer, who sees no tradition before and during Jesus’ time about Elijah as the precursor of the messiah. Ben Witherington III, *Jesus the Seer: The Progress of Prophecy* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 249.

to arise someday (1 Macc. 14:41; cf. 4:46).<sup>13</sup> Thus, he may also be the anointed prophet sent to guide Israel in the end of days.

**“He has raised up a horn of salvation for us” (Luke 1:69)<sup>14</sup>**

The question now is to what extent the Lukan Jesus looks like or unlike the prophet of Jewish expectation. We begin with the data in Zechariah’s Benedictus, which is peculiar only to Luke. Zechariah prophesies about the coming messiah who brings about the salvific restoration of Israel. “He has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us” (Lk. 1:68-69). Alluding to 2 Sam. 22:3, the “horn of salvation,” refers to the messiah. It is a symbol of salvation during first century Judaism, as stated in no. 15 of the Eighteen Benedictions, “Cause the shoot of David to shoot forth quickly, and raise up his horn by thy salvation.”<sup>15</sup> The salvation of Israel comes with the person of the savior. Likewise, the breaking-in of the messianic eschaton comes with the eschatological prophet.

The string of aorist indicative forms, ἐπεσκέψατο, “visited” (v. 68), ἐποίησεν λύτρωσιν, “redeemed” (v. 68), ἤγειρεν, “raised” (v. 69), ἐλάλησεν, “spoke” (v. 70), and ὤμοσεν, “swore” (v. 73), indicate decisive point actions in the past, viewed in summary fashion.<sup>16</sup> “Redeemed” echoes Ps. 111:9. Such language reflects the OT acts of God’s redemption, seen as “patterns,” and therefore, “prophecies” of the coming redemption of the messiah (Ps. 106:10, 45), as E. E. Ellis points out.<sup>17</sup> “From of old” (Lk. 1:70), quoting Mic. 7:20, is found only in Luke-Acts. Alluding to Ex. 13:5, Deut. 7:8, and Jer. 11:5, Luke includes the “oath that he swore to our father Abraham” (Lk. 1:73). Thus, Luke looks back to the past redemptive promises of Yahweh to Israel. Then he looks forward to the fulfillment of OT promises with two eschatological agents—Jesus and John. The multiple uses of aorist and future tenses in the Benedictus covers the scope of Luke’s past and future message of salvation history, from the OT promises to the NT consummation in Jesus himself. The Benedictus, then, is essential to Luke’s presentation, in that it combines the end-time role of John in Gabriel’s words and the final fulfillment of all hopes in Jesus in the Magnificat, in one striking poem of Jewish expectation.<sup>18</sup>

“That we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us” (Lk. 1:71). Luke raises the prospect of restoration for Israel through the coming prophetic messiah. Israel’s restoration means salvation from her enemies, which implies political liberty according to Jewish hopes (1QM 14.4-10; 18:6-11; Pss. Sol. 17:23-27).<sup>19</sup> Yet the accent is on spiritual, personal, and national reinstatement, and not militant messianism.<sup>20</sup> It includes “holiness and righteousness” (v. 75), “knowledge of salvation” and “forgiveness of sins” (v. 77), “light in darkness and death” (v. 79), and guidance “into the way of peace” (v. 79).

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<sup>13</sup> Vermes, *Scrolls*, 87.

<sup>14</sup> All quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

<sup>15</sup> Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels* (London, UK: Collins-Fontana, 1976), 131-132; Ravens, *Luke*, 37.

<sup>16</sup> D. B. Wallace describes this verb form aptly as a “snapshot of the action.” Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 555.

<sup>17</sup> E. Earle Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke. New Century Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Matthew Black (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 78. Ellis, however, sees Jesus’ “priestly role” in the Benedictus, while acknowledging the prophetic character of the messianic era. Ellis, *Luke*, 72-73, 77.

<sup>18</sup> John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, vol. 35A of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1989), 91.

<sup>19</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, vol. 3 of *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 91.

<sup>20</sup> Craig A. Evans, *New International Biblical Commentary: Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 32.

As a prophetic concern, the return of Israel through her anointed redeemer is important to Luke. B. Witherington III suggests that Luke portrays Jesus, Peter, and Paul in Luke-Acts as OT figures to tap into the interest of his Gentile readers in Jewish prophets and prophecies. For Theophilus, Luke presents a prophetic gospel to remove the negative attitude towards the perceived subversive character of early Christianity, as well as to confirm its authenticity.<sup>21</sup> Let me balance such a Gentile slant by positing a Lukan concern for Israel, as seen in the abundantly salvific character of the birth narratives. If the infancy narratives set the tone for the third gospel, notwithstanding the programmatic nature of Jesus' sermon at Nazareth for his ministry, then Luke's concern may well be to call the Jews to a saving knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth, in whom the OT promises find their fulfillment.

John is to prepare the way of the Lord "because of the tender mercy of our God" (Lk. 1:78). "Tender mercy" (ESV) translates *σπλάγχνα*, which is always plural in the NT,<sup>22</sup> and *ἐλέους*, which is singular. The nouns, *σπλάγχνα ἐλέους*, are found nowhere else in the NT or in the LXX, but in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and its Hebrew equivalent in Qumran.<sup>23</sup> "In the last days God will send his compassion on the earth, and whenever he finds compassionate mercy [*σπλάγχνον ἐλεος*], in that person he will dwell" (T. Zeb. 8:2; cf. 7:3; 1QS 2.1; 4QS1.). Significantly, T. Zeb. 8:2 is set in "the last days."

J. Nolland, noting that Zechariah's prophecy is "eschatological in character," proffers that it speaks "of an eschatology already in process of realization but with a future fulfillment yet outstanding."<sup>24</sup> I. H. Marshall also sees its realization "in the time of the End" (Lk. 7:18; Mal. 3:1; Isa. 29:18; 35:3; 61:1).<sup>25</sup> No main verb indicates a time "to be saved from our enemies" (Lk. 1:71). Hence, we can best treat the beginning-of-fulfillment tone of Lk. 1:68-70 by linking it to the immediately near future.<sup>26</sup> With Zechariah's announcement, the era of salvation is at hand. It attests to the prophetic-messianic character of the coming messianic age.<sup>27</sup> It signifies the appearance of Jesus as an anticipated eschatological event, as indicated also by his baptism and sermon at Nazareth (Lk. 3:22; 4:21).

#### **"The Holy Spirit Descended on Him" (Luke 3:22)**

In Mark's version of Jesus' baptism, he describes Jesus coming out of the water (Mk. 1:10). Yet Luke strikes this detail. He is not concerned about the event of the baptism, but the post-baptism event of cosmic importance (Lk. 3:21-22). As Nolland argues, similar to Marshall,<sup>28</sup> by using a genitive present participle, *προσευχομένου*, "was praying," with the aorist genitive participle, *βαπτισθέντος*, "had been baptized," Luke establishes "a clear time separation between the baptisms and the opening of heaven." The implications are remarkable. (1) Luke "almost totally reformulated" Mark. (2) Jesus' baptism is no longer in view, unlike in Mark and Matthew. (4) Luke projects what happened while Jesus was praying after his baptism. (5) Thus, Luke presents "a new beginning," and "decisive steps are taken in the context of Jesus' prayer" (cf. 6:12; 9:18, 28-29; 11:1; 22:41).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Witherington III, *Jesus*, 331.

<sup>22</sup> Marshall, *Gospel*, 94.

<sup>23</sup> Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 89.

<sup>24</sup> Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 84-85.

<sup>25</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 120.

<sup>26</sup> Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 87.

<sup>27</sup> Ellis, *Luke*, 72-73.

<sup>28</sup> Marshall, *Gospel*, 150, 152.

<sup>29</sup> Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 160.

Crucial is the solely Lukan interposition of an infinitive phrase, ἐν τῷ βαπτισθῆναι, “were baptized,” and a genitive construction with two participles, βαπτισθέντος, “were baptized,” and προσευχομένου, “praying.” The aorist infinitive, ἀνεωχθῆναι, “opened,” with the noun, οὐρανὸν, as the accusative, would become the subject of Ἐγένετο.<sup>30</sup> The construction makes the clauses of v. 21 subordinate to v. 22.<sup>31</sup> Thus, Luke’s direction is what happened *after* Jesus baptism and *while* he was praying.<sup>32</sup> Evidently, while Jesus was praying, heaven opened, the Spirit descended, and the Father spoke (Lk. 3:21-22). The anarthrous aorist participle, βαπτισθέντος “being baptized,” and present participle, προσευχομένου, “praying,” exert its verbal over its adjectival function. It now draws attention to their verbal nature. W. Liefeld sees here a contrast between the single event of the baptisms, and the enduring image of Jesus’ prayer life.<sup>33</sup>

The upshot is worth pondering. This event is not the baptism of Jesus. It happened *after* that. Unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke focuses on the event after the baptism. It happens *during* his praying, an activity which Luke points out throughout his gospel (Lk. 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 11:1; 22:41). Heaven opened, the Spirit came, and the Father spoke perhaps in response to Jesus’ prayer. The coming of the Spirit signified Jesus’ anointing.<sup>34</sup> It is the anointing for a task, a commissioning. Luke uses the anointing event to introduce Jesus’ public ministry in the next breath (Lk. 3:23). Thus, Luke emphasizes both the coming of the Spirit and praying of Jesus, which is non-Markan and non-Matthean. Luke also shows the importance of this event, in that both the coming of the Spirit and the voice of the Father anointed Jesus, attested him as Son, and authorized his ministry.

The Testaments also describe a combination of the heavenly opening, Spirit-giving, and proclaiming voice to the anointed prophetic priest. “The heavens will be opened . . . with a fatherly voice . . . And the spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him” (T. Levi 18:6-7; cf. T. Jud. 24:2). Isaiah links the same giving of the Spirit with the coming of the kingly messiah and messenger (Isa. 11:2). This bearer brings good news to the poor, binds the brokenhearted, and announces liberty to the captives (Isa. 61:1). Significantly, Jesus applied the promise of Isa. 61:1 upon himself as the person on whom the eschatological promise rested (Lk. 4:19). Jesus returned from Jordan “full of the Holy Spirit” and went into the wilderness “led by the Spirit” (Lk. 4:1). He preached in Galilee “in the power of the Spirit” (Lk. 4:14). Thus, the fullness, direction, and descent of the Spirit mark him as the prophesied prophet of the last days.

John linked the Spirit in his apocalyptic picture of Jesus. Jesus is the one who will baptize people with the Spirit and fire, clear the floor with his winnowing fork, gather the wheat, and burn the chaff (Lk. 3:16-17). The contrast John carves is clear. Whereas John only prepares the way for the Lord initially, Jesus consummates all things finally. In this eschatological framework, Jesus blesses the repentant, but judges the resistant. Following J. D. G. Dunn and J. A. Fitzmyer, Nolland sees here an “eschatological purgation” for the penitent and destruction by wind and fire for the godless. Drawing on Jer. 4:11-12, he views the imagery of winnowing to refer to the wind in its dual function of cleansing and judgment (Isa. 4:4; 11:4; Ezek. 13:13); and

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<sup>30</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, Power Bible CD, version 4.3. ed. John Gilbertson (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, 2005).

<sup>31</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, vol. 3A of *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 336.

<sup>32</sup> Marshall, *Gospel*, 152.

<sup>33</sup> Walter L. Liefeld, *Luke*, vol. 8 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible*, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 859.

<sup>34</sup> Marshall, *Gospel*, 150, 152.

the fire, in its twin tasks of destroying the dross and purifying the metals (Isa. 1:25; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:2-3). The Qumran also describes the Spirit with figures of purging and refining (1QS 3.7-9; 4:20-21; 1QH 16.12). The baptism and power of the Spirit poured out at Pentecost and continued in the young church, but with the purging of Ananias and Sapphira. In this final age, Jesus' task includes the refining of the godly with the cost of following Christ. He also purges the ungodly with the division he causes among people, until the "final eschatological climax" of the ages (Lk. 12:49-53; 14:26-33; 17:29; 21:25-26, 36).<sup>35</sup>

#### **"Today This Scripture has been Fulfilled" (Luke 4:21)**

In what Luke presents as paradigmatic of the future path of Jesus' public ministry, Jesus reads Isa. 61:1-2<sup>36</sup> and makes a claim in a synagogue at Nazareth. He announces to all that the prophecy has been fulfilled in himself. In saying it, Jesus categorically places himself as the speaker of Isaiah's prophecy. Thus, Jesus is anointed as prophet and messiah,<sup>37</sup> by virtue of his post-baptism anointing (Lk. 3:22; 4:18). He is the eschatological prophet, proclaiming good news to the poor, releasing the captives, and giving sight for the blind (Lk. 4:18). He proclaims the year of Yahweh's favor (Lk. 4:19). In that the prophecy is found in the pericope of the suffering servant passages of Isaiah, and that Isa. 61:1 reflects the servant songs, we could infer also that he is the suffering servant.<sup>38</sup> Clearly, Luke presents Jesus as the final prophet from the inception of his ministry.<sup>39</sup>

The predominant thought in Isaiah 61 is prophetic. Four things are striking in this passage for our present study: anointing of the spirit of Yahweh, commissioning, task of the prophet-messiah, and epochal year of the Lord's favor. At Nazareth, Jesus applied all these aspects to himself. Like the servant, the Isaianic speaker possesses the spirit of Yahweh (Isa. 42:7). Unlike the speaker and Cyrus, however, the servant is never called anointed (Isa. 45:1).<sup>40</sup> The qal perfect, חָשַׁב, "anointed" (Isa. 61:1) denotes a "setting apart to an office" "to religious service."<sup>41</sup> In the context of Isa. 61 then, it signifies consecration to fulfill a mission.<sup>42</sup> The equivalent LXX form, χρίτω, carries the same sense of "an anointing by God setting a pers. apart for special

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<sup>35</sup> Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 153, 155.

<sup>36</sup> Bock writes that Luke "probably" inserted Isa. 58:6 in the reading. He cites the linkage of the terms, ἄφεσις and ἀφέσει in the Greek, and חָשַׁב and חָשַׁב, which appear in both texts, and the Jubilee imagery, linking it to Luke 4. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 404-405. Yet, R. H. Stein counters that the parallel in Mark 6:1-6 reveals that Luke did not have to include it. For Luke, the chosen Scripture reveals perfectly Jesus' ministry purpose. Luke stated that Jesus chose the text himself and "described his ministry as aimed at its fulfillment." Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 156. Most probably, Jesus himself quoted Isa. 58:6 in his reading.

<sup>37</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1995), 61-62.

<sup>38</sup> Liefeld, *Commentary*, 867. However, Fitzmyer sees Jesus as eschatological prophet, not as suffering servant. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 529.

<sup>39</sup> R. B. Sloan Jr., *The Favorable Year of the Lord: A Study of Jubilarial Theology in the Gospel of Luke* (Austin, TX: Schola, 1977), 51, 71.

<sup>40</sup> John L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, vol. 20 of *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 180.

<sup>41</sup> Francis Brown, Samuel Driver, and Charles Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, s. v. חָשַׁב, Bible Windows, version 5.0, ed. Paul Bodin (Cedar Hill, TX: Silver Mountain Software, 1994).

<sup>42</sup> So, Roger Norman Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66. New Century Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Ronald E. Clements (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 241.

service under divine direction.”<sup>43</sup> Thus, Jesus was “sent,” in that he was “anointed.” The term, ἀποστέλλω, “send forth,” indicates a sending away of someone “for the achievement of some objective.”<sup>44</sup> It further reinforces the idea of commissioning imbedded in his anointing. That this anointing is connected with receiving the gift of the Spirit is clear in 1 Sam. 16:13.<sup>45</sup>

The Spirit-anointing of prophets and end time figures also finds forceful expression in Qumran. The Spirit taught people through “the anointed ones and seers of the truth [prophets]” (CD 2.12). Resonating Isa. 40:1 and 61:1, 11QMelch tells of the messenger “who announces salv[ation]” and “comfo[rt the afflicted]” (11QMelch 2.18-19). To “comfort the afflicted” means “to instruct them in all the ages of the worl[d] . . . ] in truth” (11QMelch 2.20). M. P. Miller sees the use of Isa. 61:1-2 by 11QMelch in an apparent Jubilee mode.<sup>46</sup> In fact, the preface states, “In this year of jubilee, [you shall return, each one, to his respective property, as is written]” (11QMelch 2.1). If so, then the language of poverty, bondage, and oppression brings on new meaning to the Lukan use of the text. The Jubilee frame now goes against the usual non-critical, spiritualized, and confused reading of the Lukan “poor” to refer to the Matthean “poor in spirit.” Yet 11QMelch also applies Isa. 61:1 to an eschatological figure who “will proclaim liberty for them, to free them from [the debt] of all their *iniquities*” (11QMelch 2.6, emphasis added). This expectation of a final messenger bringing freedom from sin reverberates in Zechariah’s hope of forgiveness, peace, and freedom from Israel’s enemies with the coming of Jesus.

Echoing Isa. 42:7 and 49:9, the task of the Isaianic speaker in Isa. 61:1 is to bring good news to the poor, open the eyes of the blind, and set the prisoners free. This means that the speaker sees himself as completing the work of the servant. His work now concerns Israel in her condition of helplessness, in that the poor, the heartbroken, and the prisoners may refer to post-exilic Israelites as a whole, especially those who are faithful to Yahweh. Hence, he declares the coming of salvation.<sup>47</sup> Jesus as eschatological prophet brings good news to the poor and with it, God’s blessing (Lk. 4:21; 6:20, 24). The point is that the ministry of Jesus, as God’s epochal agent, marks the “arrival” of God’s own blessing, as J. B. Green asserts.<sup>48</sup>

Though Luke may have omitted the phrase, “bind up the brokenhearted” (Isa. 51:1),<sup>49</sup> he maintains the same basic message of deliverance, which takes the forms of restoration and release. Luke introduces the theme of Israel’s restoration by the coming of John and Jesus in the birth narratives of Luke. He takes it up again with Peter’s note of ἀποκαταστάσεως, “restoration,” with the second coming of Jesus (Acts 3:21).

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<sup>43</sup> Frederick William Danker, rev. and ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL/London, UK: University of Chicago, 2000), s. v. χρίω.

<sup>44</sup> Danker, *Lexicon*, s. v. ἀποστέλλω.

<sup>45</sup> John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, vol. 25 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 302; also, Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 241.

<sup>46</sup> M. P. Miller, “The Function of Isa. 61:1-2 in 11Q Melchizedek,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 467-469; so, Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 197.

<sup>47</sup> McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, xvii, 181. Critical scholars date Isaiah 40-66 or “Deutero-Isaiah” between 550-540 BCE (post-exilic), while conservative scholars put it at 740-681 BCE (pre-exilic). See McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, xviii-xxiv; Robert C. Ortlund Jr., “Isaiah,” in *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1232-1233. The case for the unity of Isaiah is strong (Isa. 1:1). The prophecy would then be predictive in nature, yet still highly relevant to both the readers of Isaiah’s day and the post-exilic Israelite community.

<sup>48</sup> Green, *Theology*, 64.

<sup>49</sup> The Byzantine text has *ιασασθαι τους συντετριμμενους τον καρδιαν*, “to heal the brokenhearted,” but omitted in NA27. No sufficient reason is given so far. Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 191; Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 405.

Luke also develops the idea of release through the dual modes of forgiveness of sin (spiritual) and healing of disease (physical) in his narrative.<sup>50</sup> Release from captivity is especially striking to the Israelite recipients of Isaiah, in that the divine judgment of exile was due to their sin—their disloyalty to the covenant and hence, their disobedience to Yahweh (Deut. 28:45-68; Isa. 42). The prophetic message of release therefore is a message of forgiveness.<sup>51</sup> The mission of deliverance through restoration and release is both messianic and prophetic then, so that when Jesus applied it to himself, the messianic mission overlaps with the prophetic role, thus defining his role as the prophetic messiah (Lk. 4:24). This is evident by how Luke links prophetic anointing and messianic anointing (Lk. 3:22; Acts 4:26-27).<sup>52</sup> It is within Jesus' messianic role then, that he discharges his prophetic task. As such, Jesus is to be seen, not as a messianic prophet, but as a prophetic messiah (Lk. 13:33).

Liefeld, with D. L. Bock<sup>53</sup> and Nolland,<sup>54</sup> likens the “year of the LORD’s favor” (Isa. 61:2) to the year of the Jubilee (Lev. 25:8-17). There are indeed salient parallels. R. Sloan even makes the interesting case for a “jubiliary theology” in Luke.<sup>55</sup> However, the picture closely recalls and derives from Isa. 42:1-4 and 49:1-6 as C. Westermann<sup>56</sup> and R. N. Whybray assert; and Isa. 40:1-11, 51-52, and 60 for J. D. W. Watts. The similarities of Isa. 61:1-11 are so close to the servant songs of Isa. 40-66 that this “song” may belong to the same group of songs. In effect, the speaker of Isa. 61 applies the themes and phrases of the servant songs to himself.<sup>57</sup> “Comfort, comfort my people” (Isa. 40:1). Even so, the recipients of this original commission left it unfulfilled (Isa. 49:1-4). It is now left to the anointed speaker of Isa. 61 to realize it. He will now “comfort all who mourn” (Isa. 61:2). What Isa. 40 hazily projects then is now apparent in Isa. 61.<sup>58</sup> Yet the language of Jubilean liberation in Jesus’ acts of salvation should not be discounted.

The perfect indicative, *πεπλήρωται*, “fulfilled” (Lk. 4:21), signifies completed action in the past, yet with continuing results in the present. It can be an “intensive perfect,” wherein the focus is on the resultant state:<sup>59</sup> Having been fulfilled, this prophecy is still being fulfilled “today.” Most likely, it is a “perfect with a present force,” functioning like an intensive perfect, but with a present force:<sup>60</sup> Today, this prophecy *is* fulfilled. That Jesus quoted the “year of the LORD’s favor” in Isa. 61:2 as being fulfilled “today” signifies the new era of eschatological favor from Yahweh with Jesus’ coming. In that the completion of OT prophecies ushers in the time of the end, as Marshall points out, the consequent ministry of Jesus therefore is the beginning of the end of days.<sup>61</sup> Jesus’ ministry marked the dawning of the day of salvation. It is eschatological, in that this day has arrived. It is fulfilled today. It is realized in Jesus himself.

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<sup>50</sup> Green, *Theology*, 79.

<sup>51</sup> Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 409.

<sup>52</sup> Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, 202.

<sup>53</sup> Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 405, 410.

<sup>54</sup> Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, 197.

<sup>55</sup> Sloan, *Favorable Year*, 51; Contra, R. C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1986), 68.

<sup>56</sup> Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1969), 365.

<sup>57</sup> Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 239-240.

<sup>58</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 303.

<sup>59</sup> Wallace, *Grammar*, 575.

<sup>60</sup> Wallace, *Grammar*, 580; likewise, Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 412.

<sup>61</sup> Marshall, *Luke*, 121.



Today is the year of Yahweh’s favor.<sup>62</sup> This is not to say though that the era of salvation, began and ended with Jesus, is no longer present, as H. Conzelmann argues. Rather, the era of salvation, which Jesus announced at Nazareth realized in him, begins with His ministry, covers the period of the church, and consummates at the parousia.<sup>63</sup> “Today” then refers to “the time in history when God in sovereign grace brings freedom from the guilt and effects of sin,” as Liefeld aptly put it. That Luke included it as the programmatic theme of Jesus’ public ministry is consistent with his stress on the breaking-in of the new epoch of salvation.<sup>64</sup> It may also explain why Luke omitted the next phrase—“and the day of vengeance of our God” (Isa. 61:2). Luke’s omission would align with his emphasis on this final age of deliverance in his gospel. Like Marshall,<sup>65</sup> Bock suggests that the omission signifies the present time of release rather than judgment, though with a warning (Lk. 4:24-27); but also, that the time of judgment is not yet. He then links it with the “already, not yet” tension of NT eschatology.<sup>66</sup> Yet, I must point out that the “not yet” judgment in Luke 4 is disparate from the “already” arrival of eschatological hope with Jesus’ ministry—both being incongruent. Nonetheless, the Isaianic prophecy proclaims salvation through a prophetic messiah in the final age of Israel’s restoration and release. That Jesus applied it to himself effectively configures both his self-understanding and ministry in an eschatological agenda.

**“Listen to Him!” (Luke 9:35)**

C. A. Evans, Liefeld, Nolland, and Bock rightly note Luke’s allusion of Deut. 18:15 in Lk. 9:35. Yet Bock goes farther in proving that the word order of Lk. 9:35 shows a direct match with the LXX,<sup>67</sup> which is unparalleled in Matthew and Mark.

Deut. 18:15	αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε	Mk. 9:7	ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ
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Lk. 9:35	αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε	Matt. 17:5	ἀκούετε αὐτου
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Following Mark, Luke uses the present imperative, ἀκούετε, “listen” (Lk. 9:35), as compared to the future indicative, ἀκούσεσθε, “shall listen” (Deut. 18:15). If Luke uses Mark as his main source, at this point, he reverses the word order to match the Mosaic text. Unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke *configures* the divine imperative, αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε, “listen to him,” to the Mosaic prophecy itself. The implications are significant.

Apparently, Luke links the eschatological Moses-like prophet to Jesus.<sup>68</sup> He presents the Father’s command in answer to the prophecy. Luke pinpoints Jesus as the eschatological prophet of Jewish expectation. That is not to say that Luke implies a Moses typology for Jesus. Rather, Luke’s reference to Deut. 18:15 indicates that the Moses-like prophet is now the person of Jesus himself. Luke quotes Peter acknowledging it (Acts 3:23-24). D. Ravens contends that Luke draws out the Moses typology of Jesus, citing Jesus’ death and glorification as a picture of Yahweh’s past deliverance of Israel. The use of the word, ἐξοδου, “departure,” of Jesus (Lk. 9:31) in the LXX describes Israel getting out of Egypt (Ex. 19:1; Num. 33:38). The shining appearance of Moses at the transfiguration reflects his shining face when he came down from

<sup>62</sup> Marshall, *Gospel*, 178.

<sup>63</sup> Marshall, *Luke*, 121; similarly, Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 533-534; and Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 412.

<sup>64</sup> Liefeld, *Commentary*, 867; similarly—Stein, *Luke*, 157.

<sup>65</sup> Marshall, *Luke*, 121.

<sup>66</sup> Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 405, 411.

<sup>67</sup> Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 874.

<sup>68</sup> Contra, Marshall, who sees the text as a “call to obedience” rather than a “christological statement.” Marshall, *Gospel*, 388.

Sinai (Ex. 34:29). The children of Israel were afraid, just like the apostles (Ex. 34:30; Lk. 9:34).<sup>69</sup> However, C. F. Evans is on the dot in finding no solid bases for stretching *ἐξοδον* to refer to Israel's exodus and redemption.<sup>70</sup> Instead, with Marshall,<sup>71</sup> Fitzmyer,<sup>72</sup> and Liefeld, Jesus' "exodus" may "recall" the great redemption of God in the Israelite exodus.<sup>73</sup> If it is a typology, as D. P. Moessner posits, it is not in the sequence, description, chronology, or analogy of the details, but in a correspondence in the calling, implementation, and destiny of Jesus, the Moses-like prophet.<sup>74</sup> With Ravens and Liefeld, and against Fitzmyer, who considers Moses and Elijah as mere "foils to Jesus" and representing the old Israel,<sup>75</sup> the two prophets still played major roles in Jewish thought. Moses preceded the messiah, while Elijah pointed to the messiah.<sup>76</sup> The people still expected a Moses-like prophet. Some believed Jesus to be the comeback Elijah of old (Lk. 9:7-8, 19). Ravens even argues that Luke presents Jesus as the expected Elijah. He cites allusions to Elijah with the raising of the widow's son at Nain, the call to bring down fire from heaven, and Jesus' ascension.<sup>77</sup> However, Luke identifies John with Elijah, while Jesus is more identified with Moses (Lk. 1:17; 7:27; 9:35; Acts 3:23-24). The style may be anthological, interpreting Jesus' acts as recalling or imitating<sup>78</sup> Elijah, but not taking it as fulfillment of Elijanic prophecy.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, Ravens rightly notes that although not representing Israel, Moses and Elijah stood with Jesus in their heavenly glory, authenticating Jesus as the prophet.<sup>80</sup> The point is that the Mosaic and Elijanic links should not be forced into Moses and Elijah typologies, since the endpoint of Luke's narrative is to listen to Jesus.<sup>81</sup>

The coming prophet like Moses is Jesus. He fulfills the prophecy. Like Moses, his teaching is consistent with the Law. That is why they must listen to Jesus.<sup>82</sup> Unlike Moses, he is the infallible interpreter of the Law, prophets, psalms (Lk. 24:27, 44). In fact, he fulfills it. Like Moses, he is a prophet. Yet, unlike Moses, he is the superior eschatological prophet who redeems and guides Israel in the final days (T. Lev. 18:2; Lk. 24:44-45). Despite his prediction of the cross, listen to him! The cross is crucial to his task as the prophetic messiah. Aside from the disciples' need to learn this from Jesus, the command strongly suggests the prophetic role of Jesus as the final interpreter of the Scriptures and the ultimate revealer of God.

### Conclusion

When Matthew related the incident about John's disciples asking Jesus if he was the coming one or not, he merely writes Jesus' answer to them (Matt. 11:2-6). Luke notes the same

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<sup>69</sup> Ravens, *Luke*, 128.

<sup>70</sup> C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke. Trinity Press International New Testament Commentaries* (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity, 1990), 418.

<sup>71</sup> Marshall, *Gospel*, 380, 384-385.

<sup>72</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 794.

<sup>73</sup> Liefeld, *Commentary*, 927.

<sup>74</sup> David P. Moessner, "Luke 9:1-50: Luke's Preview of the Journey of the Prophet Like Moses of Deuteronomy," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102, no. 4 (1983): 575-605.

<sup>75</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 795.

<sup>76</sup> Liefeld, *Commentary*, 926.

<sup>77</sup> Ravens, *Luke*, 132-134.

<sup>78</sup> J. Severino Croatto, "Jesus, Prophet Like Elijah, and Prophet-Teacher Like Moses in Luke-Acts," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 3 (2005): 455-456.

<sup>79</sup> Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 322.

<sup>80</sup> Ravens, *Luke*, 129.

<sup>81</sup> John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*, vol. 35B of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1993), 503; equally, Marshall, *Gospel*, 388.

<sup>82</sup> Ravens, *Luke*, 129.

things, but with a preface: “In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight” (Lk. 7:21). Then he records Jesus’ identity-markers in words that allude to the vivid eschatological promises of Isa. 29:18, 35:5; 42:6, and 61:1. Clearly, Jesus’ words matched the Isaianic passages, signifying the breakthrough of the new era of salvation with his coming. For Luke, the visible actuality of the saving events points to the reality of the eschaton, and with it, the function of the eschatological prophet. We could say that Jesus’ prophetic actions identify him. His activity describes his identity. Yet, what drove those actions? It is a fair thing to say that it is not so much his activity that defines him, but his prophetic and messianic self-understanding that defines his activity. His activity then merely authenticates his identity. For even before his birth, Zechariah already declared his role as such. OT prophecy dictated the function of the final prophet, with Jewish apocalyptic tradition reconfiguring it. The powerful words and works of Jesus fulfilled it. Thus, his saving actions do not make him the prophet. Rather, his prophetic messianic identity determines his saving events.

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