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LUKE AND LEGACY: BRUCE LINCOLN AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF JESUS'S PROPHET-LIKE AUTHORITY IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts, Religious Studies

By

Kendall Mayo

December 2021

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LUKE AND LEGACY: BRUCE LINCOLN AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF JESUS'S PROPHET-LIKE AUTHORITY IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Religious Studies

Missouri State University, December 2021

Master of Arts

Kendall Mayo

ABSTRACT

In his gospel, Luke uses various identity markers in his description of Jesus (Son of God, Son of Man, Davidide, etc.). One of the primary markers that Luke uses for Jesus is "prophet," and this marker serves Luke's historiographical purpose of identifying Jesus as the culminating figure in Israelite history. A significant body of work has already been produced discussing the areas where Jesus is shown to act like a prophet. However, this thesis will continue the discussion by looking at the places where Jesus is shown to "bust" the prophetic mold by doing and saying things that prophets normally do not. First, this thesis will discuss some ideas offered by Bruce Lincoln (ancestral invocation, shared eschatological images, and authority construction) that will prove useful in identifying how Luke uses the prophetic office in his historiography. It will then discuss a variety of prophetic tropes that commonly appear in the Old Testament in order to then show how Luke has Jesus emulate these motifs in his gospel. It will be demonstrated that Luke shows Jesus to surpass or "bust" these prophetic tropes, thus cementing Jesus as one who is truly the ultimate figure of Israelite history and the legitimate central figure in the early Christian community.

KEYWORDS: Luke, Jesus, christology, prophet, Synoptic Gospels, authority, Bruce Lincoln

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In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

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I dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Sutah Hardage. You first taught me to love the stories in the Bible. I hope I can tell this story as well as you could.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 1
Literature Review	Page 6
Approach/Methodology	Page 17
Mythic Background	Page 18
Lincoln: Myth and Authority Construction	Page 20
Prophetic Authority	Page 26
Regnal Formulas	Page 27
Prophetic Utterances	Page 29
Call Narratives	Page 32
Mountain Experiences	Page 39
Miracles	Page 45
Jesus's Prophetic Authority	Page 71
John as Prophet	Page 71
Jesus as Prophet	Page 74
Lincoln and Jesus the Prophet	Page 82
Beyond Prophetic Authority	Page 84
Prophetic Trope Busting	Page 85
Lincoln, Luke, and Authority	Page 100
Conclusions	Page 103
Bibliography	Page 106

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Moses's Miracles Page 56

Table 2. Elijah's Miracles Page 63

Table 3. Elisha's Miracles Page 70

Table 4. Jesus's Miracles Page 93

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Lincoln's Ancestral Invocation Tree Page 21

Figure 2. Marvel Page 47

Figure 3. $Miracle_1$ Page 48

Figure 4. $Miracle_2$ Page 49

Figure 5. $Miracle_3$ Page 50

Figure 6. $Miracle_4$ Page 51

INTRODUCTION

Why does it matter that Rey is a Palpatine?[1] In the most recent installment of the Star Wars franchise, *The Rise of Skywalker,* it is revealed that Rey, the protagonist for the previous two movies, is indeed the granddaughter of the former evil ruler of the Galactic Empire, Sheev Palpatine. Though this idea is hastily introduced into the story and is the source for much criticism of the movie, it stands as a revelatory moment where the heroine of the new trilogy is shown to come from bad stock. But why is that important? In the trilogy of which *Rise of Skywalker* is a part, Palpatine is not discussed at all until the final episode. Even then, there are only hints of his evilness through the dialogue he has with Rey and one spectacular display of power where he can incapacitate several hundred ships on his own. But it seems odd that the "big bad" of the whole trilogy would be a character that is otherwise unknown in the movie's immediate context.

Rey's lineage only makes sense when it is put into the perspective of the larger story. If a person were to watch the original three Star Wars movies (*A New Hope, The Empire Strikes Back,* and *Return of the Jedi*) one would understand just how villainous Emperor Palpatine is. His construction of the Death Star killed the entire planetary population of Alderaan, and his empire had subjugated the whole galaxy to a fascist rule. If one were to include the prequel series (*The Phantom Menace, Attack of the Clones,* and *Revenge of the Sith*), one would learn that Palpatine was also responsible for the apparent extermination of the Jedi, the group of laser-sword-wielding sorcerers who are the "good-guys" of the whole series. In this context, the extent

[1] To see a complete summary of the *Skywalker Saga* in *Star Wars,* see https://starwars.fandom.com/wiki/Star_Wars_saga#Plot_summary

of Sheev Palpatine's evilness can truly be seen. It therefore makes more sense as to why his role as evil mastermind in *The Rise of Skywalker* is so terrifying to the protagonists of that movie. Most importantly, it gives context to the shocking reversal the audience experiences when they find out that Rey, their hero, is Sheev's granddaughter.

In the final scene of the movie, Rey is asked what her last name is. Though she is descended from the evil emperor, she replies that her name is Skywalker: the last name of the heroes of the previous two series. She has also readily identified with the Jedi, as noted by her lightsaber and telekinetic abilities. When Rey inevitably kills Palpatine, her actions are justified in the eyes of the audience because of (1) her status as a Jedi and a Skywalker, and (2) the evil that Palpatine had done in the past and was planning to do in the future.

This is not merely a defense of *The Rise of Skywalker,* though it could be used as such if the reader is not convinced of its importance to the Star Wars franchise. Rather, this brief synopsis highlights some critical aspects of storytelling and the ways in which it can legitimize action. By understanding the mythology behind the movie, that is, the story of Palpatine's evil exploits, one can better understand the actions taken by various characters in opposition to him. That same myth makes Rey's lineage even more shocking as she stands against her grandfather and aligns herself with the family who had historically been opposed to him. The myth allows the viewer to better understand why certain characters do the things that they do, and why those characters are important to the story.

Something similar occurs in Luke's gospel.[2] Luke writes a foundational text that serves to

[2] At this point, I should note some basic assumptions I will be making about the date, unity, and authorship of Luke-Acts. First, in agreement with most critical scholarship, I will assume a date of composition after the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. Second, I will consider Luke-Acts to be a unified literary work with overlapping narrative and theological

direct an emerging people group. His discussion of the hero, Jesus, and his connection to the larger "myth" behind the story directly affects the ways in which people order and make sense of the world. Therefore, a careful discussion of the ways in which Luke describes Jesus and what Jesus does is necessary to understand the goals that Luke had for his story.

For example, recent scholarship on Luke's Christology has argued that Luke's Christology makes use of a number of different Old Testament images in order to articulate who Jesus is, and what the implications are of his ministry.[3] Jesus is portrayed as a King coming like David (1:32), a prophet like Elijah (7:11-17), the Son of man (5:24; 6:5), a savior (2:11), and Son of God (4:41). Each of these ideas build toward Luke's overarching Christology, and an analysis of Lukan Christology that ignores one or more of these intertextual identity markers would be incomplete. However, I do not aim to provide a comprehensive account of Lukan Christology. Rather, I hope to track the development of one of these identity markers (Jesus as prophet) and display how it works toward Luke's goal of self-definition for the infant Christian community. Specifically, I will use Bruce Lincoln's concepts of (1) ancestor invocation, (2) shared eschatological images, and (3) authority construction to show how Jesus's emulation of the prophetic office contributes to Luke's historiographical agenda.

I should note that this thesis will be operating with some assumptions as to the goal of

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elements. The discussion of the identity of the author of these two books is one that lies outside the scope of this thesis, but I will refer to the author as "Luke" for ease of language.

[3] Examples of the various images associated with Jesus in Luke's gospel include (1) the coming Davidide (see Nina Henrichs-Tarasenkova, *Luke's Christology of Divine Identity* [New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016], 139), (2) a great prophet (see Thomas Brodie, "Departure for Jerusalem [Luke 9,51-56] as a Rhetorical Imitation of Elijah's Departure for the Jordan [2 Kgs 1, 1-2,6]," *Biblica* 70 no. 1 [1989]: 96-109), (3) YHWH's return to the temple (see Gregory Lanier, "Luke's Distinctive Use of the Temple Portraying the Divine Visitation," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 65 [October 2014]: 434-462), (4) a combination of a number of OT images (see Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program Realized for All Nations* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012]).

Luke-Acts. Primarily, I will operate assuming, as Gregory Sterling and Sean Adams argue, that Luke is primarily concerned with providing a historiographical work that legitimizes the early Christian movement. When discussing Luke's conception of Jesus's identity, even one aspect of it, it is very easy to take up the discussion of Luke's fuller Christology. However, I hope to maneuver around such a discussion as much as it is possible, as such an endeavor would require a much larger work than I can provide in this context. With that being said, there are some claims about Jesus's identity that must be acknowledged in order to see how Luke constructs his authority.

I will argue that Luke shows Jesus to follow in the Yahwistic prophetic tradition, but to also "bust" the mold of the prophetic office in order to articulate the ways that Jesus surpasses the role of prophet.[4] To do this, this thesis must do three things: (1) establish a framework by which to recognize prophetic activity, (2) recognize instances where Jesus emulates prophetic activity, and (3) recognize instances where Jesus busts or surpasses the audience's expectations of what a prophet can do. The first chapter will discuss common tropes that appear alongside Old Testament prophets. Some of these tropes will emphasize that Old Testament Yahwistic prophets are legitimized through their connection to YHWH. Though this may seem like an obvious statement, the writers/editors of prophetic narratives went to great lengths to prove that the message or action of a particular prophet either was or was not from YHWH. If a prophet says or

[4] To describe this literary feature, I use the word "bust" which carries, in my mind, two connotations. First, if a mold or expectation is busted, then the novel action performed is one that surpasses previous expectations. Thus, a trope or expectation is busted in the sense that the new statement/action excels beyond the previous. The other sense of the term is in its somewhat destructive sense. Jesus's ability to bust expectations of previous prophetic tropes is something that is portrayed as radically different than other Israelite figures. He says and does things that leave previous leading figures "in the dust" so to speak: not discrediting their importance, but placing their importance in the perspective of the radical new sayings/actions of Jesus.

does something without YHWH's influence, then that prophet is portrayed negatively. Thus, a prophet's authority is constructed in relation to YHWH's authority. Other tropes will simply reflect common writing practices associated with prophetic activity. I will analyze five prophetic tropes common to the Old Testament Prophets (Regnal Formulas, Call Narratives, Prophetic Utterances, Mountain Experiences, and Miracle Performances) to see how each one is used to legitimize the prophet's career. The second chapter will show how Luke narratively links Jesus to the prophets of the Israelite scriptures in order to construct his authority along prophetic lines. Luke portrays Jesus doing the things that other prophets did in certain instances, and this chapter will be concerned with highlighting those points. However, there are other scenes where Luke shows Jesus to emulate the old prophets, but to then break with established prophetic tropes. These points of discrepancy are the subject of the third chapter. I will show that, at times, Luke portrays Jesus doing things that prophets are traditionally unable to do. These are moments where Jesus busts out of previous understandings of how a prophet should perform his vocation. In this way, Jesus is the one who is more than a prophet, though he is prophet-like. In my discussion of both the second and the third point, I will consider how Bruce Lincoln's work can be used to understand how Luke constructs Jesus's identity, first by relating him to prophets, then by having him supersede the prophets.

I should note a caveat here. If one were to have a robust discussion of Luke's construction of Jesus's identity, a larger thesis would be needed. One would need to trace Luke's use of titles such as Son of Man, Son of God, Savior, Lord, Messiah, and the like. This thesis cannot accomplish such a full discussion. However, it will attempt to trace Luke's use of the prophetic office in order to point toward his understanding of Jesus's identity. Again, the overall goal is to show how the prophetic office and the busting of that mold contributes to the authority

that Jesus has in Luke's gospel.

Literature Review

This literature review will be split into two sections. The first will provide a discussion of authors who have studied the Lukan connections between Jesus and the Old Testament prophets. Since I will argue that Luke constructs Jesus's authority by connecting him literarily to the Hebrew prophets, this is a necessary section. The second section will provide a discussion of scholars dealing with the genre of Luke's gospel. Substantial work has been done on the function of Luke's gospel, and how it fits within contemporary Greco-Roman writing styles. I argue, alongside other scholars, that Luke makes use of a type of Greco-Roman historiography that attempts to legitimize the new Christian community and their foundational figure: Jesus. Thus, this section will discuss other scholarship on this topic.

Jesus and the Prophets. In his article, "Luke-Acts as an Imitation and Emulation of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative," Thomas Brodie considers the ways in which Luke makes use of the Old Testament stories of Elijah and Elisha in his descriptions of Jesus.[5] Brodie highlights four areas that he believes are good examples of Luke's use of the Kings narrative. He considers (1) the programmatic statements of Jesus at Nazareth in Luke chapter four, (2) the imitation and emulation of Elijah and Elisha by Jesus, (3) the adaptation of specific texts from the Kings narrative by Luke, and (4) the basic organization of both stories.

Jesus's programmatic statements in Luke 4 directly invoke the Elijah and Elisha stories. While being questioned in Nazareth, Jesus defends his prophethood by reminding the crowd that

[5] Thomas Brodie, "Luke-Acts as Imitation and Emulation of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative" in *New Views on Luke Acts,* ed. Earl Richard (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990).

Elijah and Elisha both performed wonderful miracles for people not considered Israelites. Brodie believes an understanding of the two prophets is essential to Luke's understanding of Jesus's work. "If Luke regarded them as foundational models for understanding Jesu and his mission, then it is not surprising that in his narrative about Jesus he should give a foundational role to the narrative of Elijah and Elisha."[6] Brodie then recognizes five episodes from Luke-Acts that he believes to be direct re-workings of the Elijah/Elisha narrative (i.e., Luke 7:11-17; 7:36-50; 9:51-56; Acts 6:9-14; 8:9-40). On the macro-level, Brodie sees that both the Elijah/Elisha narrative and Luke-Acts maintain a two-part structure.[7]

In another article, "The Departure for Jerusalem (Luke 9,51-56) as a Rhetorical Imitation of Elijah's Departure for the Jordan (2 Kgs 1,1-2, 6)," Brodie further develops his idea of Lukan imitation. Brodie focuses on one of the five episodes previously mentioned in order to show how Luke made use of the Elijah story. The Greco-Roman stylistic tradition of imitation allowed the author to "go beyond it (the previous text) to produce something better – or much so that eventually imitation became synonymous with emulation or rivalry."[8] Brodie shows how Luke imitates the Elijah stories. Both show messengers being sent ahead into Samaria, the messengers being rejected because of the protagonist's destination, the idea of fire being called from heaven, and the journey to various places on the way to the final destination.[9]

Brodie spends most of these articles showing the ways in which Luke has Jesus imitate Elijah but neglects to consider the implications found in the discrepancies, even as he emphasizes how Greco-Roman imitation functions in these stories. To be fair, Brodie does

[6] Brodie, "Luke-Acts as Imitation," 80.
[7] Brodie, "Luke-Acts as Imitation," 82.
[8] Brodie, Thomas, "The Departure for Jerusalem," 98.
[9] Brodie, "The Departure for Jerusalem," 101.

recognize that there are differences in the stories, and he even believes that these differences are important to Luke's agenda, but he does not elaborate on what those ideas were or how they would have impacted the early Christian understanding of Jesus.[10]

Craig Evans writes in a similar vein as Brodie as he deals with questions of Luke's usage of Old Testament ideas and theologies. He argues that Luke's primary use of the Elijah/Elisha narrative is to articulate the legitimacy of the new people of God: the Christian community.[11] He analyzes some of the same scenes that Brodie puts forth as being the clearest examples of Luke's use of Elijah and Elisha. Jesus's dialogue at Nazareth, Evans suggests, articulates a differing view of the people of God than his critics.[12] After healing a widow's son, Jesus tells John's disciples that the dead are raised, and that the poor are having good news preached to them. Evans sees this as a direct allusion to Jesus's proclamation at Nazareth, thereby emphasizing the "poor" characteristic of the woman he just helped.[13] Jesus's refusal to call down fire on the Samaritan towns displays an example of his mercy shown to the outsider.[14] Through these examples, Evans believes that Luke is crafting a new image of the people of God, specifically, those that are poor and outside of the current Jewish covenant.

During his discussion of the Nazareth scene in Luke chapter four, Evans makes this claim: "[S]ince in all probability Luke intended this passage to have a programmatic, or paradigmatic, function for his Gospel, it is reasonable to suppose that later, less obvious allusions to the Elijah/Elisha tradition are meant to recall the lessons of the Nazareth sermon."[15] Though

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[10] Brodie, "The Departure for Jerusalem," 106.

[11] Craig Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives and the Ethic of Election," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106 (1987): 79.

[12] Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives," 78.

[13] Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives," 80.

[14] Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives," 81.

[15] Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives," 79.

the central section of Luke's gospel does heavily emphasize the question of the "people of God," Evans runs the risk of affirming the consequent with this statement. He does manage to make good arguments for the return to this theme in subsequent Elijah/Elisha references, but to suggest that *all* references to the prophets, no matter how minor, refers to the idea of the people of God as a whole is to risk missing other themes or theological ideas that Luke may be developing. Specifically, it risks overlooking the variety of ways in which Luke aligns Jesus with Old Testament prophets in order to legitimize his ministry.

J. Severino Croatto also discusses Luke's allusions to Elijah and Elisha but does so in terms of claims about Jesus. He argues that, in Luke's gospel, Jesus is primarily described as a prophet, while his messiahship does not become prominent until after his passion and ascension.[16] He corroborates this claim by reminding the reader that Jesus rebukes those who call him messiah before his passion.[17] Jesus operates as a prophet in Nazareth, has a fated ascension like Elijah, and is killed in Jerusalem like a prophet.[18] However, Jesus acts as one who is superior to prophets like Moses an Elijah, since he functions as a replacement for the others: "From this moment [the end of the transfiguration] on, the risen Jesus anticipated in the transfiguration will be the only mediator, interpreter, and teacher for the Christian community. The risen Jesus will replace both the prophet-teacher Moses and the prophet Elijah."[19]

Though Croatto rightly notes the similarities that Luke draws between Jesus and prophetic figures of the Old Testament, his claim that Jesus is only a "post-paschal" Messiah seems to deviate from the ideas that Luke builds concerning Jesus's identity. As will be

[16] Severino Croatto, "Jesus, Prophet Like Elijah, and Prophet-Teacher like Moses in Luke-Acts," *JBL* 124 (2005): 452.

[17] Croatto, "Jesus, Prophet like Elijah," 453.

[18] Croatto, "Jesus, Prophet like Elijah," 455-458.

[19] Croatto, "Jesus, Prophet like Elijah," 461.

discussed below, Luke sets Jesus up as a character who initiates prophetic calls instead of merely responding to them (cf. Luke 5:9-11). Luke portrays Jesus within the established prophetic tradition, but he also describes Jesus in such a way that he stands above and beyond that tradition. Therefore, to consider Jesus as only a post-paschal Messiah is to under-sell Luke's Christology.

Mark McVann angles his discussion of Jesus's "prophethood" toward the role of "ritual" found in Jesus's ministry. He distinguishes "ritual" from "ceremony" by the frequency with which they mandate "special time."[20] "When the pause occurs irregularly, or as a break in the routine, it is called *ritual*. When the pause happens predictably it is a ceremony."[21] McVann argues that ritual primarily serves to transform a person's status within a given community, either for good or for ill.[22] These transformative acts can only be performed by a "ritual elder": a person who has previously undergone the transformative experience.[23]

McVann asserts that the relationship of John the Baptist and Jesus in Luke 3 is one of ritual elder and initiate. He notes, much like Brodie, that Jesus, in Luke's gospel, functions much like a prophet. Therefore, Luke must tell the story in a way that legitimates Jesus's prophetic authority.[24] McVann shows that Jesus considered John to be "the greatest of the prophets" (Lk. 7:26), so John's role as ritual elder at Jesus's baptism would make sense.[25] Jesus's subsequent journey into the wilderness effectively separates him from the rest of the world for a time in

[20]Mark McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts: The Case of Jesus the Prophet," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, ed. Jerome Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 334.

[21] McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts," 334.

[22] McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts," 334-335.

[23] McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts," 337.

[24] McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts," 343.

[25] McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts," 344.

order for the ritual to be complete.[26] Therefore, once he has been baptized by John and successfully resisted Satan, Jesus's status as prophet is legitimate.[27]

McVann does well to recognize that Luke uses John as a prophet character to accentuate Jesus's identity. He also provides a helpful framework by which one can understand how authority can be constructed within the prophetic office. This thesis offers another framework (the use of prophetic tropes) that can be used alongside McVann's in order to better understand how Luke constructs Jesus's identity in his gospel.

Historiography. In *Historiography and Self Definition,* Gregory Sterling argues that Luke makes use of a genre that he calls "apologetic historiography" in order to locate the new Christian community within the Israelite scriptural tradition. In order to display Luke's use of this genre, Sterling recounts the development of the genre throughout history. He settles on Josephus's telling of Jewish history as the ultimate example of apologetic historiography of which he believes Luke made use.

Sterling argues that Luke's main purpose is to define the tradition that makes up the Christian community.[28] He notes that at all points during the narrative, the mission and direction of God's people are always kept in focus: "The contents of Luke-Acts are thus not about a single individual nor a collection of individuals, but about a movement."[29] It is because of this that Sterling suggests that Luke-Acts is reminiscent of stories of people groups.[30] Luke's connection of the Christian story to the story of the Old Testament thus helps him substantiate the idea that

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[26] McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts," 348.
[27] McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts,"351.
[28] Gregory Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography* (New York, NY: E.J. Brill, 1992), 346.
[29] Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition,* 349.
[30] Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition,* 349.

history, specifically the church's history, is ordered by YHWH.[31] This is the sense in which Luke's narrative is "self-defining."

Though Sterling recognizes Luke's use of Septuagintal material, specifically large swaths of the Deuteronomic history, he fails to recognize the degree to which Luke perpetuates similar themes. Sterling sees Deuteronomic history as "the record of how the will of God has been enforced among humanity."[32] As previously noted, he believes that this is a shared theme between Israelite history and Luke-Acts. However, he distinguishes between Deuteronomic history and Luke-Acts by claiming D-history to be primarily concerned with the story of Israel and Judah alone.[33] Therefore, Luke's adaptation of the story twists it in such a way to make it uniquely Christian.[34] However, J. G. McConville's hypothesis as to the intention of Deuteronomic history allows for further continuity between it and the Lukan narrative.

McConville suggests that D-history maintains a major theme of the redefinition of the people of God.[35] This theme is explicitly present within the Lukan narrative, as gentile believers often become the foil to Jewish religious leaders. It does seem plausible then, especially since Luke makes such broad use of D-history narrative, that Luke saw his work as a continuation of this redefinition process. This process then centers around the way that Luke identifies Jesus, as his identity is the contingent factor in the maintenance of the Christian community.

Sean Adams writes to articulate more clearly the ideas presented by Sterling. In his article, "Luke, Josephus and Self Definition," Adams argues that "apologetic historiography"

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[31] Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 359.
[32] Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 356.
[33] Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 360.
[34] Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 360.
[35] J.G. McConville, "Narrative and Meaning in the Book of Kings," *Biblica* 70 (1989): 39-40.

does not accurately capture Luke's purposes. Whereas Sterling thinks the apologetic nature of the Luke-Acts is due to its self-defining agenda, Adams believes that an apologetic must be directed toward outsiders.[36] It is the intended audience that determines if a story is apologetic or not. Adams is careful to clarify that it is possible for a non-apologetic work to serve apologetic purposes within a given community, as these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.[37] However, since he sees Luke as primarily written to affirm "insiders," it cannot be called "apologetic."

Jerome Neyrey attempts to articulate certain important aspects of the first century Jewish "symbolic world."[38] His aim to help the reader better understand symbols of purity and boundaries that would have been standard parts of the social imaginaries of the Jews of the era. By doing so, Neyrey can show what social symbols Jesus manipulates in the proclamation of his message, specifically in Luke-Acts. His main two questions are "How did first century Jews view their world?" and "How does Jesus challenge that world view?"

Neyrey tries to show the social taxonomies and boundaries created by the first century Jewish people for the sake of their own self-definition. He utilizes Mary Douglas's concept of purity in order to show how the Jewish people ordered their space, time, and people according to holiness.[39] He then recognizes that many of Jesus's actions in Luke reject these commonly

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[36] Sean Adams, "Luke, Josephus and Self-Definition: The Genre of Luke-Acts and its Relationship to Apologetic Historiography and Collected Biography," in *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament,* eds. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts (Boston, MA: Brill, 2013), 447.

[37] Adams, "Luke, Josephus, and Self Definition," 447.

[38] Jerome H. Neyrey, "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts: 'They Turn the World Upside Down,'" in *The Social World of Luke Acts,* ed. Jerome Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 271-272. See also Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

[39] Neyrey, "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts,"274-280.

understood purity boundaries.[40] Neyrey argues that Jesus redefines purity no longer in relation to the law, but to himself.[41] Those who accept Jesus's message are properly ordered, while those who reject it are not.

Neyrey correctly recognizes that Luke sees Jesus as a person who can redefine the Jewish community. This thesis will build upon this idea by identifying Luke's justifications for Jesus's ability to change the social order. Though Neyrey correctly identifies many of the Jewish social boundaries of the time, he sometimes fails to nuance the ways in which the new Christian community changed them. For instance, Neyrey argues that Jesus's rejection of dietary restrictions consequently changes the Christian view on the people of God: "Hence, when Jesus and his followers abrogated dietary laws or rejected circumcision, they rejected the distinctive practices of 'the people of Israel,' thus implying that there is no such thing as a holy people, a people set apart for God."[42] If, as this thesis will argue, Jesus functions in a prophet-like role that supersedes Moses in Luke, then it would seem that Luke is actually constructing a new understanding of what it means to be the "people of God," by centering the focus of this new people not on Moses, but on Jesus himself. By rejecting the idea of a new "people of God," Neyrey risks missing crucial aspects of Luke's Christology and theology of inclusivity. In actuality, it seems that Luke builds the infant Christian community out of the old Jewish community to be a redefined "people of God."

In her book *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic,* Marianne Bonz also discusses Luke's attempt at defining the Christian community. However, she rejects the idea that Luke saw his work as any kind of historiography. Rather, she believes Luke to have crafted an

[40] Neyrey, "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts," 286-287.
[41] Neyrey, "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts," 300.
[42] Neyrey, "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts," 288.

epic in the tradition of the *Aeneid.* She claims, "Epic was intended to provide the insight and clarity lacking in historiography by representing history as an ordered typology."[43] Bonz analyzes Virgil's *Aeneid* in order to describe the epic structure that would have then typified the genre.[44] She recognizes that "the great epics of antiquity have tended to appear only at significant inaugural moments in a community's or a society's corporate life."[45] Specifically, these epics tend to serve the purpose of recognizing a particular group's existence as part of some cosmic intervention as opposed to chance.[46] Much of Virgil's early career was driven by a desire to produce literature that portrayed the Augustan age as the eschatological fulfillment of the human world.[47]

Bonz notes the basic structure of Virgil's epic work. He begins the *Aeneid* with a rather dense section in which he offers a basic outline of the work. The *Aeneid* opens with "not only the seeds of the major conflicts and grand themes that will be developed during the course of the narrative but also the germ of the poem's essential structure, through which its meaning will be mediated."[48] The reader then learns through a programmatic prophecy that it is indeed the divine will of the fates that Aeneas should travel to Rome and found a great city.[49] Bonz notes how the opening of the poem also reveals the three-part structure of the story.[50] She then calls attention to one of the most important narrative mechanics of the Virgilian epic: disparity. Much of the *Aeneid* is structured to look like the *Odyssey*. However, there are points where the stories

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[43] Marianne Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2000. Kindle eBook), Lc 270.
[44] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, Lc 395.
[45] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy,* Lc 233.
[46] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy,* Lc. 250.
[47] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, Lc. 471-478.
[48] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, Lc. 507.
[49] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, Lc. 514.
[50] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, Lc. 517.

drastically diverge, and these moments usually reveal ideas that Virgil is trying to emphasize.[51]

Bonz recognizes that Luke's two-part story accomplishes a similar purpose to that of Virgil's *Aeneid.* Just as Virgil sought to situate Rome as the rightful inheritors of Grecian rule, Luke sought to "assure a smooth transition from Israel's scriptural past to the rapidly emerging gentile Christianity of his own time."[52] Bonz also believes that Luke-Acts maintains the three-part structure of the Virgilian epic, with the story of Pentecost serving as a bridge between the story of YHWH's work through Jesus, and the eschatological church that Luke found himself in.[53] Luke also makes use of epic literary tools such as allusion and ambiguity, symbolic embellishments, and the presentation of a central theme through prophecy in the Pentecost story. Bonz works through large portions of Lukan narrative in an attempt to uncover a plethora of places where Luke made use of Virgilian-epic literary tools. Her conclusion is that Luke made use of Roman literary devices in order to create an eschatological world rooted in Hebraic narrative.

Bonz's approach to identifying the genre of Luke-Acts seems to be the most convincing to me. It accounts for the overarching structure of the narrative, literary devices in the story, and community-defining motives of the author. However, Bonz's analysis of the purpose of Luke's story is lacking in one area. She believes that Luke saw the new Christian community as being directly "at odds" with the Judaism from which it was emerging.[54] Though this analysis does reflect some of the antagonism that Luke's characters show toward Jewish leaders, it neglects foundational aspects of Luke's theology: namely, the universality of Jesus's call for repentance.

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[51] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, Lc. 539.
[52] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, Lc. 1039.
[53] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, Lc. 1109.
[54] Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, Lc. 1103.

My approach differs from that of previous scholars by emphasizing (1) the ways Luke constructs Jesus's authority relative to the Hebrew prophets and (2) how discrepancies in these allusions to the prophets reveal nuances in Luke's construction. Specifically, this thesis will argue that Jesus's emulation of and "busting" of the mold of the prophetic office shows him to have the authority to form the Christian movement.

Approach/Methodology

This thesis will be divided into four parts. First, a brief discussion of some of Bruce Lincoln's ideas about mythmaking and authority construction will be provided in order to establish a general framework from which to analyze the subsequent biblical texts. Second, I will consider certain tropes found in the Old Testament prophets. Lincoln will not be explicitly discussed in this section. Rather, the writings of and about the prophets will be analyzed through five prophetic tropes. Examples will be given of each trope in order to show how it functions within prophetic literature. There is not always a causative relationship between a prophet's act of conforming to these tropes and the construction of authority. Rather, some of these tropes are merely reflective of legitimate prophetic action as seen by the creator of the stories.[55] Third, I will consider the ways that Luke makes use of these prophetic tropes in his construction of Jesus's authority. Since many of Luke's stories about Jesus are also found in the other Synoptic Gospels, I will consider stories that are unique to Luke in order to better understand how he individually constructs Jesus's authority. In instances where a story is analyzed that is shared

[55] Since this thesis is primarily concerned with the ways Luke constructs Jesus's authority in relation to Old Testament prophets, I will assume that the OT prophets already have authority in Luke's mind. There does not seem to be a need to show how their authority is constructed. Rather, I will analyze tropes surrounding the prophets as Luke uses them to construct Jesus's authority in his gospel.

between the Synoptics (e.g., the transfiguration), the elements of the story that are unique to Luke will emphasized. I will use Lincoln's theories to see how these stories construct Jesus's authority. Fourth, I will argue for instances where it seems that Luke has Jesus "bust" previous ideas of what a prophet should do and say, and how these moments are used to articulate Jesus's identity. Lincoln's theories will again be applied to see how these nuances of Jesus's use of the prophetic office change how his authority is constructed.

Mythic Background

As noted by authors like Brodie and Evans, this thesis will discuss the ways in which Luke portrays Jesus as in line with the Israelite prophetic tradition. While many previous studies have noted the similarities that Luke draws between Jesus's ministry and Elijah's and Elisha's ministries, the discrepancies between Jesus and the old prophets seem to suggest that Luke wants the reader to see Jesus as different and greater than the previous prophets. Bonz makes use of the idea of literary discrepancies in her analysis of the parallels to *The Odyssey* in *The Aeneid.*[56] But, this thesis will use the idea of literary discrepancies to see differences between Luke's depiction of Jesus and Old Testament depictions of prophets. It is these discrepancies that Luke constructs Jesus's authority. Though Luke characterizes Jesus as a prophet, there are moments in the narrative where Jesus busts the prophetic mold. Luke portrays Jesus as a one greater than any prophet; one who acts differently and with more authority than the old prophets, but who is still aligned with the Yahwistic prophetic tradition.

By being of higher status and having greater authority than the prophets, Jesus can do and say things that prophets could not traditionally do. It is this status that enables him to cause the

[56] Bonz, the Past as Legacy, Lc. 539.

rising and falling of many in Israel, as Simeon prophesies (Luke 2:34), and that justifies his place at the head of the infant Christian community.

In order to understand how Lincoln's work can aid the reader in understand Jesus's identity in Luke's gospel, one must know (1) which of Lincoln's theories will be used in this thesis and (2) how those theories work. Having now discussed the goals I will be pursuing in this thesis, I will outline a few of Bruce Lincoln's ideas that will be especially helpful to the present study in this analysis of Luke's historiography.

LINCOLN: MYTH AND AUTHORITY CONSTRUCTION

Myth and the function of myth are critical to this thesis's methodology. Bruce Lincoln's work on the effects of myth and mythic discourse will be used to show how and why Luke attempts to connect Jesus to previous prophetic traditions. Specifically, I will make use of Lincoln's ideas of (1) ancestor invocation, (2) shared images, and (3) authority construction.

Lincoln views ancestor invocation as a crucial aspect of defining and redefining social borders. Figure 1 helps explain this concept. Close groups of the same "tribe" (or larger group) can invoke certain common ancestors to make peace with other groups of the same tribe.[57] For example, clan 1 may invoke ancestor A in order to establish a kind of kinship with clan 2. The opposite can also be true. If one smaller group or "clan" within the "tribe" wishes to "estrange" itself from the larger tribe, that clan may invoke an ancestor that is important to them but that is not shared by the tribe. For example, clan 4 may invoke ancestor B in order to establish estrangement between them and clan 2. Doing so redefines social borders so as to exclude those who do not recognize that ancestor or the ideas shared by or associated with the ancestor.[58] Lincoln notes that ancestors may only be invoked in proportion to the problem at hand: "One cannot rally tribal-sized groups for clan-level conflicts, or vice versa."[59] Clan A would not benefit from invoking ancestor I in order to establish peace between clans 1 and 2. Rather, ancestor A would be the most useful in establishing the kinship of that specific community.

It is in this context that stories about ancestors become quite important. Recollection of

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[57] Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 19.

[58] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 18.

[59] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 19.

these common ancestors becomes a vehicle by which common action can be inspired. The ways in which stories about ancestors are told can influence how certain groups view both insiders and outsiders.[60] For example, clan A may tell a story of their origin in which ancestor *I* gave them the right to rule, while giving clan B the job of serving clan A. By nature of the story, clan B would be constructed as the group to be ruled, while clan A is constructed as the ruling clan. However, should clan B tell the story of its origin, its members may recount ancestor *I* giving them the right to lead. In both instances, the people within each tribe believe their perception of the two tribes to reflect the natural order. However, Lincoln makes sure to note that these identities are indeed "constructed," as the way in which the story is told directly defines members of both groups in relation to their perceived hierarchy.[61]

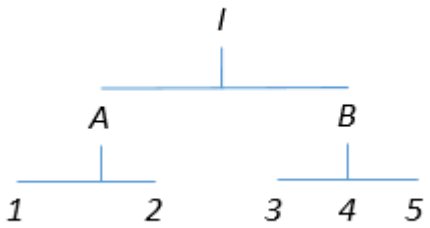

Figure 1: Lincoln's Ancestral Invocation Tree[62]

The matter of particular importance here is how story affects relations between groups. Lincoln notes that myth often "charters and thereby perpetuates continuing patterns of intertribal relations."[63] Take the example of clans A and B. Because clan A believes their right to rule has

[60] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 20.
[61] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 20.
[62] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 17.
[63] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 20.

been passed to them by ancestor *I,* violent action against subversive members of clan B might be legitimized. However, should the story of the common ancestor be told differently, a different set of actions may be legitimated through the evocation of different ideas. Lincoln says, "It is precisely through the repeated *evocation* of such sentiments via the *invocation* of select moments from the past that social identities are continually (re-) established and social formations (re-) constructed."[64]

These ideas led Lincoln to define Myth as "a small class of stories that possess both credibility and *authority.*"[65] Myths are credible because people think that the stories happened, but they have authority because people order their lives and social structures around the ideas in the story. Therefore, myths often compete for dominance among certain societies as groups seek to establish either legitimacy or power. Groups with power will tell certain myths that help them maintain power, while groups without power will often tell myths that help them gain power. These myths must, in turn, be accepted as accurate representations of reality by those who hear it for the myth to gain authority.[66] Either way, these groups use myths to "legitimate the acts and mobilize the social groupings that … enable them to deal with the initially problematic situation."[67] As more people accept one myth, competing myths then lose their ability to inspire action.

It is at this point that Lincoln discusses competing uses of shared images. Just as clans may make differing uses of shared ancestors, they may also make different uses of shared images. Lincoln notes that several Iranian religions that share Zoroastrian heritage share an

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[64] Lincoln*, Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 21.
[65] Lincoln*, Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 23.
[66] Bruce Lincoln, *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars: Critical Explorations in the History of Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 56.
[67] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 26.

eschatological image of a future where mountains and valleys disappear. One of these religious groups believes that this "leveling" will be an act of restoration that will return the world to its original, pristine, state.[68] The leveling reflects the ways in which all social boundaries of class and nationhood will be "leveled" in the age to come. However, another group believes this "leveling" to be the result of chaos: a phenomenon brought about through the breakdown of social borders and the intermingling of classes.[69] Although both groups share ideas on how the future will look, the ways in which they talk about these images drastically changes the ways in which they live in the present. The group with the positive view of the leveling can advocate for a kind of "perfect love" that transcends certain social boundaries.[70] However, the other is able to reinforce the same borders by altering the meaning in the same image.

The final aspect of Lincoln's work that should be discussed here is his ideas surrounding the construction of authority. Lincoln notes that myth is a force that "legitimate[s] and ennoble[s]" action.[71] Thus, myth can determine if one action is right or wrong, honorable or shameful, etc. One can then see how the importance of myth can directly tie to Lincoln's ideas about ancestral invocation. Should one ancestor be part of a myth that legitimizes action A, and a contemporary person invokes that ancestor in order to perform action A, then that contemporary person will have a greater level of authority in performing that action (i.e., more people will accept that action A is something that should have been done).

When discussing authority, Lincoln relies heavily on the idea of "voice." Lincoln recognizes that when two people are in a dispute, they occupy the role of first and second

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[68] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 37.
[69] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 40-42.
[70] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 40.
[71] Lincoln, *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars*, 53.

voice.[72] These voices will then usually submit themselves to a third, authoritative voice (often "the law").[73] This third voice only has authority so long as people are willing to submit to it.[74] Its authority is then constructed by collective understanding. However, this third voice can be either ignored by someone with greater "power" (that is, literal strength: the ability to force a person to perform some action) or it can be corroded by various forms of public speech. Lincoln considers an example of "4th voice" to be the use of state power, while 5th voice is "corrosive" public speech that can "eat away at the claims and pretensions of discourses and speakers who try to arrogate authority for themselves."[75]

It has been argued that Lincoln's approaches to analyzing societal construction is lacking because his methodology prevents him from exploring his test cases thoroughly.[76] While it is true that Lincoln does not consider every factor that could play into the construction, reconstruction, or deconstruction of societies, it seems as though Lincoln's primary concern is not to provide a detailed history of each event that he surveys.[77] Rather, Lincoln uses various stories and histories specifically as test cases in order to show how his broader concepts function in individual circumstances. Following this approach, this thesis will consider Luke's gospel as another test case in which Lincoln's conceptual categories will be used. Though this approach

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[72] Bruce Lincoln, *Authority: Construction and Corrosion* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994), 56.

[73] Lincoln, *Authority*, 56.

[74] Lincoln, *Authority*, 61.

[75] Lincoln, *Authority,* 67, 78.

[76] T. O. Beidelman, review of *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification,* by Bruce Lincoln, *Contemporary Sociology* 19, no. 5 (1990): 741.

[77] Donald Sutton, review of *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth Ritual and Classification,* by Bruce Lincoln, *Journal of Social History* 24, no. 2 (1990): 446.

may not fully articulate every cultural facet that could play into Luke's construction of Jesus's authority, it should prove helpful in analyzing how Luke uses myth to construct Jesus's identity.

With the utilization of a methodology such as Lincoln's, one does run the risk of anachronism and the mislabeling of categories of thought.[78] This thesis attempts to pay attention to the issues that this philosophical understanding could create, while also recognizing that any attempt at understanding ancient mental categories will be skewed to some degree.

Lincoln's work will be helpful insofar as it can show why Luke connects Jesus to the Old Testament prophetic tradition, and how that connection establishes Jesus's credibility. It will also help the reader understand the significance of moments where Jesus is shown to bust the prophetic mold, and the ways that these moments construct his identity. If I am to show how Luke has Jesus emulate the prophetic office, I must now offer a description of that office.

[78] See Lars Albinus, *Regimes of Truth: Review of Bruce Lincoln's Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars, Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 25 (2013): 178-196. Albinus notes several linguistic issues that arise when Lincoln uses modern categories in his analysis of cultural texts that could operate in different Wittgenstinian language games.

PROPHETIC AUTHORITY

In order to talk about the ways that Jesus exercises authority, it is necessary to discuss the ways in which his authority is constructed in the gospel of Luke. Scholars like Thomas Brodie and Craig Evans have for some time argued that Luke makes use of Elijah/Elisha narratives in his stories about Jesus.[79] Luke uses several parallels or "echoes" in his gospel to other Old Testament prophets as well.[80] Therefore, if one desires to discuss the ways Luke constructs Jesus's authority, one must consider Jesus's emulation of the prophetic office as a whole. Luke's narrative shows Jesus engaging in prophet-like activity at various points in his career. These prophet-like behaviors fall into previously established tropes that are seen throughout both Old Testament narrative and prophecy. Thus, before looking at the ways in which Luke's Jesus makes use of prophetic tropes, an analysis of those tropes and their function in the Old Testament should be conducted.

This thesis will make use of five recognizable prophetic tropes: (1) Regnal Formulas, (2) Call Narratives, (3) Prophetic Utterances, (4) Mountain Experiences, and (5) Miracle Performances. No Old Testament prophetic text makes use of all five of these tropes, but they are common enough among the breadth of the prophetic material to be easily correlated with prophetic activity. This section will consider a few examples of each trope in the Old Testament in order to establish how each one functions within its particular narrative or prophecy. By

[79] Cf. Thomas Brodie "The Departure for Jerusalem," 96-109, and Craig Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives and the Ethic of Election," 75-83.

[80] For a discussion of the idea of scriptural "echoes," see Richard B. Hayes, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

establishing the function of these tropes, one can then move toward understanding how Luke's use of them affects his discussion of Jesus's authority.

Regnal Formulas

Often, before a prophet either receives a word from YHWH or before he pronounces it, the scene of the event will be set by either the narrator or the prophet himself. These regnal formulas situate the prophet within a particular region at a particular time.[81] This also allows for the reader to better understand the socio-political and historical context in which the prophet's message is to be pronounced. The first chapter of Ezekiel serves as a great example.

> In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin), the word of the LORD came to the priest Ezekiel son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was on him there. (Ezekiel 1:1-3, NRSV)

By reading this text, the reader can immediately situate Ezekiel's message within the context of the exiled Israelites. The year is introduced with phrase ἐν τῷ τριακοστῷ ἔτει (in the thirtieth year). The reader also learns exactly when and where the prophet's message occurs. Ezekiel's recognition that he was "among the exiles" situates him within a group of people assuming that they were rejected by YHWH.[82] Thus, Ezekiel's vision takes special significance,

[81] The use of "Regnal Formula" as a term is borrowed from Alberto Green, "Regnal Formulas in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of the Books of Kings," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 42 (July, 1983): 167-180.

[82]Daniel Block, *The Book of Ezekiel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 83.

as he likely would not have expected any kind of divine interaction from the God who had abandoned Israel. It is likely that this time/space description would also increase the authority of such a text. In the case of Ezekiel's vision here, the date provides an extra sense of reality to the vision. Not only does the reader know the contents of the vision, but they know where and when it took place.

Sometimes, these superscriptions provide authority by placing prophecies that speak of God's future action before the event itself takes place. For instance, Jeremiah 32 shows King Zedekiah of Judah scolding a captured Jeremiah for declaring that Babylon would succeed in their siege of Jerusalem. The editor takes great care to inform the reader in the regnal formula that "[a]t that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 32:2). According to the editor, Jerusalem has not yet fallen to Babylon at the time of Zedekiah's and Jeremiah's conversation.[83] However, the reader is aware that Babylon does indeed succeed in its military efforts against the southern kingdom. Therefore, Jeremiah is shown to be a true prophet of YHWH as his prophecy before the fall of Jerusalem is proven to truly be the word of God.

These regnal formulas or synchronisms occur very frequently in the book of Kings. Regnal formulas situate the subsequent story in the reign of a particular king, whether it be about him or someone else. An example can be found in 1 Kings 15:1. The story opens with, "In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam son of Nebat …" "בשנת" ("in the year") or its variant "בשנה" is used to introduce the period which the narrator is now discussing.[84] The Septuagint

[83] Holladay notes that the use of the words "mouth" and "eyes" (v. 4) is likely an ironic move, given the fate the Zedekiah faces in 39:5-7. This use of irony also shows the hand of the editor in the compilation of Jeremiah's narrative and work. See William Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, chapters 1-25* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 213.

[84] See the differences in 1 Kings 14:25(בשנה) and 1 Kings 15:1 (בשנת).

uses two different constructions to mark these synchronisms. The variation is mainly in the term used to denote "year." The synchronism used in 1 Kings 15:1 is "**ἐν** τῷ ὀκτωκαιδεκάτῳ **ἔτει** βασιλεύοντος Ἰεροβοὰμ υἱοῦ Ναβὰθ"[85]. Here, "In the___year" is written "ἐν τῷ ____ **ἔτει".** The variation can be found in 1 Kings 14:25 with ἐνιαυτῷ replacing ἔτει for the word year.[86]

Elijah is not introduced in this way, but when the narrator tells the reader of Elijah's word from YHWH, it is said to have come to him in "the third year" (εν τω ενιαυτω τω τριτω) of the famine. Again, this situates Elijah's message within a particular context. Though it does not mention Ahab, the reader understands that this is the famine that Elijah pronounced against Ahab in the previous chapter. The subsequent story will thus take on the socio-political and agricultural weight of what is implied in this introductory clause.

Prophetic Utterances

Prophetic utterances tend to follow a basic formula. Within any utterance, there are three parties: (1) YHWH, (2) the prophet, and (3) the recipients of the message. Each of these members are necessary in order to classify an utterance as truly prophetic. Removing one of the participants from the formula results in an utterance that is, at best, not useful to the people of God, and, at worst, blasphemy.

That YHWH must be involved in true prophetic utterance should be a given. The office of the prophet is one that is designated by YHWH alone.[87] The prophet's message must also be

[85] All quotes from the Septuagint are from Gregory R. Lanier and William A. Ross, *Septuaginta: A Reader's Edition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2018).

[86] "Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἐνιαυτῷ τῷ πέμπτῳ βασιλεύοντος" in 1 Kings 14:25 (emphasis added).

[87] See J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 244. Thompson notes that Jeremiah, as a prophet, was one whose words were equated with

one that only comes from YHWH. Any utterance by the prophet that claims to be from YHWH and is not is considered to be deceitful and sinful. In the fifth chapter of Jeremiah, YHWH speaks through Jeremiah against prophets who are "full of wind" (Jeremiah 5:13). These prophets claim to speak for YHWH and say "He will do nothing. No evil will come upon us, and we shall not see sword or famine" (Jeremiah 5:12). This stands in contrast to YHWH's word to Jeremiah only a few verses later. "Because they have spoken this word, I am now making my words in your mouth a fire, and this people wood, and the fire shall devour them. I am going to bring upon you a nation from far away, O house of Israel, says the LORD" (Jeremiah 5:14-15). Jeremiah's utterance is, as previously mentioned, proven to be truly from YHWH as Babylon eventually overthrows the Israelite monarchy and subjugates the people.[88] The standard litmus test for true prophets is the coming about of their prophecies in the lives of those who heard it, proving that the prophecy was truly from YHWH.[89] The distinction between Jeremiah and the prophets whom YHWH condemns in this passage is the source of their utterances (cf. Jeremiah's confrontation with Hananiah in Jeremiah 28:1-17).[90] YHWH is the source for Jeremiah's prophecies, but not for these other false prophets.

The prophet is the second necessary figure in prophetic utterances, so it is important to

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YHWH's: "There was a complete identity between Jeremiah's words and God's word to Judah." The other prophets, who claim to speak for YHWH but do not, are the ones who have brought about such great wrath from YHWH. Therefore, it seems that the theological implication is that prophets must only be established via the word of YHWH.

[88] See Leslie Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 77. "His [Jeremiah's] assertion assumes that he is a true prophet and that, in rejecting his oracles, they [the people] are rejecting YHWH."

[89] R. P. Carroll emphasizes this idea by dealing with issues of cognitive dissonance in the lives of those who experience failed prophecies. See R. P. Carroll, "Ancient Israelite Prophecy and Dissonance Theory" *Numen* 24 (August, 1977): 135-151.

[90] Paul Gallagher, "Discerning True and False Prophecy," *Asia Journal of Theology* 1 (April, 2014): 3-15.

discuss the development of the prophetic office. In Exodus 20, YHWH speaks to Moses at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20:1-17). While YHWH talks to Moses, the people of Israel see the theophany taking place and are terrified (Exodus 20:18-21). This interaction proves to be an issue for the people, who then beg Moses to serve as the bearer of YHWH's messages in the future, refusing to let YHWH talk to them directly. As Benjamin Uffenheimer notes, Moses's ascent "symbolize[s] the remoteness of God from the people, for Moses alone was permitted to climb the mount."[91] After this interaction, YHWH's direct speech to his people are always mediated through a prophet.[92]

Authority is imbued in the utterance of a prophet who recognizes that his speech comes from YHWH. When a true prophet speaks a prophetic utterance, there is recognition of YHWH's position in the utterance. The phrase "Thus says YHWH" often precedes a prophetic declaration. In other instances, oracles will be preceded with "The word of YHWH came to [insert prophet's name]" in the regnal formula. Both statements acknowledge that the words the prophet is speaking or is about to speak are not creations of his own mind. Rather, the authority of the message is located, not in the prophet, but in YHWH.[93]

The final aspect of each prophet utterance is the recipient of the message. Often, these messages are delivered to a person or group of people who are in positions of power. Samuel functions as one who can establish legitimate Kings and revoke illegitimate kings at YHWH's

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[91], Benjamin Uffenheimer, *Early Prophecy in Israel* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1999), 167.

[92] In the case of Balaam's ass (Numbers 22), it is unlikely that the donkey would have been qualified for the office of prophet. However, the story still maintains the idea that YHWH's message must be mediated through an alternate source to the recipient of his message.

[93] John Van Seters, "Prophecy as Prediction in Biblical Historiography," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Ancient Israelite Historiography,* eds. Mark J. Boda and Lissa M. Wray Beal (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 93.

command (cf. 1 Samuel 10:1; 15:28; 16:12-13).[94] Elijah operates in a similar role, as he speaks against the wickedness of King Ahab and his wife (cf. 1 Kings 18:18). Those who receive the message do not necessarily have to be in places of governmental authority. Rather, the message could be intended for those who find themselves in places of social authority. K. L. Noll notes that "[I]t is a narrative necessity that a man of god must establish his credibility by giving instructions or announcing promises that achieve results … which prepares the reader for a plot complication."[95] The common prophetic refrain that condemns the mistreatment of widows, sojourners, and orphans, directed at those in positions of higher economic and social status, is a good example of this concept.[96] Those with resources or influences are required, by the prophet, to take care of those without resources or influence.

Call Narratives

Some Old Testament prophets have a specific moment in time mentioned where their normal life is directly interrupted by a call to prophetic service to YHWH. These stories serve to offer initial direction to the prophet, teaching him who he will be speaking to and who he will be speaking for. The call serves as a separation in time, whereby the prophet's former life is halted as he begins full-time work for YHWH. Generally, these calls occur directly between YHWH

[94] For a more in-depth discussion of the relationship between Old Testament prophets and governmental authority figures, see Cristiano Grottanelli, *Kings and Prophets: Monarchic Power, Inspired Leadership, & Sacred Text in Biblical Narrative* (New York: Oxford Press, 1999), 93.

[95] K. L, Noll,"Presumptuous Prophets Participating in a Deuteronomic Debate," in *Prophets, Prophecy, an Ancient Israelite Historiography,* eds. Mark J. Boda and Lissa M. Wray Beal (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 127.

[96] Cf. Deuteronomy 10:18; Jeremiah 7:6; Zechariah 7:10.

and the prophet. However, this is not always the case, as with Elisha's call.[97] A key aspect of the call narrative is the prophet's reaction. YHWH's speaking directly to the prophet often results in fear or reservation on the part of the prophet. These reactions will be of utmost importance in this discussion.

Normal Habel provides a helpful model through which these stories can be viewed. He proposes six literary structures that he suggests undergirds the call narratives. First, is "the Divine Confrontation." Here, YHWH appears to the prophet at a time of historical crisis in "a disruptive experience for which there has been no obvious preparation. The call marks the initial interruption of God in the life of the individual."[98] Next is "The Introductory Word." The "word" prepares the individual for his commission and highlights the personal relationship said individual has with YHWH.[99] Third is "The Commission," where the prophet is told the reason why YHWH is calling him, and what purpose he will serve.[100] Fourth is "The Objection," where the called one's insufficiency is contrasted with YHWH's ability to use him.[101] Fifth is "The Reassurance." Here, YHWH assures the prophet that he will go with him to perform the task.[102] Again, YHWH's ability and the prophet's ability are contrasted, with YHWH supplying what the prophet lacks. Finally, Habel recognizes "The Sign" as a conformation of YHWH's commissioning.[103] A sign offers divine evidence of YHWH's interaction with the prophet.

In what follows, I will consider the Old Testament prophets who experience call

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[97] When Elisha is called to the prophetic office, Elijah commissions him by throwing his mantle onto Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21).

[98] Normal Habel "The Form and Significance of the Call Narrative," *Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 77 (1965): 298.

[99] Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narrative," 299.

[100] Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narrative," 299.

[101] Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narrative," 300.

[102] Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narrative," 300.

[103] Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narrative," 301.

narratives in ways that fit in the framework that Habel provides. It should be noted that elements in these call narratives are not exclusive to prophetic calls (cf. Gideon in Judges 6:11-27), but they are common enough to be considered parts of a trope that frequently occurs in the call of Yahwistic prophets.[104]

Moses. Moses serves as a kind of prophetic archetype for the Yahwistic tradition. Since YHWH speaks to his chosen people through Moses, he can be said to be a prophet. His story contains a call narrative with characteristics that will be later emulated by later prophets like Isaiah and Jerimiah.[105] In the third chapter of Exodus, YHWH appears to Moses in an inconsumable burning shrub.

> When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Exodus 3:4-6)

It takes some time for Moses to recognize the gravity of the situation in which he finds himself. Indeed, YHWH must instruct Moses as to how "holy" the setting truly is, and how Moses should act in such a situation.[106] However, once Moses recognizes just who it is with

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[104] Fred Guyette criticizes Habel's model saying that there are other Old Testament call stories that have characteristics not covered by Habel (Fred Guyette, "The Genre of the Call Narrative: Beyond Habel's Model," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 43 (2015): 54-58). However, Habel's model does recognize tropes that, though not a necessary condition for a prophetic call, are easily recognizable and, as I will argue, are utilized by later authors like Luke.

[105] Brevard Childs, *The Book of Exodus: a Critical, Theological Commentary,* OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 55.

[106] Cf. Coats, George W. *Moses: Heroic Man, Man of God* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 59.

whom he is communing, he immediately hides his face out of fear for looking at YHWH. Moses's reaction suggests that he understood some kind of danger that came with being in the presence of the God of his ancestors.[107] Moses does not seem to express fear for any other reason. There is not a sense of introspective remorse on account of his sins, nor a consideration of the sins of the Hebrews or the Egyptians. The fear feels more basic. The magnitude of the God that has appeared to him merely lends itself to a sort of cowering response or "creature consciousness."[108]

Moses's fearful reaction corresponds in part to Habel's idea of "the Objection." Moses later expresses hesitancy in his ability to persuade the Israelite people of the legitimacy of his message. He says, "But suppose they do not believe me or listen to me, but say, 'The LORD did not appear to you'" (Exodus 4:1). This concern is met by YHWH's promise to perform miracles as a sign confirming Moses's position and message. This reaction perfectly describes Habel's objection. However, Moses's initial response of hiding his face seems to reflect a similar (though not identical) concept. In both situations, the prophet's position as one who is less than the deity is highlighted. In 4:1, it is Moses's ability that is contrasted with YHWH's. Moses cannot persuade (objection), but YHWH can (reassurance). In 3:6, it is Moses's existence that is contrasted with YHWH's. YHWH's presence is so much greater than Moses's, that Moses feels a need to hide his face for fear of his life. In both instances, the inferiority of the prophet is emphasized to assert the power of the deity which they serve. Thus, this thesis will make use of a broader form of Habel's "Objection" called "Inadequacy." This term allows for both kinds of reactions on the part of the prophet, since both seem to come from the same recognition of the

[107] Nahum Sarna, *Exodus: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, JTC (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 15.

[108] George Savran, "Theophany as Type Scene," *Prooftexts* 23 (2003): 130.

position of both YHWH and the prophet.

The moment of encounter is of significance, as it serves as the start of YHWH's act of deliverance for the people of Israel. Immediately, YHWH tells Moses of his "awareness of the Israelite's plight (vv. 7, 9) and intention to rescue them through Moses" (vv. 8, 10).[109] Thus the purpose in YHWH's call is revealed. Moses is called to perform a specific function. The phrasing of the commission "emphasizes the urgency of the historical dilemma."[110]

Jeremiah. In the first chapter of Jeremiah, one finds Jeremiah's call narrative. It is far more direct than Moses's call yet emulates it in some sense.[111] YHWH appears to Jeremiah declaring "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). Jeremiah's response echoes Moses, as he expresses hesitancy in his ability to perform the task (Jeremiah 1:6).[112] Though Jeremiah is concerned about his age being a restraint on his ability to critique entire nations, YHWH ensures Jeremiah that YHWH will deliver him from all those who oppose him (Jeremiah 1:8).[113] This promise of deliverance also contains echoes of Moses's call narrative, as YHWH promises to protect Moses as he opposes Pharaoh (cf. Exodus 3:20; 4:1-5). Jeremiah does not act in a way that suggests that he fears YHWH in the encounter. YHWH's command to "not be afraid of them" reveals that Jeremiah's fear is directed toward those to whom he will be

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[109] Carol Meyers, *Exodus,* NCBC (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 54.

[110] Normal Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narrative": 304.

[111] Holladay *Jeremiah 1*, 27.

[112] Holladay, *Jeremiah 1,* 28. Holladay believes it possible that Jeremiah is here orienting his response in a way reminiscent of Solomon's objection of kingship (1 Kings 3:7).

[113] See Brent Strawn, "Jeremiah's In/effective Plea: Another Look at נאר in Jeremiah I 6," *Vestus Testamentum* 55 (2005): 366-377.

speaking. It is his moment of "Inadequacy."[114]

YHWH's promise of protection, "the Reassurance" is coupled with a relocation of agency. "Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, 'Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant'" (Jeremiah 1:9-10). Jeremiah is no longer the one who will be speaking. Rather YHWH will be speaking through him. This statement places a higher level of authority on Jeremiah, as his words will from this point forward bear the weight of YHWH. As Leslie Allen notes, "In Jeremiah's case supernatural equipping stands uncompromisingly over against nature and nurture, as v. 9 will confirm."[115] This transfer in agency is important, as Jeremiah will be reminding "all the cities of Judah" of their sins and telling them of their coming judgement (Jeremiah 1:15-16).

Isaiah. Isaiah's call narrative is far more dramatic. It begins with a vision, where Isaiah sees YHWH surrounded by a group of seraphs shouting YHWH's glory (Isaiah 6:1-3). Upon seeing this, Isaiah exclaims "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts (Isaiah 6:5)!" YHWH, looking for a messenger, finds a willing servant in Isaiah, who begs YHWH to send him out with a divine message (Isaiah 6:8). Isaiah is told to "[m]ake the mind of this people dull…until cities lie in waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is utterly desolate" (Isaiah 6:10-11). Here again, YHWH's message in the call story is one of

[114] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1,* 28. Holladay points out that Jeremiah's objection here sounds reminiscent of Solomon's objection to kingship in 1 Kings 28. In both cases, the called one perceives his age to be a limiting factor in the vocation to which he is called.

[115] Allen, *Jeremiah*, 26.

severe action.

Unlike Jeremiah and Moses, Isaiah is not, in this scene, depicted as though he is concerned with his ability to deliver YHWH's message, or worried that he will be hated by those to whom he is sent. Rather, his only moment of fear, his moment of "Inadequacy", comes when he recognizes his own sinful self in YHWH's presence.[116] YHWH's righteousness is contrasted with, not just Isaiah's sinfulness, but the sinfulness of all of his people.[117] The emphasis on the impurity of Isaiah's lips and the need for their purification seems to reflect the vast difference between Isaiah's cultic status and YHWH's.[118] Thus, when the seraph purifies Isaiah's lips by placing a coal from the altar on them, Isaiah is then given clearance to stay in YHWH's presence (Isaiah 6:6-7).

Ezekiel. Ezekiel's call shares similarities with Isaiah's. Like Isaiah, Ezekiel is called during a vision that he receives from YHWH. While seeing a heavenly chariot, Ezekiel sees "the likeness of the glory of the Lord" and immediately falls on his face (Ezekiel 1:28). Ezekiel is told to whom he is being sent: the people of Israel (Ezekiel 2:3). He is being sent to speak YHWH's words "whether they [the people of Israel] hear or refuse to hear" (Ezekiel 2:7). YHWH then gives Ezekiel a scroll and commands him to eat it (Ezekiel 3:1). By eating the scroll, Ezekiel will have YHWH's words in his mouth in a similar way to Jeremiah, and somewhat like Isaiah. That a prophet's mouth must have specific association with the divine is common between Ezekiel,

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[116] Hans Wildeberger, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary,* trans. Thomas Trapp, Continental Commentaries (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991)*,* 249.

[117] Brevard Childs, *Isaiah* OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 55.

[118] This act of purification likely reflects ancient Mesopotamian cultic rituals where the purification of a person's mouth symbolized the purification of their entire body. Thus, the purification of Isaiah's lips makes him able to stand in YHWH's presence. This also implies that outside of this act of purification, Isaiah's life was truly in danger. See Victor Hurowitz, "Isaiah's Impure Lips and Their Purification in Light of Akkadian Sources," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 60 (1989): 39-89.

Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Like Jeremiah and Isaiah, this action locates Ezekiel's authority not within himself, but in YHWH who tells him what to say.

Ezekiel immediately falls on his face in the presence of YHWH. Much like Moses, there is not a lot of detail regarding the exact reason a why he is so scared. His reaction to "Inadequacy" seems to follow suit with the previous prophets, as something about YHWH's presence seems to induce fear in those who can experience it. However, those who survive contact with the divine seem to enter, "a new stage of life."[119] For Ezekiel, this new stage looks much like a transition from the priesthood to prophethood, as YHWH gives him the words that he will say to the nations.[120] Much like Jeremiah and Moses, YHWH reminds Ezekiel that he will be facing opposition, as the recipients of his message are likely to ignore it. However, YHWH totally rejects Ezekiel's claim to inadequacy, as he immediately commands him to stand up, and then forces Ezekiel to stand up with the spirit that enters him. Thus, YHWH's word carries with it a kind of enabling power.[121] YHWH's message through Ezekiel is, again, a severe one. Ezekiel's service as a "sentinel" suggests that YHWH has some nasty things in store for the people of Israel who have abandoned their worship of him.

Mountain Experiences

Mountains, in Old Testament texts, serve as a frequent location for theophanies. Prophets are shown to ascend mountains to meet with God. This action is also closely tied to Moses's

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[119] Victor Matthews, "Theophanies Cultic and Cosmic: 'Prepare to Meet Thy God!'," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 310.

[120] Margaret Odell, "You Are What You Eat: Ezekiel and the Scroll," *The Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 237.

[121] William H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1-19*, WBC (Waco; Word Books, 1986), 25.

reception of the covenant. In Exodus, YHWH first appears to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:16-19). The subsequent interaction between Moses and YHWH shows that God's presence on the mountain was not something to be trifled with (Exodus 19:21-25). Moses is commanded to "go down" and tell the people of the conditions involved with YHWH's presence (Exodus 19:21). This function of Moses, the intermediary who ascends the mountain to talk with YHWH and who subsequently descends the mountain to deliver a message to the people, continues throughout the narrative. Moses must receive the commandments of YHWH in chapters 21-23, in order to then deliver the commandments to the people at the beginning of chapter twenty-four. This process is repeated at the end of chapter 24, with Moses ascending the mountain to receive the stone tablets on which the law was written (Exodus 24:12) and later descending to rebuke the Israelites for worshiping the golden calf (Exodus 32:7-10). Thus, one gets the idea that the mountain is a place where YHWH meets with his messengers to deliver important messages to his people.

The act of meeting with God on the mountain is also of importance in this discussion, since "the mountain" was a common ancient near-eastern axis mundi.[122] Since the presence of YHWH is so dangerous, as noted in the discussion of call narratives, the ways in which characters are described in the presence of YHWH should be considered. Questions to be considered are: how does the prophet respond? Is the prophet affected in any way? How must the prophet view or look at YHWH? This section will deal with two of the most prominent mountain interactions with YHWH, Moses's and Elijah's.

Sinai (Moses). Moses is described as one with whom God would speak "face to face, as one speaks to a friend" (Exodus 33:11). But there is another divine interaction that suggests an

[122] Meyers, *Exodus,* 52.

even closer encounter. Moses begs to see YHWH's glory, to which YHWH replies "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, 'The LORD' … but you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live (Exodus 33:19-20)." This is no small matter. As Nahum Sarna notes, "[E]very other instance of a visible *kavod* [glory] in the Torah is characterized by three features: (1) It is a mass experience; (2) the *kavod* is distant from the observers; and (3) god initiates the manifestation and freely chooses the time and place."[123]

Thus, Moses's request for a unique experience with YHWH's glory is out of the ordinary, and attests to the unique relationship that Moses has with YHWH. Not just anyone can make this kind of request and expect an affirmative response.[124] YHWH commands Moses to stand on a rock, where YHWH will cover Moses as he (YHWH) passes by (Exodus 33:21-22). YHWH tells Moses that he will not see YHWH's face, but his back instead (Exodus 33:23).[125]

Moses is then commanded to bring two stone tablets up Mt. Sinai to serve as replacements for the ones that he had previously shattered (Exodus 34:1). It is here that YHWH is to pass by Moses. However, it should be noted that Moses's primary purpose in ascending the mountain is the retrieval of YHWH's commandments. This trip also ties into Moses's request for YHWH to accompany the people of Israel as they leave Sinai, since (1) this request sparks YHWH's command to ascend the mountain, and (2) Moses repeats the request after YHWH passes by (Exodus 33:15-16; 34:9). As YHWH passes by, he announces both the divine name

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[123] Sarna, *Exodus,* 214.

[124] Meyers, *Exodus,* 263.

[125] The "face to face" nature of Moses's and YHWH's relationship (33:11) seems at first to be at odds with Moses's concern for his life in this scene. However, Mark Wessner argues that Moses's "face to face" encounters with YHWH likely reflect a passive participation, whereby YHWH's desire to commune with Moses nullifies the usually deadly side effects of such an interaction. See Mark Wessner, "Toward a Literary Understanding of Moses and the Lord 'Face to Face' (פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים) in Exodus 33:7-11," *Restoration Quarterly* 44 (2002): 109-116.

and a summary of his character.

> The LORD, the LORD a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon they children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation. (Exodus 34:6-7)

This revelation serves to reveal exactly who it is that will be going with the people of Israel from Sinai: who it is that will make this people distinct (cf. Exodus 33:16). Here, the covenant is given again, and YHWH reestablishes his relationship with the people through the revelation to Moses (Exodus 34:10).

After receiving the covenant, Moses returns to the Israelite camp at the base of the mountain. As he returns, his face shines or is glorified (LXX: δεδόξαστι) "because he had been talking with God" (Exodus 34:29).[126] Everyone who sees him is afraid, but he speaks to them all the things which YHWH told him on the mountain (Exodus 34:30-31). Every subsequent time that Moses speaks with YHWH, his face is said to shine again (Exodus 34:34-35). This shine speaks to the intimate relationship that YHWH and Moses share. Because of Moses's proximity to the divine, his face is affected. This likely mirrors the "face to face" nature of Moses's and YHWH's conversations. What is important here, is that Moses's shining face serves as a symbol of his unique function in YHWH's dealings with Israel. "[W]hen God speaks to him directly; it

[126] Though the meaning of קרן in this text is debated (see William H. Propp, "The Skin of Moses' Face – Transfigured or Disfigured?," *The Catholic Bible Quarterly* 49 [1987): 375-386 and Menahem Haran, "The Shining of Moses' Face: A Case Study in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography," in *In the Shelter of Elyon,* eds. W. Boyd Barrick and John R. Spencer [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984], 159-169) the use of δεδόξαστι here likely reflects the idea of "shining" or "glory" in the LXX.

reflects God's glory and signifies Moses's authority."[127] Even the language used of Moses when he shines reflects an attempt to emphasize his authority.[128]

Horeb (Elijah). In 1 Kings, Elijah is shown to mirror Moses's encounter. However, there are some key discrepancies. After emerging victorious from his contest with the prophets of Baal, and after being declared an outlaw by Queen Jezebel, Elijah flees to the wilderness (1 Kings 19:1, 4). He ends up at Mt. Horeb and spends the night in a cave (1 Kings 19:9). Here, YHWH asks Elijah why he is there, to which Elijah responds, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:10). In a manner echoing his command to Moses, YHWH tells Elijah, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by" (1 Kings 19:11). An incredibly intense wind, and earthquake, and a great fire all pass over the mountain, but YHWH's presence is noticed by Elijah in the "thin silence" (קול דממה דקה Kings 19:12-13). The previous interaction is repeated, with YHWH asking Elijah why he is there, and Elijah responding by claiming to be very zealous and the only prophet of YHWH left (1 Kings 19:13-14). YHWH responds by telling him to (1) leave, (2) anoint a new king, and (3) anoint Elisha as prophet in his place (1 Kings 19:16).

There are echoes of Moses's experience with YHWH in Elijah's. Both are called to a mountain where YHWH will pass by (Exodus 33:19-20; 1 Kings 19:11), both hide in a rock formation as YHWH passes (Exodus 33:21; 1 Kings 19:9,13) and both must hide their face as

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[127] Meyers, *Exodus,* 266.

[128] Nahum Sarna argues that קרן (shining) and its homonym קרן (horn) are the words at play here. Thus, the horns of the golden calf are cleverly diminished by this telling of the story. See Sarna, *Exodus,* 221. The use of δεδόξαστι by the LXX seems to reflect a similar authority-laden understanding, though lacking the word play of the Hebrew.

YHWH passes.[129] But, the differences are striking. First, Elijah's experience seems to serve as a corrective lesson rather than an establishment of covenant. Sigve Tonstad suggests that Elijah's encounter on Horeb serves an attempt at revising Israelite understandings of the ways that YHWH interacts with his people: "[T]he reasons for the prophet's confidence in God must lie elsewhere, demanding of him a new perception and outlook. It is, as it were, as if Yahweh is repudiating precisely the features on which Elijah's prior confidence was built before his very eyes."[130]

While Tonstad sees the experience as corrective for Elijah, Peter Lockwood argues that this is the moment when Elijah is fired in favor of Elisha. Lockwood sees Elijah's flight to the wilderness and to Horeb as an act of defiance. "The journey to Mt. Horeb is an act of stubborn defiance by Elijah, undertaken in order to claim for himself the glory and grandeur of Moses and to gain a fresh boost of divine power to continue and complete the splendid work he has commenced in Israel."[131] This motivation is judged to be problematic by YHWH, so Elijah is decommissioned in favor of Elisha.[132]

William Dumbrell offers arguably the best understanding of the relationship between Moses's and Elijah's mountain experiences. He, like Lockwood, believes that YHWH disapproves of Elijah's flight to Horeb because "[t]here is other business of Yahweh which in fact he should presently be about!"[133] He argues that the Horeb experience serves to chastise

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[129] Moses's face is hidden by YHWH's hand in Exodus 33:22 and Elijah covers his face with his mantle in 1 Kings 19:13 NRSV.

[130] Sigve Tonstad, "The Limits of Power: Revisiting Elijah at Horeb," *The Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 19 (2005): 261.

[131] Peter Lockwood, "The Elijah Syndrome: What is Elijah up to at Mt. Horeb?" *Lutheran Theological Journal* 38 (August 2004): 54.

[132] Lockwood, Peter, "The Elijah Syndrome," 58.

[133] William Dumbrell, "What Are You Doing Here Elijah?: Elijah at Horeb." *Crux* 22 (1986): 18.

Elijah for his hubris in trying to be like Moses.[134]

> Thus there is the curious twist in all of this that the prophet of god, so conscious of his significance and indispensability for Israel, is rebuked and then removed. Israel's future did not depend upon the manifestation of his particular genius or giftedness. It depended as it always did and would upon the sovereign intervention of Yahweh, who would continue to honour his commitment made at Sinai to Israel.[135]

Thus, Elijah's attempt to elevate himself to the status of Moses is condemned. This is reflected in his decommissioning in favor of Elisha, and the differences in the result of Elijah's and Moses's theophanies. While Moses's face shone as an indication of his unique status among the people of God, Elijah is sent away and reminded that he is only one of many prophets still in Israel (1 Kings 18:13).

Miracles

For many of the Old Testament prophets, miraculous acts serve as one of the defining features of the prophetic office. Characters like Moses, Elijah, and Elisha are often most known, both in the text and in the present day, for the miracles that they perform. These miracles usually serve the purpose of either legitimizing the prophet's status or furthering YHWH's plan for his people in some way. Though the narrative purpose of these miracles is often directly tied to the surrounding story, the way the miracles are performed by the prophet varies widely. This section will address the question of *how,* in the pragmatic sense, the method of miracle performance varies from prophet to prophet: namely Moses, Elijah, and Elisha. In what manner are these

[134] Dumbrell, "What Are You Doing Here Elijah?" 18.
[135] Dumbrell, "What Are You Doing Here Elijah?" 19.

prophets performing miracles? Does the prophet invoke YHWH to intervene? Does the prophet simply perform a miraculous action of his own volition? Who is the primary active agent in the specific scene? It is with these questions that various prophetic miracle stories will be analyzed.

The miracle stories selected will revolve around Moses, Elijah, and Elisha. The Moses stories analyzed here will come from Exodus, as his role as prophet will be paradigmatic for the latter two.[136] The goal of this section will be to articulate commonalities found between the three prophets in order to later study how Jesus's miracle performance in Luke's gospel compares to those of the former prophets.

This section will make use of positioning theory. Positioning theory suggests that discourse functions in terms of the constantly changing position of characters, rather than their static roles.[137] Thus, in a conversation, a person may change their own position, or attempt to position the other person, several times. The analysis of position is helpful in this discussion of miracle performance since the way that one positions himself or herself can speak to the place that he or she views themselves in the current moral and social hierarchy.[138]

Though other prophets do perform miracles (e.g., Samuel and Isaiah)[139], these three characters do so the most. Moses serves as a prophetic archetype for subsequent prophets, so his inclusion seems natural. Elijah and Elisha are the D-history prophets most famous for their various miracles, and the literary structure of their narratives allows for the reader to see the

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[136] See Brian Britt, "Prophetic Concealment in a Biblical Type Scene," *Catholic Bible Quarterly* 64 (January, 2002): 37-58 for an example of how Moses is used as a paradigmatic prophetic character in his encounter with YHWH on Sinai in Exodus 34.

[137] Rom Harre and Luk van Langenhove, *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999). This section will rely heavily on the work of Harre and Langenhove in the discussion of positioning theory.

[138] Harre and Langenhove, "Introducing Positioning Theory," 21-22.

[139] Cf. 1 Sam 12:18 and 2 Kings 20:7.

development of a common theological idea. Therefore, some of their miracles will also be discussed in terms of how they fall within these categories.

Additionally, this thesis must distinguish between prophetic *marvels* and *miracles* (see Figure 2). There are instances throughout the Old Testament where supernatural acts take place *without required action by the prophet*. The distinction between these supernatural acts (called *marvels* in this paper) and miracles is in the role that the prophet plays. A miracle, as defined in this thesis, is a supernatural action that makes use of the prophet in its performance. The prophet is a necessary component in the execution of a miracle as he operates in the role of *actor.* In a miracle, the prophet performs some action that will then bring about the supernatural.[140]

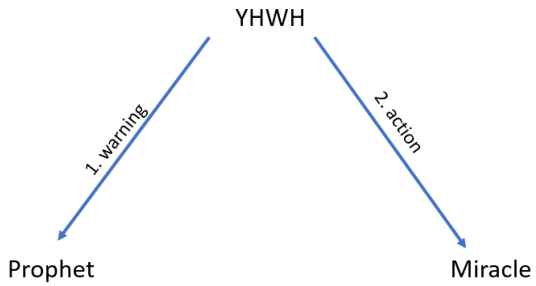

Figure 2: Marvel

A marvel is the discussion or prediction of a supernatural act by a prophet, but one where the prophet is not involved in its enactment. An example of a marvel would be the appearance of manna in the wilderness to the Israelites. YHWH tells Moses that he is going to send bread from heaven. Moses is not required to do anything to make the bread appear. Rather, he must only tell

[140] "Necessary," as it is used here, does not refer to YHWH's inability to execute a supernatural action without the assistance of a prophet. Rather, it functions as a relative term. In miracles, prophets are "necessary" insofar as they always function as *actors* that perform some action in order to bring about the miracle of YHWH (the *source*).

the people about the rules for picking it up (Exodus 16:4-5). In this instance, Moses is not functioning as an *actor* (one who performs some action to bring about the supernatural action), but as a *messenger*: one who alerts a person or group of people to some supernatural action that YHWH is going to perform.

Miraculous acts seem to show up under a few different conditions in the Old Testament text. The first kind will be referred to as a miracle$_1$ (see Figure 3). A miracle$_1$ takes place after a direct command from YHWH. In this instance, YHWH is performing first order positioning.[141] YHWH commands the prophet to perform some action, to which the prophet as *actor* acquiesces. The result is that the supernatural action (the miracle$_1$) takes place.

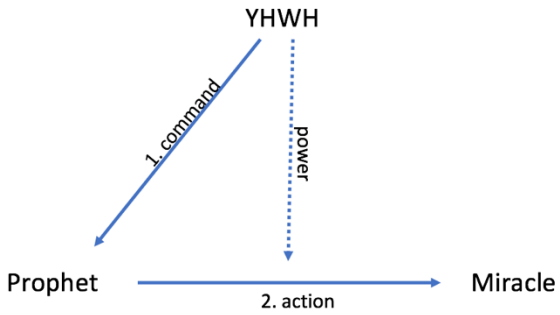

Figure 3:Miracle$_1$

A miracle$_2$ is a miracle that occurs when YHWH responds to the request of the prophet (See Figure 4). The prophet performs first order positioning. YHWH either responds by having the prophet perform some action through which YHWH will enact the miracle, or YHWH will act alone without the help of the prophet. The difference between a miracle$_1$ and a miracle$_2$ is in the initiation of the miracle. Whereas YHWH initiates a miracle$_1$ with a command, the prophet initiates a miracle$_2$ with a request to YHWH. The prophet (1) deliberately positions himself by

[141] Harre and Langenhove, "Introducing Positioning Theory," 20-22.

assuming that he (the prophet) has the authority to ask something of his deity and (2) "convinces" YHWH to position himself as willing to answer his requests.[142]

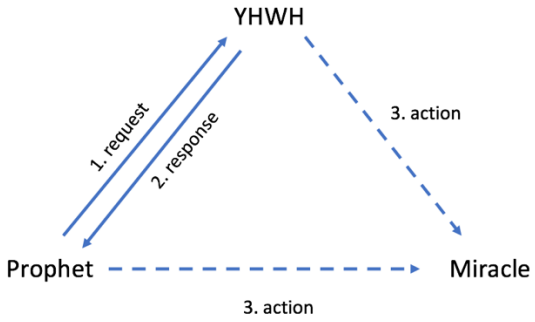

Figure 4: Miracle$_2$

A miracle$_3$ is like a miracle$_2$, with the key difference being the mode of request. Where a prophet directly asks for aid from YHWH in a miracle$_2$, the prophet indirectly requests YHWH's help by means of a blessing, curse, or other indirect entreaty (See Figure 5). Curses or blessings done in the name of YHWH would fit this description. This kind of miracle shows the prophet (1) positioning himself as one who can *indirectly invoke YHWH*, and (2) positioning YHWH as one who will honor that blessing or curse *by means of direct invocation*. Success at positioning the deity is contingent on deity's willingness to participate. In the cases of miracles$_1$ miracles$_2$, and miracles$_3$, the prophet, through invocation, notes that YHWH is the one who ultimately

[142] Harre and Langenhove, "Introducing Positioning Theory," 25-27. Harre and Langenhove use the term "forces" when discussing the ways in which one person may cause another person to position himself or herself. While that language proves to be effective when analyzing human discourse, it does not capture a nuanced picture of the way that divine dialogue functions for these texts. Since YHWH is perceived as significantly more powerful and intelligent than any human he interacts with, it does not seem fair to suggest that a human could "force" YHWH to position himself. Therefore, this paper will nuance Harre's and Langenhove's use of the word "forces" by using the word "convinces." Doing so will still allow the reader to understand the desired goal of the prophet's speech is for YHWH to acquiesce to their request/demand, but to also recognize the divine/mortal power dynamics present in the narrative.

decides if a miracle will take place or not. In any attempt of any of these three kinds of miracles, YHWH must be directly acknowledged as the *source* and *miracle agent.* The prophet merely serves as a vessel through which YHWH works, and he is aware of that fact.

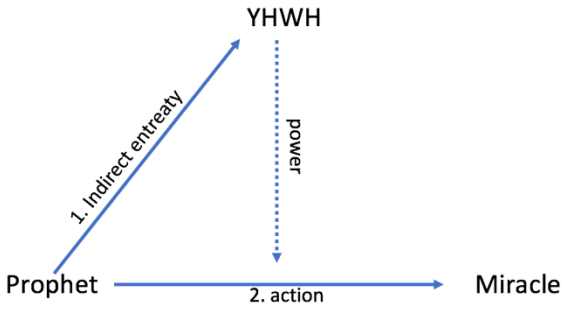

Figure 5: Miracle$_3$

A fourth kind of miracle is the one of particular interest in this study. In the case of a miracle$_4$, the prophet neither requests a miracle from YHWH, nor is he commanded to perform one (See Figure 6). Rather, the narratives where these kinds of miracles show up suggest that the prophet simply performs the miracle by his own volition, without having to consult, or even appeal to YHWH first. Now it should be clarified that the miracle$_4$ still recognizes YHWH as the *source* as the other three do. The only difference is the lack of either command from or request of YHWH. The prophet, much like in a miracle$_2$ and a miracle$_3$, is positioning himself and YHWH into a particularly effective relationship. The prophet (1) deliberately positions himself by assuming that he (the prophet) has the authority to *perform the miracle* and (2) "convinces" YHWH to position himself as willing to follow the prophet's lead, *without any* ***direct*** *acknowledgement of YHWH as source*.[143] That the prophet makes the assumption that he has the authority to make this kind of decision is not unmerited, as the moment of the prophet's call

[143] Harre and Langenhove, "Introducing Positioning Theory," 25-27.

immediately ties their work to YHWH's work.[144] This lack of invocation of YHWH, direct or indirect, is what distinguishes a miracle$_4$ from a miracle$_2$ or a miracle$_3$. The initiation of the miracle is entirely on the part of the prophet. This is the only miracle type where the prophet has *miracle agency*.

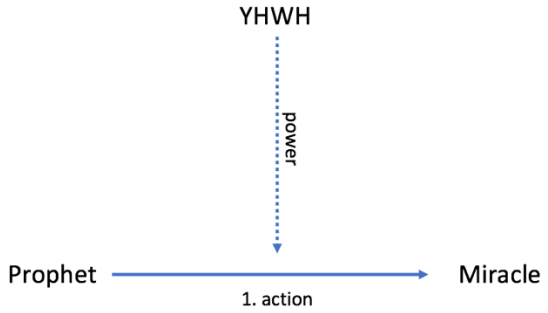

Figure 6: Miracle$_4$

A comprehensive discussion of all the miracle types performed by these three prophets could be a thesis all on its own. Therefore, I will show at least one occurrence of each type of miracle that each prophet performs. Not all prophets perform all four types, but an example will be provided of each type that the prophet does perform. However, I will provide a comprehensive chart at the end of my discussion of each prophet that will show each of their respective miracles and its classification according to my paradigm. The miracles directly discussed in this paper will be the ones that I find to be (1) the most helpful in displaying how this paradigm functions and (2) the most in need of categorical clarification, as the distinction between miracle types can sometimes be difficult.

[144] Consider Moses's call narrative in Exodus 4:1-9 where divine acts are directly tied to Moses's validity as a prophet of YHWH.

Moses. Most of Moses's miracles fall into the category of either $miracle_1$ or $miracle_2$, though not all of them. Moses's position, as one who speaks with YHWH face to face, grants him a unique status as both a leader of Israel and a prophet of God. This status also causes Moses to function as a kind of archetype for miracle performance that subsequent prophets, especially Elijah and Elisha, will follow.[145] The analysis will consider one of each of the miracle types that Moses performs in order to find the ways that *miracle agency* functions in his stories.

The Red Sea (Exodus 14:13-21). In Exodus chapter fourteen, one finds the story of the parting of the Red Sea. In this story is the climactic moment of the Israelite Exodus. After leaving Egypt with Pharoah's permission, Moses and the Israelites find themselves being pursued by the Egyptian military. The Israelites, following YHWH's directions, end up at the edge of the Red Sea, trapped between a fast-approaching enemy and a body of water. Enter the miracle. At YHWH's command Moses stretches out his staff over the water and the sea splits in front of him (Exodus 14:21). The Israelites are then able to cross through the sea on dry land. After crossing, Moses is commanded to again stretch out his staff over the sea. The Egyptian army that now finds itself stuck in the middle of a large body of water is destroyed. This scene is likely the most famous of all the miracles that Moses ever performs, and it will go down in Israelite history as the defining act of YHWH's mercy toward his people. But one must consider how this miracle fits into this study's framework.

Moses is the actor in this scene. However, the text suggests that YHWH is the one who initiates the action. Though Moses promises the people that YHWH will deliver them (Exodus

[145] Bernon Lee, "'Face to Face': Moses as Prophet in Exodus 11:1-12:28," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Ancient Israelite Historiography,* eds. Mark J. Boda and Lissa M. Wray Beal (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 3. Lee refers to Moses as the "prophet *par excellence" in the Israelite tradition.*

14:13-14), it is YHWH who first tells Moses to stretch out his staff to deliver his people (Exodus 14:16), thus maintaining the image of YHWH as a warrior of nations.[146] With this in mind, it seems best to classify this miracle as a miracle$_1$.

Another important component in this miracle is Moses's staff. The staff functions as a symbol and tool of YHWH's power as invested in Moses.[147] As Moses performs actions with the staff, divine action follows (cf. Exodus 7:20; 8:5, 16-17, etc.) The use of a prophetic prop alongside divine action will continue to show up in the D-history (e.g., the ark in Joshua 6, and Elijah's mantle in 2 Kings 2:8 and 14). However, the Deuteronomist seems to imbue the staff with power insofar as it is related to YHWH's direction either directly or through Moses.[148] The same can be said of Joshua's use of the ark. It's use as a river splitter (Joshua 3:16) and a city destroyer (Joshua 6:20) is contingent on YHWH's prior command (cf. Joshua 3:13 and 6:4 respectively). This use of props will appear differently in the Elijah/Elisha narratives, but that will be discussed below.

Water at Marah (Exodus 15:23-25). In chapter fifteen, one can see an example of Moses performing a miracle$_2$. When Moses and the people arrive at Marah, the people complain because they have no water that they can drink (Exodus 15:23). Here, the narrator tells the reader that Moses "cried out to the LORD; and the Lord showed him a piece of wood; he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet" (Exodus 15:25). Like in the case of the Red Sea, Moses does not act with any *miracle* agency, but he does get the miracle process started by making a

[146] Meyers, *Exodus*, 115.

[147] Thomas Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus,* ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 317. Dozeman considers the staff to be magical (140) only insofar as it has been imbued with power from YHWH.

[148] It should be noted that, until the fight with Amalek in Exodus 17, Moses's use of the staff in miracle performance is only associated with YHWH's command in either a miracle$_1$ or miracle$_2$.

request of YHWH. This miracle can be considered a miracle$_2$ because Moses as the *actor* initiates the miracle by requesting help from YHWH. YHWH then responds by instructing Moses as to what he should do to bring about the miracle. In either miracle, YHWH is the one who can determine whether the miracle happens, as he either commands the miracle or grants Moses's request. YHWH maintains the role of *miracle agent.*

Victory Over Amalek (Exodus 17:8-16). The clearest example of a miracle$_4$ in Moses's life occurs in Israel's victory over Amalek in Exodus 17. Moses sends Joshua out with some men to fight the attacking Amalekites. While they are fighting, Moses holds his staff in the air. If his staff stays in the air, Israel's army is successful. However, when he lets his arms down, Israel begins to lose the fight. Thus, Moses recruits Aaron and Hur to hold his arms up so that Israel can be victorious.

In this story, Israel's victory over Amalek is totally contingent on Moses's ability to keep his staff held in the air (Exodus 17:8-13). YHWH never commands Moses to do this, nor does Moses ever ask YHWH if he could or should do this. Rather, Moses positions himself in such a way that suggests that YHWH will likely follow his lead. Moses functions both as *actor* and *miracle agent,* as he can enact this miracle without consulting YHWH first.

It should be noted that YHWH approves of Moses's actions in this miracle$_4$. YHWH swears to "utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus 17:14) after their attack on the Israelites: an attack that will be held against Amalek throughout the D-history.[149] Moses's miracle$_4$ is in line with God's plan to deliver and protect the people of Israel as they wander. Thus, the performance of this miracle$_4$ seems to be condoned by YHWH, even though it

[149] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus,* 395-396. Dozeman notes that this vow is later shown to be a command to Joshua (Deuteronomy 25:17-19), and the inability to follow this command will result in Saul's downfall (1 Samuel 15).

is never directly commanded or requested. YHWH acts on Moses's behalf even without invocation because Moses attempts to further YHWH's plan for Israel.

A clue as to how Moses has this kind of authority is found in the name given to his staff, מטה האלהים (the staff of God). George Coats recognizes that the rod is an item that represents Moses' authority before Pharoah and the people.[150]

> It [the staff] represents the authority of Moses, his endurance to achieve victory over the enemy. That the rod here is called the 'rod of God' refers the authority of the hero to its divine origin. It is precisely in this combination that the distinctive unity between heroic man and man of God can be seen most clearly.[151]

Thus, the staff becomes symbolic of Moses's relationship to YHWH, as one who can speak and act for YHWH in certain instances. Though Moses may be portrayed similarly to a King, the text again emphasizes that the ability to affect the outcome of the battle is not Moses's, by describing how physically weak he is (Exodus 17:11).[152] The source of the miracle is never in question, but Moses's role as prophet or "man of God" does seem to offer him a degree of *miracle agency* when working toward YHWH's desires.[153]

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[150] George Coats, *Moses: Heroic Man, Man of God* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 127.

[151] Coats, *Moses*, 127.

[152] Sarna, *Exodus,* 95. *Contra* Geoffrey Miller, "J as Constitutionalist: A Political Interpretation of Exodus 17:8-16 and Related Texts," *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 70 no. 4 (June 1995): 1834-1838.

[153] See Charlie Trimm, "God's Staff and Moses' Hand(s): The Battle Against the Amalekites as a Turning Point in the Role of the Divine Warrior," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44 (2019): 198-214. Trimm suggests that this episode functions as a transitional story where Moses's act of raising his hands symbolizes that Israel will, in the future, pray for YHWH's deliverance even as they lose Moses and his staff (213). Though this explanation does not account for the later use of props in the D-history, it does allow for one to see quasi-intercessory act on the part of Moses that reveals his recognition of YHWH's miracle agency.

Conclusions About Moses's Miracles. Table 1 presents all the miracles that Moses performs. It should be noted that some marvels, such as the appearance of manna in the wilderness, are not listed since they are not pertinent to the current study.

Table 1: Moses's Miracles

Miracle	**Reference**	**Miracle#**
Leprosy hand	Ex 4:6-7	m1
Rod becomes serpent	Ex 7:10-12	m1
Water turned to blood	Ex 7:15 - 21	m1
Removal of the frogs	Ex 8:12-14	m2
Removal of the flies	Ex 8:30-31	m2
Sending of boils	Ex 9:8-11	m1
Sending of hail	Ex 9:22-26	m1
Cessation of hail	Ex 9:33-34	m2
Sending of locusts	Ex 10:12-15	m1
Removal of locusts	Ex 10:18-19	m2
Sending of darkness	Ex 10:21-23	m1
Splitting of the Red Sea	Ex 14:15	m1
Waters of Marah Drinkable	Ex 15:23-25	m2
Water from rock	Ex 17:5	m2
Defeat of Amalek (staff)	Ex 17:8-16	m4

In each of the miracles listed, Moses functions in at least the role of the *actor*. In fact, for most of the miracles he performs, he explicitly operates in that role. However, Moses's victory over Amalek stands as an anomaly. Here, Moses is both *actor* and *miracle agent*. Why is this the case?

As mentioned previously, Moses, as God's prophet, seems to be able to use at least some level of prophetic improvisation. Though he is never commanded to hold his staff in the air by YHWH, Moses still receives divine aid when he does. However, Moses's *miracle agency* seems to be contingent on its alignment with the divine plan, at least in the D-History. Since YHWH's supernatural acts in the Exodus story are always for the protection and deliverance of the Israelites, or for their correction, Moses's attempt to aid Israel in war against the Amalekites is met with divine intervention.

Moses's miracle$_4$ is approved by YHWH because it (1) recognizes YHWH as its source and (2) serves YHWH's purpose. This idea is mirrored the account of Moses's failure at Meribah in Numbers maintains this theological idea. When Moses strikes the rock instead of speaking to it, water still comes forth from the rock to sustain the children of Israel (Numbers 20:9-11). YHWH's faithfulness to his overarching plan is maintained. However, Moses is then directly rebuked for disobedience to YHWH's command and is therefore prohibited from entering the promised land (Numbers 20:12).

Elijah. Elijah's miracles are sometimes a bit more difficult to categorize. Even though he operates within the same prophetic tradition as Moses, some of his miracles are performed differently. For example, Elijah never performs a miracle$_1$. He also provides this study with its first example of a miracle$_3$. Elijah provides examples of the ways in which the prophetic office is developing within the D-history.

Resurrection of Widow's Son (1 Kings 17:21-22). Based on this study, Elijah performs two miracles that can easily be called a miracle$_2$. The one of most significance to this paper is the resurrection of the widow's son in 1 Kings 17:21-22. The widow of Zarephath, for whom Elijah has already performed the miracle of the oil, discovers that her son has "no breath in him" (1 Kings 17:17). Upon hearing this, Elijah stretches himself on top of the boy and entreats YHWH, "O LORD my God, let this child's life come into him again" (1 Kings 17:21). The boy then comes back to life, and Elijah takes him down to his mother proclaiming "See, your son is alive" (1 Kings 17:23).

This miracle functions as a miracle$_2$ because of Elijah's direct entreaty to YHWH. Elijah is the *actor* who stretches himself on top of the boy. However, the text directly identifies YHWH as the *miracle agent* in v. 22. After Elijah's request, "The Lord listened to the voice of Elijah" and then brought the child back to life.

Twice Baked Soldiers (2 Kings 1:2-12). Other of Elijah's miracles are more difficult to categorize. In the first chapter of 2 Kings, Elijah twice calls down fire from heaven to consume Ahaziah's soldiers (2 Kings 1:2-12). When asked if he is a man of God, Elijah responds by saying, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty" (2 Kings 1:10). This scene likely reflects lower class, Israelite distaste for the Omride dynasty, as Elijah subverts monarchical authority and reinforces the tie between legitimate kingship and YHWH worship.[154] This miracle could either be considered a miracle$_1$ or a miracle$_4$. This action

[154] Tamis Renteria, "The Elijah/Elisha Stories: A Socio-cultural Analysis of Prophets and People in Ninth-Century B.C.E. Israel," in *Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective,* ed. Robert Coote (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 75-126. Renteria argues that much of the Elijah/Elisha cycles represent groups of lower-class Israelites that were resistant to Omride rule. She argues that this explains why a document that legitimizes Jehu's rule is concerned with drought and its effect on widows. Elijah's confrontation of the soldiers here seems to reflect a

does seem to fit the description of a miracle$_4$. Elijah does not directly entreat YHWH, asking him to burn the soldiers. He does not indirectly entreat YHWH either, but he proclaims his status as a "man of God" in his condemnation of the soldiers.[155]

It does seem that Elijah is able to access YHWH's power without invocation, and under his own ability. However, Elijah's previous meeting with the Angel of the Lord in vv. three and four of the same chapter suggests that previous, unspoken conversations have taken place. YHWH has already condemned Ahaziah to death because of his inquiry of Baal-zebub (2 Kings 1:3). It seems that the same wrathful attitude is mirrored in Elijah's call of fire from heaven on the soldiers who have been sent to arrest him. The statement stands as a challenge of sorts, between Elijah and Ahaziah. T. R. Hobbs notes, "[T]he emphasis is upon the prophet as 'man of God,' a term reserved for characters as Moses (Deut 33:1), Samuel (1 Sam 9:6), Elijah, and Elisha (2 Kings 2:8)."[156] Elijah's response to the soldiers and the subsequent fire that consumes them serves as "authentication of Elijah as 'man of God' over against the royal authority."[157] This contest of authority seems reminiscent of Moses's dispute with Korah (cf. Numbers 16) and with Miriam and Aaron (cf. Numbers 12). The issue at hand is a common one: is the prophet a legitimate messenger of YHWH? It seems likely Elijah's claim about being a man of God actually stands as a kind of indirect invocation. He is reminding the soldiers of his status as a prophet of YHWH, one who, because of his relationship to YHWH, can stand against governing

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similar sentiment, as it corrects Omride Baal worship and reinforces Yahwism as a proper means to authority.

[155] See Victor Hamilton, "אישׁ," *NIDOTTE* 1:388-390. Hamilton notes that this is the only instance in the Old Testament when a "man of God" refers to himself by that title.

[156] T. R.Hobbs, *2 Kings,* WBC (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1989), 5. It should be noted that this term is also used of angels/divine messengers (cf. 1 Samuel 2:27). The emphasis seems to remain the same, as the character in 1 Samuel is one who speaks on behalf of God; one whose authority to speak about future events is derived directly from YHWH.

[157] T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 11.

bodies when they oppose YHWH. Thus, this miracle can be classified as a miracle$_3$.

Beginning and End of Drought (1 Kings 17:1 and 1 Kings 18:41). The other two instances of a possible miracle$_4$ concerns Elijah's weather miracles. Here, the discussion hinges on Elijah's role in a drought and the return of rain. At the opening of 1 Kings 17, Elijah announces "As the LORD the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word" (1 Kings 17:1). This drought brought about through the word of Elijah is maintained for three years (1 Kings 18:1). It is then at his word that the rains return several years later (1 Kings 18:41). Is Elijah performing a miracle$_4$ and declaring a drought without consulting YHWH? This is unlikely. Since YHWH is indirectly invoked ("As the Lord the God of Israel lives ... ") the first option one is presented with is to call this miracle a miracle$_3$.[158]

The classification of this miracle hinges on the nature of Elijah's role. Classifying this miracle as a miracle$_3$ would imply that Elijah is the *actor* involved in the miracle's execution. However, if Elijah is operating in the role of *messenger,* then one must reconsider calling this a miracle at all. First, one should consider Ahab's status according to the Deuteronomist. In chapter sixteen, Ahab is said to have done "more to provoke the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than had all the kings of Israel who were before him" (1 Kings 16:33). It seems that Elijah's declaration of the drought is in direct response to Ahab's provoking of YHWH.[159] N. J. Tromp emphasizes "the decisive part played by prayer in the story" (1 Kings 18:36), but this

[158] Contra Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* ABC (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 425, who claims that Elijah's status as "man of God" allowed him to start and terminate the drought at his word alone. Though Elijah's word is involved, this understanding does not give a nuanced enough description of the dynamics of Elijah's and YHWH's relationship in this miracle story.

[159] Volkmar Fritz, *1&2 Kings*, Continental Commentaries (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 183.

prayer seems to be directly for the sign of fire that will convince the crowds of YHWH's supremacy (cf. 1 Kings 18:37 "so that these people will know that you, O Lord, are the true God.")[160] Therefore, Elijah's statement in 1 Kings 17:1 makes the drought most closely resemble a marvel. This is coupled with YHWH's statement to Elijah in 18:1 where YHWH commands Elijah saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab; I will send rain on the earth." Here, YHWH claims full responsibility for the restoration of rain, and, implicitly, for the drought. Therefore, it seems more accurate to describe both the prediction of drought and the restoration of rainfall as a marvel not a miracle$_3$ or a miracle$_4$.

Jordan Split (2 Kings 2:8). Elijah's only definite miracle$_4$ takes place while he and Elisha are travelling to the spot where he will be taken up into heaven. When they both come to the edge of the Jordan, Elijah "[takes] his mantle and [rolls] it up, and [strikes] the water; the water [parts] to the one side and to the other, until the two of them [cross] on dry ground" (2 Kings 2:8).

This action seems to be Elijah's emulation of Moses's parting of the Red Sea.[161] Here, Elijah's mantle takes the place of Moses's staff as the prop by which the water is split. However, this emulation of Moses is not necessarily positive. Elijah's previous attempt to be like Moses at Horeb ended in chastisement or possibly his removal from the prophetic office.[162] This scene then seems to continue in that vein as Elijah reluctantly progresses toward anointing Elisha as his

[160] N.J. Tromp, "Water and Fire on Mount Carmel: A Conciliatory Suggestion," *Biblica* 56, no. 4 (1975): 495.

[161] T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* Word Biblical Commentary, 19.

[162] Tonstad, "The Limits of Power," 261, and Lockwood, Peter, "The Elijah Syndrome," 51-62. Tonstad argues that the story shows YHWH to revise Elijah's perception of how the divine is to interact with his people. However, Lockwood takes this idea a step further by suggesting that Elijah is "fired" in the Horeb scene and is told to go anoint his replacement.

replacement.[163] Thus, Elijah's mantle functions like Moses's staff, but in an ironic fashion. The prophet who sought to be like Moses is performing a version of his miracle *only after being fired.*

Here, Elijah operates both the role of *actor* and *miracle agent.* He is the *actor* because the miracle takes place when he strikes the water with his mantle. However, he is the *miracle agent* because he performs the miracle without (1) any invocation, direct or indirect, of YHWH, or (2) a command from YHWH to perform some action. The miracle takes place at only Elijah's and later Elisha's discretion (2 Kgs 2:13-14), and it allows him to continue his way to his ascension only a few verses later (2 Kings 2:11).

Conclusions About Elijah's Miracles. Table 2 categorizes all the miracles that Elijah performs in the Kings' narrative. Though he does not perform as many miracles as Moses, he still operates within similar constraints. In fact, when Elijah seeks out supernatural action that is outside of YHWH's overarching scheme, he is rebuked for it.[164]

The one instance of Elijah's miracle$_4$ also coincides with the divine plan. In 2 Kings 2:1, one finds that Elijah's ascension is fated as something that YHWH is about to do.[165] Though

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[163] See Christina Fetherholf, "Elijah's Mantle: A Sign of Prophecy Gone Awry," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 42 no. 2 (2017): 207-210. Fetherholf argues that the scene in 1 Kings 19:19-21 shows Elijah's reluctance to obey YHWH's command to anoint Elisha as prophet after him. Fetherholf believes Elijah's mantle to be symbolic of his failed office.

[164] Tonstad, "The Limits of Power: Revisiting Elijah at Horeb," 261. Tonstad argues that the Elijah's theophany experience at Horeb serves as a rebuke of the prophet, to show him what his relationship to YHWH should look like. "It is, as it were, as if Yahweh is repudiating precisely the features on which Elijah's prior confidence was built [powerful theophanies] before his very eyes." For more discussion on Elijah's Horeb experience as divine rebuke, see Lockwood, "The Elijah Syndrome," 51-62 and Moshe Reiss, "Elijah the Zealot: A Foil to Moses," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 32, no.3 (2004):174-180.

[165] Thomas Brodie, "The Departure for Jerusalem (Luke 9, 51-56) as Rhetorical Imitation of Elijah's Departure for the Jordan (2 Kings 1,1-2,6)," *Biblica* 70, no.1 (1989), 103. Brodie notes that the only two characters to ever have a fated ascension in the Christian canon are Elijah (2 Kings 2:1) and Jesus (Luke 9:51).

Elijah's progress on his journey does not appear to be a necessary factor in his ascension, his attempt to part the waters of the Jordan seems to serve narratively as (1) a means that will bring him to the place where he will ascend and (2) an intertextual echo of Moses's miracle that caused a body of water to split.

Table 2: Elijah's Miracles

Miracle	**Reference**	**Miracle#**
No rain	1 Kings 17:1	marvel/m3
Revives widow's son	1 Kings 17: 21-22	m2
Fire consumes altar	1 Kings 18:37-38	m2
Rain is coming	1 Kings 18:41-43	marvel
Fire consumes the fifties	2 Kings 1:9-12	m3
Parting the Jordan	2 Kings 2:8	m4

Thus, the performance of a miracle$_4$ retains the same caveat as in Moses's case. The prophet can maintain *miracle agency* so long as he (1) is working toward a similar end as YHWH and (2) can offer some recognition that YHWH is the *source* of the miracle.[166]

Elisha. Elisha has more miracles recorded than either of the two previous subjects of this survey. He also performs the greatest variety of miracle types, executing a great number of miracles$_4$. Like the previous sections, this section will consider at least one of every type of miracle that Elisha performs. However, Elisha performs one miracle that serves to significantly

[166] Though YHWH is not explicitly referenced by Elijah in his miracle$_4$ performance, the comment by the narrator that he was approaching the days of his ascension at the hand of YHWH seems to contextualize the miracle of splitting the Jordan within YHWH's plan.

advance the Deuteronomist's theology of miracles. Thus, this section will give more attention to Elisha's use of miracles$_4$.

Water Made Clean (2 Kings 2:19-22). After Elijah is taken into heaven, Elisha travels to Jericho. There, a group of people tell him "The location of this city is good, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the land is unfruitful" (2 Kings 2:19). Elisha commands the people to bring him a bowl full of salt. He then throws the salt into the spring and declares, "Thus says the LORD, I have made this water wholesome; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it" (2 Kings 2:20). As he commands, the water becomes "wholesome" and the narrator notes that it remains that way "to this day" (2 Kings 2:21).

This miracle appears to be an example of a miracle$_1$, though one that is more implied than explicit. Elisha's miracle firmly places him within the prophetic tradition of sustenance provision (cf. Moses in Exodus 15:23-25) and Elijah in 1 Kings 17:8-16).[167] Elisha recognizes YHWH as *miracle agent* by prefixing his statement about the water with "Thus says the LORD." Generally, this phrase would suggest that the following supernatural action would be a marvel, as it is something that YHWH has decreed. However, Elisha's act of throwing the salt into the spring situates him as the *actor* in this story. This is not something that YHWH has done without Elisha. Rather, Elisha acts in a way that causes the miracle to happen. Thus, this scene is definitely a miracle, not a marvel.

The initial problem with describing this miracle as a miracle$_1$ is in the order in which the miracle takes place. Yes, Elisha recognizes that this is a supernatural action that has been decreed by YHWH, but that decree is not made known until after Elisha has played his role as

[167] Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ABC (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 37.

actor by throwing the salt in the spring. Thus, the narrator leaves the origin of the miracle ambiguous. The reader must infer how the miracle was initiated. The decree from YHWH rules out the possibility that this should be categorized as either a miracle$_3$ or a miracle$_4$. The options are that either (1) YHWH commanded Elisha to throw the salt into the spring unprompted, resulting in a miracle$_1$, or Elisha directly entreated YHWH and YHWH answers, resulting in a miracle$_2$. An answer to this question is not available from the text. However, the fact that the only options are either a miracle$_1$ or miracle$_2$ shows that, in this miracle, YHWH maintains the role of *miracle agent*.

Bear Assault (2 Kings 2:23-25). Immediately after fixing the spring at Jericho, Elisha leaves and encounters a group of boys who begin to harass him. They exclaim "Go away, baldhead! Go away, baldhead!" (2 Kings 2:23). In what is likely the greatest example of adolescent corporal punishment in the Old Testament, Elisha curses the boys in the name of YHWH, with the result that two she-bears come out of the woods and maul forty-two of them (2 Kings 2:24).

This miracle can best be classified as a miracle$_3$ since his invocation of YHWH is indirect. He curses the boys "in the name of YHWH", thereby giving YHWH the *miracle agency* for the subsequent miracle. Since the curse is uttered by Elisha, he is functioning as the *actor* in this scene. Much like Elijah's miracle$_3$ with the king's messengers reinforced his identity as a prophet, so too does this miracle cement Elisha's identity.[168]

[168] See Brian Irwin, "The Curious Incident of the Boys and the Bears: 2 Kings 2 and the Prophetic Authority of Elisha," *Tyndale Bulletin* 67 no. 1 (2016): 23-35. Irwin argues that this story serves to complete the story of Elijah sweetening the water. It reinforces the covenant curse of Leviticus 26:22 warning Israel to not disregard the prophetic word. Thus, the miracle$_3$ here serves to show the seriousness with which people ought to take Elisha's position.

Shunamite Woman's Son Raised (2 Kings 4:8-37). Elisha's relationship with the Shunamite woman offers a great test-case for his use of miracles. Elisha (1) predicts the birth of her first son (2 Kings 4:16), (2) fails to raise him from the dead (2 Kings 4:31), and (3) successfully raises him from the dead (2 Kings 4:35). The question then becomes, what kind of miracle does he perform? Elisha's pronouncement of the Shunamite woman's impending conception is very clearly a miracle$_4$. Elisha never invokes YHWH, nor even references YHWH in his proclamation to the woman. As Wesley Bergen notes, the editor plays on the story of Sarah's pregnancy in Genesis in his telling of the birth of the son of the Shunamite woman. Whereas Sarah becomes pregnant "at the time of which God had spoken to him [Abraham]," the Shunamite woman becomes pregnant "in due time, as Elisha had declared to her."[169] Bergen notes that "Elisha takes the place of God in the story."[170] Elisha's pronouncement is effective but appears out of line with how a "man of God" is supposed to act. Bergen believes that the Deuteronomist shows Elisha to be in the wrong, "for once it [power] has lost its connection to the divine, it loses credibility."[171] In fact, Elisha's credibility as a man of God is totally questioned. Mary Fields rightly argues that Elisha is portrayed negatively as the Shunamite woman reminds Elisha that the child is his responsibility, even as Elisha attempts to avoid interaction with her.[172] However, the fact that the woman conceives, even though Elisha is

[169] See discussion of Genesis 21:2 and 2 Kings 4:17 in Wesley Bergen, *Elisha and the End of Prophetism* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 98.

[170] Bergen, *Elisha and the End of Prophetism,* 99.

[171] Bergen, *Elisha and the End of Prophetism*, 99.

[172] Mary Shields, "Subverting a Man of God, Elevating a Woman: Role and Power Reversals in 2 Kings 4," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 58 (1993): 66. That Elisha is described negatively subverts claims that Gehazi's moral failings were to blame for the failed miracle (see Reuven Klein, "Gehazi and the Miracle Staff of Elisha," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 45 (2017): 103-110).

portrayed as having ignored YHWH as the *source*, is puzzling. Why would YHWH be the *source* for a miracle when the *actor* does not recognize the deity's power?

David Jobling argues that this episode shows Elisha "defeating" the empowered woman who is shown to assume a position of authority over the prophet; thus, the conclusion of the story shows Elisha rightly restoring the proper power dynamic.[173] While this interaction does display a lesson for Elisha, Jobling's analysis fails to recognize the role greed plays in this and the subsequent story. Rather, this story should be seen as a polemic in two senses. First, this story seems to serve as a rebuke of Elisha's greed. Whereas Elijah aids a poor widow in the parallel to this story, Elisha serves a married woman of great means (2 Kings 4:8). The woman builds a room for Elisha (2 Kings 4:10) and it is only then that he promises the woman a child (2 Kings 4:16). Elisha's motivation for promising a child to this woman is monetary gain, and thus his attempt to raise the child is initially stifled. This theme of the rebuke of greed is echoed in the subsequent episode, when Elisha chastises Gehazi for taking a gift from the recently healed Syrian general (2 Kings 5:15-27). Thus, part of Elisha's lesson here is rooted in a polemic against prophecy as a means of gain.

This rebuke leads to a second lesson for Elisha: he must again recognize the source of his miraculous works.[174] Though both Fields and Bergen believe that this reflects a theology that requires the prophet's presence for miracles to be performed, it seems that the emphasis of the

[173] David Jobling, "A Bettered Woman: Elisha and the Shunamite in the Deuteronomic Work," in *The Labour of Reading: Desire, Alienation, and Biblical Interpretation*, eds. Fiona Black, Roland Boer, and Erin Runions (Atlanta: The Society for Biblical Literature, 1999), 189-190.

[174] See Bergen, *Elisha and the End of Prophetism*, 98-101 for a discussion of Elisha's power in comparison to that of YHWH and the Shunamite woman.

story is truly focused on the question of the source of the miracle and the motivation behind it.[175] To nuance Fields's view, Elisha must be present insofar as his presence is representative of his recognition of his responsibility as prophet. It is only when Elisha performs a miracle$_2$ by praying to YHWH that the boy is raised from the dead and he is then recognized by the woman as a true prophet (2 Kings 4:33-34).

A possible reason that this miracle$_4$ attempt is written as a failure is an attempt to parallel Elijah's death-defying miracle. As previously discussed, Elijah also raises the son of a widow in 1 Kings 17. Nachman Levine uses rather causative language when he notes the parallel: "Elijah brought the widow's son *to* life, Elisha causes the widow's son *to live.*"[176] Though he notes the parallel, he misses the intercessory necessity present in both stories. Elijah does not attempt to perform a miracle$_4$ when raising the dead. Rather, he immediately attempts a miracle$_2$ and calls on YHWH to restore the boy to life (1 Kings 17:21). Thus, Elisha's attempt to raise a boy with a miracle$_4$ that does not require divine invocation appears to be an attempt to surpass Elijah's status as a prophet of YHWH. However, though Elisha has a double portion of Elijah's spirit (2 Kings 2:9-12), he is not one so great as to bypass YHWH as *source* for his miracles.[177]

Axe Head Floats (Kings 6:1-7). The previous story should not be read as an attempt to show that Elisha has limited authority as a man of God. Rather, by nature of the sheer number of miracles$_4$ he performs, it seems that Elijah enjoys some elevated status as one of God's prophets.

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[175] Bergen, *Elisha and the End of Prophetism,* 102; Fields "Subverting a Man of God," 65.

[176] Nachman Levine, "Twice as Much of Your Spirit: Pattern, Parallel and Paronomasia in the Miracles of Elijah and Elisha," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 85 (1999): 29.

[177] This conclusion echoes the one made by Roy Heller, where he argues that Elisha is characterized as a morally ambiguous character. See Roy Heller, *The Characters of Elijah and Elisha and the Deuteronomic Evaluation of Prophecy: Miracles and Manipulation* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 16.

Take for example Elijah's retrieval of the axe head from the water. One of the sons of the prophets loses his axe head in the Jordan. Elisha has the man point to the location where he lost the axe head, and then proceeds to through a stick into the water, causing the axe head to float to the surface (2 Kings 6:1-7). Here, Elisha performs a miracle$_4$ different from characters such as Moses and Elijah, as there is no overarching direction from YHWH that the miracle follows.[178] This miracle is performed by Elisha while he maintains all miracle agencies. Thus, it does seem that the prophet has some level of authority that allows him to perform miracles with miracle agency in certain circumstances.

Conclusions About Elisha's Miracles. In Elisha's miracles listed in Table 3, one can see a continuation of the traditional theology of miracles present in both stories about Moses and Elijah. Miracles must be always performed with an eye towards YHWH. The theology of "the man of God" is continued as Elisha, like Moses and Elijah, is protected by YHWH in the face of adversity (cf. Exodus 17:8-16, 2 Kings 1:9-12, 2 Kings 2:24).

Elisha's miracles prove that miracles$_4$ are an approved means of miracle performance, even in instances where they are performed without any direct correlation to YHWH's overarching work in the narrative. However, Elisha also provides the most explicit lesson about the concept of *miracle agency* in the D-history theology of miracles.

At the risk of being repetitive, one must remember that miracles, especially miracles$_4$ must be (1) in agreement with (or at least not in opposition to) YHWH's overarching plan and (2) acknowledge YHWH as the *source.* Thus, Elisha's interaction with the Shunamite woman proves to be a disciplinary example of this theology. When Elisha fails to recognize YHWH as the *source* of the miracle, the miracle fails.

[178] See Exodus 17:8-16.

Table 3: Elisha's Miracles

Miracle	**Reference**	**Miracle#**
Jordan split	2 Kings 2:14	m2
Sweeten water	2 Kings 2:21	m1
Bear assault	2 Kings 2:24	m3
No rain, but water in wadi	2 Kings 3:16-17	m1
Jar of oil	2 Kings 4:3-4	m4
Give woman a son	2 Kings 4:15	m4
Raise Shunamite son	2 Kings 4:33-34	m2
Purifies pot of stew	2 Kings 4:41	m4
Elisha feeds 100 men	2 Kings 4:43-44	m1
Naaman healed	2 Kings 5:10, 14	m4
Gehazi given leprosy	2 Kings 5:27	m4
Axe head floats	2 Kings 6:6	m4
Perceives the Kings thoughts	2 Kings 6:9	m1
Blinds Aramean army	2 Kings 6:18-19	m2

JESUS'S PROPHETIC AUTHORITY

After considering the previous set of prophetic tropes, I now want to look at the ways that Luke uses these tropes to construct Jesus's authority as a prophet. This section will not consider the nuanced descriptions that point to Jesus as one greater than a prophet. That task is reserved for the following chapter. Rather, this section will strictly analyze areas in Luke's gospel where Jesus is explicitly tied to the Old Testament prophetic traditions. I will argue that the association of Hebrew prophets with Jesus's actions is a tool used by Luke to legitimize Jesus's authority to the infant Christian community by means of attaching Jesus to the larger Israelite history.

Luke does not characterize Jesus as the only prophet in his gospel narrative. In the third chapter, Luke introduces the reader to John for the first time outside of his mother's womb. Luke directly characterizes John as a prophet in his description as John prepares the way for Jesus to be baptized. If then Luke considers John to be a prophet also, one must consider how John's prophetic role compares with Jesus's prophetic role. Therefore, this section will begin with an analysis of John's role as prophet, and then proceed chronologically (according to Luke) through Jesus's ministry to see how it reflects the previously established prophetic tropes.

John as Prophet

John's Regnal Statement (3:1-2). When discussing Luke's use of prophetic imagery, one must consider John the Baptist's role in Luke's narrative. The beginning of John's ministry is prefaced by a regnal formula quite like those of many Old Testament prophets.

> In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of

Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. (3:1-2)

Here, Luke echoes the Old Testament prophetic regnal statement in content and structure.[179] The statement situates John's oracle within the time frame of a specific King, and echoes Septuagintal language regarding prophets and kings in the Kings narrative. "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius" (Ἐν ἔτει δὲ πεντεκαιδεκάτῳ τῆς ἡγεμονίας Τιβερίου Καίσαρος) seems to directly reflect the language of the Kings narrative (cf. 1 Kings 15:28).[180] They both make use of the dative of ετος to set the time frame of the following story. Luke never again uses this construction to situate his story. Even the nativity story in the second chapter, which also opens with the mention of an emperor, does not use this construction. Thus, Luke seems to intentionally mirror Septuagintal language in the narrative sections of Kings, in order to set up his story about John.[181] Where the Kings narratives feature prophets like Elisha and Elijah, John appears to be the prophet of Luke's story from his introduction.[182]

John's Oracle (3:1-20). The content of John's prophecy also reflects prophetic Septuagintal language. In the year that Luke notes in 3:2, he says "the word of God came to John" (ἐγένετο ῥῆμα θεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἰωάννην).[28] This construction mirrors oracles by other Old Testament prophets. For example, Elijah is said to have received a word from YHWH in a similar manner. First Kings 18:1 reads "the word of the Lord came to Elijah" (καὶ ῥῆμα κυρίου

[179] Clint Burnett, "Eschatological Prophet of Restoration: Luke's Theological Portrait of John the Baptist in Luke 3:1-6," *New Testament Society of Southern Africa* 47 (2013): 1-24.

[180] All citations of the Greek New Testament text come from Barbara Aland et al., eds., *Nestle-Aland – Novum Testamentum Graece,* 28th revised ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

[181] I. Howard Marshall. *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 132. See Marshall's discussion of this introductory statement in reference to John's ministry.

[182] John's association with the Israelite prophetic tradition is explicitly mentioned before his conception in 1:17, where he is said to be one who goes "with the spirit and power of Elijah."

ἐγένετο πρὸς Ηλιου). This "word" that John receives spurs him to begin preaching "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (3:3). This message of repentance seems to qualify as an oracle of YHWH, since it follows the three-part structure required of a true utterance.[183] YHWH sent the message (3:2), John delivers the message (3:3), and people receive the message (3:7).

Between the synchronism and the prophetic utterance, Luke firmly establishes this section as prophetic narrative like those in the Kings narratives. John even contests the rulers of his land much like the prophets of the Old Testament (e.g., 3:19-20). In most instances of Old Testament prophetic narrative, John would be the protagonist of this story. He is the one who speaks for YHWH to a corrupt and sinful people, much like Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Elijah. If one considers this chapter alone, Luke is writing a contemporary prophet story in the style of the narrative prophets, and John is the main character.

John and Lincoln. In reference to Lincoln's work, the synchronism that opens John's story serves as an indirect ancestral invocation on Luke's part. As already noted, Luke structures John's introduction in such a way that images of Isaiah, Elijah, and other Old Testament prophets come to mind. Thus, Luke draws an "ancestral" line between John and the former prophets, before the content of his message is even discussed. The method of John's prophetic discourse also serves as an invocation of the same prophetic tradition. By invoking the Old Testament prophetic tradition, Luke pulls the former bearers of YHWH's message into his narrative as John prepares Jesus's way. John's authority is of the same kind as the old prophets, but not the same.

[183] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke,* Sacra Pagina (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 67. Johnson notes that John is presented as a prophet who speaks the word of God and calls for repentance.

This is where Lincoln's idea of shared eschatological images is helpful. After Luke tells the reader that the Word of God came to John, he inserts the words of Isaiah.

> The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God (3:4-6).'

This statement brings about a new set of meanings for John's ministry. John's prophetic work is now placed in context of YHWH's return to Israel, situating him in the position of the eschatological prophet spoken of in Malachi 4. John's ministry is directly correlated with the Jewish eschatological hope, and Luke shapes that eschatological image to his theological purposes. Luke's gospel contains evidence of debate over the implications of these images, as many people debate the identity of this coming prophet (e.g., 7:16). Thus, the interpretation of who this prophet is directly affects how one is to understand the eschatological implications of John's and Jesus's ministry. Luke takes great care to tell the reader that John is the prophet who comes to prepare the way of the Lord. Luke has John tell the reader, "one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals" (3:16) in order that the reader can draw different eschatological conclusions about Jesus's identity.

Jesus as Prophet

Mountain Experiences. Luke uses geography in a way that enhances his characterization of Jesus as prophet. Luke uses mountain imagery in order to show Jesus behaving in prophetic manner much like Moses. There are four major mountain scenes in Luke's gospel. This section will analyze three of these scenes in order to see how Luke uses them to construct certain ideas

about Jesus. Three of the four scenes are also found in Mark and Matthew, so those scenes will be analyzed comparatively in order to see how Luke nuances the synoptic tradition.

The Choosing of the Twelve (6:12-19). Here, Luke writes his version of Jesus's choosing of the twelve. In order to see how Luke nuances this story, it seems best to discuss the story in both Matthew and Mark first. Mark precedes the choosing of the Twelve with an episode of Jesus teaching by the Sea of Galilee.[184] So many people are being healed and relieved of demons that Jesus is concerned about being crushed. The episode ends with the author noting that Jesus would not allow the demons that he cast out of the people to tell anyone that he was the Son of God.

Following this, Jesus "went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons" (Mark 3:13-15). Here Mark emphasizes the fact that Jesus went up on a mountain to choose the Twelve, something which Luke will maintain. Following this episode, Jesus returns to his home where he is confronted by the scribes who claim that he is working by the power of Beelzebub (Mark 3:20-30).

Matthew's account is preceded by several miracle stories. The author provides a summary statement saying, "Jesus went about in all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness" (Matthew 9:35). The author then gives the account of Jesus's calling of his disciples. "Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness" (Matthew 10:1). The calling of Jesus's

[184] Mark 3:7-12.

disciples here seems to correspond with his statement at the end of chapter nine: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38). Jesus then sends out the twelve to proclaim that "The kingdom of heaven has come near" (Matthew 10:7).

Luke's telling of the story is unique in that it emphasizes Jesus's ascent and descent of the mountain. Prior to his choosing of the Twelve, Jesus has some of discussions about the Sabbath; one where Jesus claims to be Lord of the Sabbath (6:5), and one where he heals a man's withered hand (6:10). Luke then gives the reader this description: "Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles" (6:12-13).

Here, as in Mark's account, Luke emphasizes the fact that Jesus "went out to the mountain." But Luke also gives the reader a different motivation. While Mark shows Jesus going up the mountain only to call the disciples (Mark 3:13-14), Luke says that Jesus goes specifically to pray for the whole night. Jesus's motivation is an interaction with YHWH. Immediately following this scene, Jesus descends the mountain to find a large gathering of people for whom he preaches and performs miracles (6:17-19). Paul Achtemeier recognizes that this pairing of preaching and miracles likely clarifies how Jesus's ministry functioned.[185] However, this thesis will argue that Luke also uses many of these teaching episodes to establish a Mosaic pattern in the third gospel.[186] Moses is one who ascends mountains to talk to YHWH, then descends to

[185] Paul Achtemeier, "The Lucan Perspective on the Miracles of Jesus: a Preliminary Sketch," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (December, 1975): 549.

[186] See Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 237. Though Marshal argues that there should be no theological nuance derived from Luke's placement of the choosing of the twelve, the geographical notes that Luke includes, coupled with his overwhelming prophetic emphasis, seem to be too deliberate to accept such a position.

deliver YHWH's words to the people. Jesus's mountain climbing habits in this section reflect a similar idea. Jesus ascends the mountain to pray to YHWH in v. 12 and descends the mountain in v. 17 in order to speak to a large crowd.[187] Jesus ascends a mountain, has some kind of interaction with YHWH, then descends the mountain with a message for a crowd.

The Transfiguration (9:28-36). The Synoptic Gospels are quite similar in their descriptions of the transfiguration. Each of the accounts are prefaced with Jesus performing a food miracle, feeding thousands, then a declaration by Peter as to who Jesus really is, followed by the ascension of a mountain and Jesus's transfiguration. Therefore, to discuss how Luke frames this story within his scope of Jesus's place in the Israelite prophetic tradition, one must consider Luke's unique discrepancies in his telling of the transfiguration.

First, Luke frames this section of his narrative with a unique conversation of Herod.

> Now Herod the ruler heard about all that had taken place, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the ancient prophets had arisen. Herod said, "John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he tried to see him. (9:7-9)

Herod thinks that he has ridden himself of the Elijah figure, the prophet, but he suddenly recognizes that he has not. One like Elijah still stands opposed to him. Thus, the subsequent stories of the feeding of the five-thousand, Peter's confession, and the transfiguration, where Luke mirrors the other synoptic accounts, are framed by a recognition that Jesus is opposing Herod in a prophet-like manner. This, again, places Jesus in the classic prophetic position of

[187] Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 110. Johnson recognizes that Luke moves this scene in mark to this particular position in order to "set the stage for the prophetic discourse" about the new Christian community.

royal opposition. His message is one that Herod is not willing to accept and one for which Herod is willing to kill him.

After the transfiguration, both Matthew and Mark tell a story of Jesus talking with the disciples about the scribes' claim that Elijah must return (cf. Mark 9:11-13 and Matthew 17:10-13). However, Luke skips this story. Instead, Luke immediately sends Jesus down the mountain to a large crowd to heal a possessed boy (9:37-43). The fact that Luke skips the conversation with the disciples to send Jesus to a crowd at the bottom of the mountain lends itself to the idea that Luke is trying to portray Jesus in a Mosaic light. Similarly, to what has been noted in the previous chapter of this thesis, Jesus goes up the mountain to interact with God, and then descends the mountain to minister to the crowds.

Seeing how Luke frames the narrative, one can now discuss how the transfiguration functions within his telling. Jesus is performing a Moses-like action, so it is no surprise that he achieves a Moses-like result.

> And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. (9:29-31)

This scene no doubt recalls Moses's interaction with YHWH on Sinai, since his face is also said to shine (Exodus 34:29).[188] However, this scene shows Elijah and Moses in a position of

[188] Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, ABC (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 801. Fitzmyer notes Luke's unique details in his account, specifically Jesus's δοξα in verse 32, "suggests some heavenly association of Jesus."

"prophets paying honor to One Who is greater than they themselves."[189] As the previous chapter discusses, Elijah's attempt to reenact Moses's theophany episode is met with a kind of rebuke. Thus, Jesus's successful emulation of Moses's theophany suggests that he is in a unique position. In fact, Jesus's reenactment is more dramatic than Moses's, as not only his face changes, but his clothes also become dazzling white. The group's discussion of Jesus's coming ἔξοδον (9:31) directly alludes to Moses leading of the Israelite people out of Egypt.[190] Luke's perception of Jesus in this scene is as a figure that can rival Moses's authority and position.[191] Jesus thus busts the prophetic mold in one sense by mirroring not just any prophet, but the archetypal prophet and lawgiver.

Jesus's Daily Routine (21:37-38). Here, the reader gets a comment from Luke that is unique in the Synoptic Gospels. After prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem (21:20-24), the coming of the Son of Man (21:25-28), and the coming about of the Kingdom of God (21:29-36), Luke tells the reader about Jesus's daily teaching routine: "Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple" (21:37-38). Luke seems to place Jesus's ascent and descent of a mountain in between his bouts of teaching in the temple. Though not explicitly stated, it seems to be the case that this account follows the pattern set in Luke 6. Luke tells the reader that Jesus "spent the night in prayer to God" when he ascended the mountain to call the twelve (6:12). Since there are only four

[189] Jindrich Manek, "The New Exodus in the Book of Luke," *Novum Testamentum* 2 (January, 1957): 8.

[190] Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 384, and Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 153.

[191] See Robert O'Toole,"Luke's Message in Luke 9:1-50," *Catholic Bible Quarterly* 49 (January, 1987): 78-79. O'Toole suggests that Luke describes Jesus not as Moses in this scene, but as one *like* Moses. The discrepancy is most clearly felt in YHWH's reference to Jesus as his Son from the clouds.

mountain scenes in Luke's gospel (6:12-19; 9:28-36; 21:37-38; 22:39-52), it is safe to say that Luke likely intends the reader to assume that when Jesus ascends mountains in Luke's story, it is for the purpose of prayer. Luke again draws on Mosaic imagery as Jesus is said to bring knowledge to the people after coming down from the mountain where he has been praying.

Miracles. After discussing the different miracle categories present in the Old Testament prophetic narratives, one should consider the miracle categories present within Luke's telling of the Jesus story. Here, four miracle stories will be analyzed that are either (1) unique to Luke or (2) contain unique elements. The content of miracle stories found only in Luke's gospel are important as they provide Luke's unique perspective on Jesus's miracle-working authority.

Jesus Identifies with the Old Prophets (4:16-30). This scene does not directly involve the performance of any miracles, but it does recall how miracles were performed in order to substantiate Jesus's claims to legitimate prophethood. Jesus's references to Elijah and Elisha are (1) prefaced by his claim to prophethood (4:24) and (2) serves to advance his prophetic message of liberation by means of reference to miracle performance. Jesus emphasizes the outsider status of those healed by the old prophets, likely to show the direction of his ministry that will bridge the gap between Jews and Gentiles.[192] It is interesting to note though, that Jesus's exegesis of Elijah's and Elisha's miracles in this section serves to legitimate his mission. Miracles are understood here as means by which one can determine if YHWH is working with an individual who is a prophet, and Jesus directly aligns himself with such characters.

Jesus and the Fish (5:1-11). After teaching some people from Simon's boat, Jesus commands Simon to go fishing.

[192] Francois Bovon, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50,* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 156.

> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. (5:4-7)

Here, Jesus performs what appears to be a miracle$_4$. There is no invocation of YHWH, direct or indirect, nor a command from YHWH. Rather, Jesus performs this miracle of his own desire, much like Moses in Exodus 14 and Elisha in 2 Kings 4:41. This supernatural action can be differentiated from a marvel because of the necessity of Jesus's command. Jesus is not a passive participant in the action but is rather the *actor* who maintains *miracle agency* by initiating the miracle without direct or indirect invocation of YHWH.

The Bent-Over Woman (13:10-17). In this scene, Jesus heals a woman who had been "bent-over" (ἀσθενείας) for eighteen years (13:11). "When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God" (13:12-13). Again, Luke presents a clear example of a miracle$_4$ on Jesus's account. Jesus does not invoke YHWH in any sense. Rather, he speaks, acts, and the miracle takes place.[193]

Both miracles show Jesus performing miracles in a manner compatible with other Old Testament prophets. His miracle performance is not out of the ordinary, and, like the prophets, stands as evidence of his legitimacy as a prophet. In the following chapter, I will consider episodes where Jesus's miracle performance may point to his status as one of greater position

[193] Luke seems to connect this story and the freedom brought about through the Mosaic covenant, thereby deepening the connection between Jesus's actions and Moses's actions. See Natalie Houghtby-Haddon, *Changed Imagination, Changed Obedience: the Bent-Over Woman as Social Vision in the Gospel of Luke* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

than a prophet.

Lincoln and Jesus the Prophet

Lincoln's theory of authority construction clarifies how Jesus's connection to the prophetic office build's his authorizing voice in Luke's gospel. If, as Sterling has argued, Luke's gospel serves, at least in part, as an effort to legitimize the infant Christian movement in light of its continuity with Judaism, then Luke's association of Jesus with the prophets ties the premier figure of Christianity to the divine work of the prophets of old.[194] At this point, let me remind the reader of Lincoln's definition of authority: "[A]uthority is not so much an entity as it is (1) an effect; (2) the capacity for producing that effect; and (3) *the commonly shared opinion that a given actor has the capacity for producing that effect*."[195] It is the third portion of this definition that is of most importance to the present discussion.

That characters in Luke's gospel believe that Jesus has the authority to do the things that he does is of central importance to the narrative, as noted by the chief priests and the scribes (20:2). However, this thesis is primarily concerned with Jesus's authority construction, *not for characters in the story, but for Luke's audience.* Jesus's ties to Israel's great prophets bolsters Luke's argument (and the larger Christian claim) that Jesus's status as the central figure of "the Way" is legitimized for those who follow YHWH. This is closely tied to Lincoln's concept of ancestor invocation. As Luke shows Jesus to emulate the prophets he is literarily invoking authoritative figures in Israel's past as witnesses to and proponents of Jesus's legitimacy. In a way, Luke invokes the prophets as Jesus's "kin."[196]

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[194] See Sterling, *Historiography and Self Definition*, 359.
[195] Lincoln, *Authority,* 10-11. Emphasis added.
[196] See Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 19.

It is not new information that Luke portrays Jesus as a prophet. Aside from the use of synchronisms, Luke shows Jesus to participate in each of the other four prophetic tropes outlined in the previous chapter. However, one must be aware of the limits that a phrase *like a prophet* carries when talking about Jesus. Luke firmly establishes that Jesus is a prophet, with Jesus even identifying himself as a prophet that must die in Jerusalem (13:32). There is no sense that Jesus is not a prophet, save that the descriptor is inadequate to fully articulate Luke's understanding of Jesus's identity. The following chapter will consider scenarios where Jesus's words and actions seem to "bust" the previously established prophetic tropes.

BEYOND PROPHETIC AUTHORITY

Thus far, this thesis has established (1) the ways that Luke describes Jesus as a prophet and (2) how Luke constructs Jesus's authority via prophetic motifs. However, to call Jesus a prophet is like calling da Vinci a painter: both descriptors only recognize one dimension of the person and fail to grasp the full breadth of their work. This idea is apparent in one sense by the number of other titles used of Jesus in the third gospel. From his conception, Jesus is Lord (1:43, 76; 2:11), Savior (2:11), Christ (2:11, 26), and Son of God (1:35), with other titles such as Son of Man (5:24; 6:5, 22; 7:34, etc.) being used by Jesus himself later in his ministry. Yet, Jesus's status as any one of these titles by no means negates his role as prophet. Thus, any presumption to call Jesus a prophet *exclusively* is problematic. Luke considers Jesus to be a prophet, yet something more.

"Prophet" also falls short in describing Jesus in a second sense. Here I will make use of the term "busting" to articulate my point. Jesus "busts" prophetic tropes insofar as he goes beyond the generally held assumptions about how prophets act and what they can do. Even in instances where the individual tropes are not addressed, Luke still shows Jesus to break with normal patterns of prophetic action and speech in order to show him to be something more. Jesus breaks the prophetic mold.

This act of busting does not negate Jesus's status as prophet, just as his status as Lord does not negate his role as Savior. Rather, it contributes to Luke's understanding of who Jesus is and what he can do. Therefore, this chapter will offer examples of instances where Jesus busts the prophetic mold while still performing prophetic actions.

This chapter will be divided into two sections. First, I will consider instances in Luke's gospel where Jesus seems to bust the prophetic mold. Specifically, I will consider the ways that Luke nuances Jesus in relation to the prophetic office in order to then elevate Jesus above the prophetic office. Here, four of Jesus's prophetic episodes will be considered: Peter's commission in 5:1-11, the raising of the widow's son plus Jesus's meal with the Pharisee in 7:11-17, 36-50, the transfiguration in chapter 9, and the implications of Jesus's statement in 13:32-35 considering his resurrection in chapter 24.

This chapter will conclude by considering the ways that Bruce Lincoln's ideas of authority construction and mythmaking can be used to understand the implications of Luke's prophetic emphasis of Jesus's identity. How is Jesus like the OT prophets? How is he different? How do these differences resonate with Luke's larger Christological themes? It is in this discussion that I hope to show how Luke uses LXX imagery in order to portray Jesus as one with authority to direct the infant Christian movement and expand the kingdom of God via Gentile inclusion.

Prophetic Trope Busting

Peter's Call (5:1-11). Luke chapter five recounts the call of Jesus's first disciples. While speaking to a crowd, Jesus commandeers Simon's fishing boat, to teach from it.[197] After teaching, Jesus tells Simon to lower his nets again in order to prepare for a catch. Simon objects, noting that he and his colleagues had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. However, Simon acquiesces and he and all those present are astonished by the huge catch he gathers. In

[197] Fitzmyer, *The Gospel of Luke*, 564. Fitzmyer notes that Luke's account of the story reveals a bias towards Peter, as he presented far more favorably in this account than in corresponding stories.

response, Simon falls at Jesus's knees and exclaims, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" (5:8)! Jesus responds by changing Simon's vocation, telling him, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people" (5:10).

In this scene, Luke makes use of his own kind of call narrative, echoing the call narratives of the Old Testament prophets. If one were to follow Habel's model, the call narrative elements are out of order, but enough of the elements are present to suggest Luke's use of the trope. Luke will nuance the trope by having the story build toward the confrontation and commission, instead of starting with those elements.

In verses two and three, Jesus initiates the discussion. He enters Simon's boat on the lakeshore and begins to teach the crowds. Simon is confronted by a man claiming to speak the word of God and is asked to aid him in his work, even if it is just pushing the boat out into the water. Just exactly who Jesus is is unclear to Simon now, but that will soon change.

In v. 4, Jesus initiates what Habel would call a sign of confirmation.[198] "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch" (5:4). This proposition will end with the miraculous result of many fish for Simon in verse 7. However, Simon initially objects saying, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing" (5:5). This is Peter's statement of inadequacy. He recognizes that he and his colleagues have been unable to produce a catch of fish all night. But he follows this statement with another that suggests at least a partial understanding of Jesus's ability to change the situation. "Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets" (5:5). The combination of these statements shows Peter's understanding of the dynamic between Jesus and himself. His ability is lacking, but Jesus's ability is not.

Jesus then fulfills the sign of confirmation by causing the overabundance of fish in

[198] Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narrative," 301.

Simon's nets. At this point, the question remains: what is the sign confirming? Peter has not yet been commissioned to any work. Luke, in this scene, shows Peter becoming convinced of Jesus authority and position before Peter is ever called to divine task.

After pulling in his massive catch of fish, Peter responds in a way reminiscent of Old Testament prophets. He falls at Jesus's knees and declares, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" (5:8) Here, the reader finds another instance of Peter's recognition of inadequacy. Much like Isaiah in his call narrative, Peter recognizes that his sinfulness stands as a deficiency in the presence of the one calling him.[199] This results in Peter assuming a position of reverence to Jesus much like Moses, who hides his face from the bush (Exod 3:6), and Ezekiel, who falls on his face after seeing "the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Ezek 2:3). As Francois Bovon notes, "The nonverbal prostration is religious behavior before the divine: on one hand, an homage; and on the other, a question of survival…Simon's reaction corresponds to the Hebrew Bible theophanies: one cannot see God without dying."[200] Jesus responds in a manner similar to YHWH here: "Do not be afraid" (5:10). [201] Jesus offers a statement of reassurance, affirming the positive relationship he has with Peter, and preparing Peter for his commissioning.

This interaction between Jesus and Simon from verse four to verse nine is unique among the Synoptics. To this point, the interaction between Jesus and Simon resembles the call narratives of Old Testament prophets. Jesus performs a sign of confirmation (the large catch), Peter expresses an understanding of his inadequacy (he cannot catch fish but thinks Jesus can/he

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[199] Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 90. Johnson notes that Peter's response here is "an expression of awe before the power of the Holy."

[200] Bovon, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50),* 170.

[201] Bovon, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50),* 170. Bovon notes that Jesus's response is resonant with YHWH's traditional response in theophany episodes of the Hebrew Bible.

recognizes his sinfulness in relation to Jesus), and Jesus reassures Peter of the nature of their relationship ("Do not be afraid"). The only thing missing is Peter's commissioning.

This is where Luke includes the words of Jesus found in both other Synoptics: "[F]rom now on you [Simon] will be catching people" (Luke 5:10; cf. Mark 4:17). This is Peter's commission. The question then becomes: why did Luke tell the first part of this story before mentioning Peter's commission? Luke frames the story in such a way that Peter must recognize the weight of Jesus's status and request. Before Jesus commissions him, he offers both reassurance and a sign of confirmation. Thus, when Jesus asks Peter to fish for people, Peter has been thoroughly convinced to listen to what this man has to say.

Luke is building Peter's prophetic call narrative.[202] Though Peter will not have the Spirit come upon him until Acts 2, his commission takes place here in Luke 5. Leading up to the commission, Jesus and Peter are acting out call narrative tropes, so that when the reader reads, "From now on you will be catching people," he or she will understand something unique about both Jesus and Peter. First, Jesus is in the call narrative, but he is not in the position of the prophet or the called one. Rather, he is in the position of the one calling. He is calling a person, reassuring the person, and confirming the call with a sign. Second, Peter is in the call narrative in the position of the called one. He expresses a recognition of inadequacy and sheer awe in response to Jesus's actions, echoing the actions of the prophets.[203] The whole interaction leads

[202] For a discussion of the prophethood of the disciples according to Luke, see Paul Minear, "The Apostles as Prophets Like Jesus," in *To Heal and Reveal: the Prophetic Vocation According to Luke* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 122-147.

[203] M. M. Bourke, "Peter in the Gospel of Luke" in *Peter in the New Testament*, eds. Raymond Brown, Karl Donfried, and John Reumann (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1973), 119. Bourke recognizes that Luke associates the story of the catch of many fish with Peter's commission for the sake of showing that Peter's ability to "catch men" is entirely rooted in Jesus's power.

the reader to understand something that Peter is only beginning to understand. Jesus's approach to Peter functions as a kind of divine confrontation. Even as one who has been called (3:21-22), Jesus shows that he operates with a new level of prophetic authority as one who can also perform calls.

The Widow at Nain (7:11-50). This scene in Luke's gospel is one of the most direct parallels of the Elijah/Elisha stories that Luke produces.[204] In the story, Jesus restores the life of a dead boy: a feat common to both Elijah and Elisha. However, to appreciate the nuance that Luke provides, one must first consider the language used by both the prophets in their death-raising episodes.

In first Kings 17, Elijah raises the son of a widow from Zarephath. In order to do so, "he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried out to the Lord, 'O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again.' The Lord listened to the voice of Elijah; the life of the child came into him again, and he revived" (1 Kings 17:21-22). Elijah performs a miracle$_2$. He asks YHWH to bring the boy back to life, and YHWH acquiesces. As discussed in the previous chapter, Elisha attempts to improve on this miracle$_2$ of Elijah by raising the Shunamite woman's son with a miracle$_4$. However, when he is unable to do so, he prays to YHWH, and lays on the child in order to restore him to life (2 Kings 4:32-34). In both of these instances, the life of the child is restored by means of a miracle$_2$.

It is interesting then that Jesus does not perform such a miracle. Whereas the Deuteronomist tells the reader that both Elijah and Elisha must entreat YHWH in order to raise

[204] Brodie, Thomas, *The Crucial Bridge: The Elijah-Elisha Narrative as an Interpretive synthesis of Genesis-Kings and a Literary Model for the Gospels* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 84. Brodie notes that the raising of the widows son in Nain by Jesus "uses not only the obvious phrase concerning giving the child to his mother but also builds line by line on a whole section of 1 Kings 17."

the dead, Jesus does no such thing. Rather, Jesus authorizes the restoration of the boy himself: σοὶ λέγω, ἐγέρθητι ("I say to you, get up"). Jesus offers an imperative (ἐγέρθητι) justified by his own authority (σοὶ λέγω). If one were to view Jesus in reference to his "prophetness," then this miracle appears to be a miracle$_4$. However, Jesus's direct claim to authority as noted by λέγω carries with it some possible theological implications. Even in other instances of miracles$_4$, there seems to be an understanding that the prophet is one who is speaking and acting on behalf of YHWH. Here, Jesus performs an identical miracle to both Elijah and Elisha, but he can do it in way that Elisha was unable. Whereas Elisha fails his attempt as a miracle$_4$ when raising the Shunamite woman's son (2 Kings 4:31) and must resort to a miracle$_2$, Jesus succeeds in performing a miracle$_4$ (7:14). In this scene, Luke encourages the reader to recognize Jesus's prophetic superiority to both Elijah and Elisha, as he performs a miracle$_4$ flawlessly in a way that the old prophets could not.

At this point, one could suggest that Luke portrays Jesus as one who is the greatest of the prophets. However, the two subsequent stories suggest a different conclusion.[205] In verse 18, Jesus is approached by some of John's disciples who ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another" (7:18-21)?[206] Jesus's response to the question seems to necessitate a resounding yes: he is "the one who is to come." As far as Luke is concerned, Jesus's title as "the one who is to come" far surpasses the title of prophet. One ought to consider Jesus's

[205] Bovon, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, 273. Bovon argues that the crowd's response to Jesus serves as a "not yet complete confession of faith" that recognizes Jesus's prophetic status in relation to Elijah but fails to fully grasp his full identity.

[206] Though a discussion of the meaning of "the one who is to come" is important to understanding Luke's broader Christology, Marshall's initial answer to this question seems more directly beneficial. Marshall sees the question of John's disciples to be primarily an echo of John's claim in 3:16 saying one stronger than he who would come after him (Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 290).

description of John after this scene. Jesus says,

> What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John. (7:24-28)

Here Jesus describes John as one who is "greater than a prophet." He (John) is one who performs the prophetic role in the ultimate manner. But John's claim of Jesus in chapter three should still be ringing in the ears of the careful reader. "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals" (3:16). Thus, Jesus's claim about John carries implications about his own identity. John is the greatest prophet, but Jesus is said to be greater than John. Therefore, one cannot take Jesus's emulation and improvement of Elijah and Elisha's miracle as a sign of ultimate prophethood. That would be to miss the nuance of Luke's description of Jesus, and to fall into the error of the Pharisee in the subsequent story.

After Jesus discusses John's identity, one of the Pharisees invites him over for dinner (7:36). While they are dining, a woman "who was a sinner" bursts in and anoints Jesus's feet with perfume (7:37-38). At this, the Pharisee thinks to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him – that she is a sinner" (7:39). Here, Luke shows Simon (the Pharisee) to have heard that some consider Jesus to be a prophet and finds that idea to be untrue.[207] However, Jesus responds to Simon's inner

[207] Bullard, Collin Blake, *Jesus and the Thoughts of Many Hearts: Implicit Christology and Jesus' Knowledge in the Gospel of Luke.* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 105.

dialogue by (1) telling him a parable and (2) forgiving the woman's sins. By forgiving sins, Jesus acts in a way not characteristic of a prophet, but of the Son of Man (5:24).[208] This action does not negate his prophetic description but surpasses and "busts" it. His role as "Son of Man" crosses over with his role as prophet in such a way that he is shown to have greater authority than prophets usually have, even as his prophethood is questioned by Simon.[209] "Jesus is presented, therefore, simultaneously as a prophet continuous and discontinuous with the prophets of old, for Jesus may be recognized as a prophet, but he is also the Son of God (1.35), Savior, Messiah, and Lord (2.11)."[210] To call Jesus a prophet is not to be incorrect, but it is to grasp only one layer of his identity.

Jesus's miracle types throughout his ministry are not entirely different than those of the former prophets. Table 4 gives every instance of Jesus performing miracles, and their categorization according to the previous framework. Jesus performs a large amount of miracles$_4$, more so than even Elisha. However, the difference is in the consistency with which he performs specifically miracles$_4$. In no instance in Luke's narrative does Jesus perform any other kind of miracle. The closest example is found in Jesus's feeding of the five thousand where, taking the fish and the bread, Jesus "looked up into heaven, blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd" (9:16). Here, one could see argue that Jesus performs a

[208] Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 86-89. In the Simultudes of Enoch, the Son of Man is directly associated with the coming judgement as one who will be seated on a throne and can enact judgement. Thus, Jesus's claim to be able to forgive sins in 5:24 seems to draw on this imagery.

[209] Collins and Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God*, 155. Collins and Collins both argue that Luke presents Jesus as one who is the "key agent" in God's eschatological judgment of humanity. It seems that it is this status as "Son of Man" that would also give him authority to forgive sin.

[210] Bullard, *Jesus and the Thoughts of Many Hearts,* 109.

miracle$_3$.

Table 4: Jesus's Miracles

Miracle	**Reference**	**Miracle#**
Jesus Passes Through Crowd[211]	4:28-30	m4
Demon Cast Out	4:33-35	m4
Simon's Mother Healed	4:38-39	m4
Various Diseases and Demons	4:40-41	m4
Large Catch of Fish	5:1-11	m4
Leper Healed	5:12-14	m4
Paralytic Healed	5:17-26	m4
Withered Hand Healed	6:6-11	m4
Centurion's Servant Healed	7:1-10	m4
Nain Widow's Son Raised	7:11-17	m4
Storm Calmed	8:22-25	m4
Demon Cast into Pigs	8:26-33	m4
Jarius's Daughter Raised	8:41-42; 49-56	m4
Woman with Issue of Blood	8:43-48	m4
Feeding the Five Thousand	9:12-17	m3/4
Demon Cast Out of Child	9:37-43	m4

[211] The claim that this scene involves a miracle is debatable. Jesus either (1) miraculously passes through an angry mob or (2) nimbly maneuvers through a crowd so dense that it had, to this point, cornered him on a cliff face. If this is not, in Luke's mind, a miracle, then the story is of no consequence. If Luke does consider it a miracle, then it falls in the category of miracle$_4$.

Table 4 continued

Miracle	Reference	Miracle#
Demon Cast Out	11:14	m4
Bent-over Woman	13:11-17	m4
Man with Dropsy Healed	14:1-2	m4
10 Lepers Healed	17:11-19	m4
Servant Ear Healed	22:50-51	m4

Even with the feeding miracle in mind, Jesus's miracle track record is astounding in relation to the former prophets. Aside from Jesus, Elisha performs the most miracles$_4$ of the prophets considered in this thesis, with a grand total of six. Of these miracles, he is rebuked once for improper miracle practice in his attempt to raise the Shunamite woman's son. Though he attempted to raises the boy with his staff, he must resort to directly invoking YHWH to revive the boy. Jesus runs into no such problems. This is not to say that Jesus of himself derives some divine power. Again, that discussion is outside the scope of this paper. Rather, it is to say that Jesus functions as a kind of idealized prophet who is able to consistently perform miracles that do not require invocation of YHWH either directly or indirectly. In this regard, Luke portrays Jesus as one who is superior to the prophets that came before him.

Jesus Critiques Herod (13:32-35). In chapter thirteen, Luke provides the reader with a unique interaction between Jesus and some Pharisees. The Pharisees approach him and tell him that Herod wants to kill him. Jesus responds.

> Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a

> prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'" (13:32-35)

Here the reader gets a unique picture of how Luke describes Jesus's prophecy. There are several elements that link this utterance to prophetic speech. The obvious is Jesus's self-identification as a prophet when giving his reason as to why he must go to Jerusalem. Second, Jesus stands in the position of the prophet in this confrontation with royalty. In this way he functions much like Elijah who openly acts despite Ahab in 1 Kings 18.[212]

Third, Jesus makes a claim about future events. In this instance, he predicts his own death within three days.[213] This is the prophetic aspect that merits the most attention for the present discussion.[214] However, the language Jesus uses to describe his prophetic action seems to differ from common language used by prophets in their attempt to justify their legitimacy. *"I am* casting out [ἐκβάλλω] demons and performing [ἀποτελῶ] cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day *I finish* [τελειοῦμαι] my work" (13:32). This string of first person, present verbs seem to suggest that Jesus sees himself as directly responsible for these acts. The language is like YHWH's declaration to Moses: "Before all your people *I will perform marvels* [ποιησω ενδοξα], such as have not been performed in all the earth or in any nation" (Exodus 34:10, emphasis added). Here, YHWH takes direct credit for the "marvels" or "glorious things" that will take

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[212] Cf. 1 Kings 18:11. Obadiah is commanded to say "Elijah is here" to King Ahab, knowing that it will incur Ahab's wrath. However, Elijah presses Obadiah to say so anyway, suggesting that Elijah is not afraid of a contest of power.

[213] David L. Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 73. Tiede notes that the content of Jesus's prophecy suggests that the phrase "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" will be uttered when "the prophet" arrives in Jerusalem. Thus, Jerusalem's fate is sealed as they fail to recognize the prophet-king that comes.

[214] Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 572.

place.

Jesus's language here is notable, as he boasts of his ability to exorcise demons and perform miracles in a peculiar way. In the LXX, the closest resemblance to this kind of boasting is found in Elijah's confrontation with Ahaziah's captains (2 Kings 1:9-15). When the first two captains ask for Elijah to follow them, he responds by saying, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty" (vv. 10, 12). As noted in chapter two, this statement is the indirect invocation responsible for the miracle$_3$ that follows it. However, it also serves as a kind of boast that vindicates Elijah's status as man of God. What should be noted in this boast is that it is precisely Elijah's position in relation to YHWH that he boasts of. He does not boast in his ability to perform the miracle, rather he reminds the captains who he works for.

Jesus's claims of responsibility for these exorcisms and healings seem to run antithetical to the ways other Old Testament wonderworkers talked about their abilities (e.g., Genesis 41:16). While there is an understanding that Jesus is one whom the Holy Spirit is upon (3:22; 4:18), his followers also seem to recognize Jesus as one who should be called on in their performance of miracles and exorcisms (e.g., Acts 3:6; 9:34; 16:18).[215] Therefore, I will argue that this statement from Jesus serves to bust the prophetic mold as well. He characterizes his miracle performance and defends his legitimacy as a prophet in a way that is beyond what a normal prophet would do. This kind of claim even begins to push the boundaries of what is usually acceptable in the prophetic performance of a miracle$_4$, as a lack of recognition of YHWH as *source* is to Elisha's detriment in his attempt to raise the Shunammite woman's son.

[215] For further discussion of early Christian invocation of Jesus in prayer, see Larry Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 104-111.

What stands as one of the most striking nuances of Luke's Christology is Jesus's prophetic self-identification in this scene. Jesus claims that "it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem," thereby identifying himself with the other prophets whom the Israelite people had rejected and murdered. This statement also points toward Jesus's crucifixion in chapter 23, where Jesus will die at the hand of the Romans in Jerusalem. His death vindicates his utterance here and proves him to be a true prophet. Jesus's prophethood has never been so blatant, but Luke's nuance of the prophetic office in identifying Jesus has never been so bold. Put plainly, prophets don't rise from the dead. Jesus claims to be a prophet who must die in Jerusalem, but he will also rise (24:1-12). This is a crucial element of Luke's gospel, as the prophet who predicts his own death proves to be more than a prophet by coming back to life.[216]

Jesus Prophecies Jerusalem's Destruction (19:41-44). A similar literary technique takes place in chapter 19 when Jesus prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem.

> If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation [from God] (19:42-44).[217]

This statement again stands within the Old Testament prophetic tradition. The prophecy of the

[216] When discussing Jesus's identity, the question of the source of this miracle, his own resurrection, is one that reveals a great deal. If Jesus raised himself, he seems to have greater power and authority than if YHWH raised him. I do not aim to discuss this Christological controversy. Rather, I should point out that either case shows Jesus to bust the mold of previous prophetic action. Nowhere before is a prophet shown (1) to rise from the dead under his own power or (2) to be raised from the dead by YHWH.

[217] The Greek text lacks the prepositional phrase "from God."

destruction or dispossession of a city or region would not have been a novel concept, as characters like Jeremiah (e.g., Jeremiah 6:1-5), and Ezekiel (e.g., Ezekiel 12:1-6) had done so previously. Jesus offers the last of many chances at repentances that had been proclaimed by the prophets before him.[218] This instance shows Jesus to fit well within the preceding prophetic tradition.

However, the content of Jesus's prophecy here shows him to again bust prophetic tropes. Jesus laments that Jerusalem has missed her "visitation" or ἐπισκοπῆς (19:44). This language should alert the careful reader to Zechariah's prophecy in the first chapter. In vv. 78-79 Zechariah claims that ἀνατολὴ will visit (ἐπισκέψεται) Israel "from on high" (ἐξ ὕψους). Simon Gathercole convincingly argues that Zechariah's language here suggests that ἀνατολὴ is a kind of heavenly figure that will descend and function as God's messiah.[219] Jesus's prophecy in 19:44 then draws on this imagery, and ties Jesus to the ἀνατολὴ from 1:78. This does not necessarily mean that Jesus has ontological equivalence with YHWH, but it does suggest that the work that he is doing carries with it a new level of authority that is more closely tied to YHWH. Thus, the NRSV addition of "from God" in v. 44 misses the nuance of Jesus's prophecy. Jesus identifies himself in this prophecy as the ἀνατολὴ that is coming "to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (1:79). Even in his prophecy that ties him to the old prophets, Jesus identifies with a figure that far surpasses the position of the prophetic office. His prophethood is retained, but it is busted.

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[218] Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 718.

[219] Simon Gathercole, "The Heavenly ἀνατολὴ (Luke 1:78-79)," *Journal of Theological Studies* 56 (October, 2005): 471-488. Gathercole bases his argument on three criteria: (1) that ἐπισκοπῆς is usually associated with YHWH, especially in Luke's gospel (1:68; 7:16), (2) that the visitation "from on high" lends to an understanding of a heavenly figure being associated with ἀνατολὴ, and (3) a reference to Isaiah 9 that also suggests a heavenly figure.

Jesus Prays Before His Arrest (22:39-52). Luke describes the night of Jesus's arrest a little differently than his Synoptic counterparts. After Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives, Mark and Matthew describe Jesus descending to the garden of Gethsemane before his arrest (cf. Mark 14:32 and Matthew 26:36). However, Luke makes no such distinction: "He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him" (22:39). Luke's description of the scene is at the mountain. Interestingly, for the first time in the narrative, Jesus is approached by a crowd on the mountain. This crowd is not as open to Jesus's message as the previous ones, as they are the posse that will seize him and take him to the high priest's house before his crucifixion (22:54).

In the first three scenes, Luke shows Jesus behaving like Moses. He ascends mountains and then descends the mountain to perform prophet-like activity with a crowd. These three episodes set the stage for this, the final mountain episode. Jesus has been shown to be a character who is far more than a prophet. Now, in a shocking turn of events, the crowd, the group usually not allowed on the divine mountain, ascends the mountain and brings the "more-than-a-prophet" down like a criminal. Thus, the three previous mountain scenes prefigure the final mountain scene, but for what purpose?

As discussed in the previous chapter, Elijah is reprimanded by YHWH for trying to attain another "Moses-like" mountain experience on Horeb. The word of Moses is final. However, Jesus is celebrated by YHWH at the transfiguration: a moment where he directly emulates Moses's mountain experience. It seems that Jesus's new message is one that YHWH is supporting. Now, in the fourth mountain scene, that message is fully recognized by the reader. Jesus's descent of the mountain, this time as a criminal, is his Mosaic trip to the crowd at the

bottom of the mountain.[220] What is his message? It is his crucifixion.

Conclusions. In these texts, one can see how Luke's portrayal of Jesus as a prophet is nuanced in such a way that the reader understands Jesus to be able to do and say things beyond the capabilities of normal prophets. Luke uses the prophetic office as a means by which he can show how and why Jesus has the authority that the early Christian movement claimed he had. But how exactly does Luke's use of trope busting construct Jesus's authority? One must now consider Lincoln's ideas of mythmaking and authority construction considering this nuanced view of Luke's Christology. Lincoln will be helpful in understanding how both the description of Jesus's prophethood and the busting of the traditional prophetic framework together to form Luke's unique perception of Jesus's identity.

Lincoln, Luke, and Authority

As discussed previously, the set of Lincoln's concepts that will be of most use here are as follows: (1) ancestor invocation, (2) shared eschatological images, and (3) authority as effect. Each of these will be discussed in order to see how Luke identifies Jesus in order to construct his authority.

Ancestor Invocation and Authority as Effect. As the previous chapter notes, Luke makes frequent allusions to the Old Testament prophets to build legitimacy for Jesus's identity and mission. However, the set of stories analyzed in this chapter reveal that Luke often nuances his prophetic allusions to show Jesus with privileges not previously granted to the prophets.

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[220] Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 355. Johnson notes that Luke's unique account of the healing of the servant's ear shows the reader that Jesus's descent of the mountain is not because of a lack of power on his part. Rather, it seems to be intentional. This idea lends itself to the one present in this thesis, that Luke saw the arrest of Jesus as an intentional descent that brought a prophetic message to the people.

Therefore, this thesis must consider how Jesus's identity as one greater than a prophet plays into Lincoln's idea of ancestor invocation.

Lincoln notes that ancestors are invoked as an attempt to redefine kinship.[221] Of significance in these invocations is the level of the ancestor being referenced, as "one cannot rally tribal-sized groups for clan-level conflicts, or vice versa."[222] It is here that one can see the importance of Jesus's direct emulation of the prophets, if one accepts the idea that Luke is attempting to legitimize the Christian movement by connecting its history to Israelite history. Elijah or Moses can be "invoked" because they are common ancestors to both the Jews and the Christians (as minimal as that distinction may be at the time of writing). However, as Sean Adams argues, Luke's two volume work cannot be considered as merely an attempt at defending the legitimacy of the Christian movement to only the Jews.[223] In fact, Luke's gospel seems to be narratively driven toward the idea that Jesus is the bearer of good news to *all people*, not just the Jews. Thus, an invocation of the prophets alone as ancestors would appear to be insufficient, as they serve only as legitimate ancestors for the Jews, not the gentiles.[224]

Luke's emphasis on Jesus as YHWH's son allows for a larger ancestor invocation. Whereas figures like Moses are only of ancestral significance for the Jews, a figure like YHWH, the creator, is used as a universal ancestor. Was YHWH considered by all people everywhere to be the creator? Of course not. But narratively, Luke can use YHWH as a universal ancestor that

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[221] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society,* 19.

[222] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society,* 19.

[223] See Adams, "Luke, Josephus, and Self-Definition."

[224] Many of the Old Testament prophets are shown to direct their messages towards people outside of Israel (e.g., Ezekiel 25-27, Jonah, etc.) and that some prophets see gentile inclusion as an effect of YHWH's work (cf. Isaiah 42:1-7). The point here is that the prophet's legitimacy as *ancestor* will only be among those people who consider him authoritative, i.e., the Jews.

progresses his theology of gentile inclusion through the work of Jesus.[225] When Jesus emulates a prophet, he invokes the prophet's memory and identity to provide authoritative claims to the people of Israel. But, when Jesus goes beyond mimicking the prophets, when he busts those molds, he can (1) make authoritative claims that can alter current social constructions (i.e., food laws, exclusivity laws, etc.) and (2) authoritatively direct a mission to all people, as they are part of YHWH's creation. If the reader understands Jesus as the ultimate Davidic King, whose ancestry is not only traced to David, but to Adam and then to YHWH himself (3:38), one can see that Jesus's identity as both prophet and son of God is indeed crucial to Luke's theology of Gentile inclusion as it justifies the expansion of the divine Kingdom beyond Israel's borders. Jesus surpasses the authority of one set of ancestors (the prophets) largely because his existence is more intimately tied to the universal ancestor: YHWH. In the context of this thesis, Jesus, the ultimate prophet, proves to be an authoritative voice to both (1) Israel, as he speaks and acts as one with greater authority than Moses and Elijah, and (2) all the nations, as he speaks and acts as the son of the creator.

Shared Eschatological Images. Lincoln's idea of shared eschatological images again proves helpful in understanding the implications of Luke's divine prophet.[226] Lincoln notes that both those in power and those not in power employ myth, specifically images of the future, for their own benefit.[227] These images, as exhibited through the varying Zoroastrian eschatological

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[225] It should also be noted, as Dr. Given reminds me, that Luke's genealogy allows for some interesting discoveries when viewed through Lincoln's concept of ancestor invocation. Whereas Matthew's genealogy traces Jesus's ancestry back to Abraham (Matthew 1:2), a common Jewish ancestor, Luke traces Jesus's ancestry all the way back to Adam and to YHWH himself. This gives Jesus the ability to invoke a universal ancestor (YHWH) which gives legitimacy to his ministry to all the gentile peoples.

[226] See pages 19-22 for my discussion of Lincoln's ideas of shared ancestry and eschatological images.

[227] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society,* 49.

myths, can be used to convey very different messages even if they are the same.[228] This idea can be found in Luke's gospel in reference to the eschatological prophet that Jesus represents.

Consider again Jesus's interaction with Simon the Pharisee in chapter 7. Simon, upon hearing the rumors of the people, attempts to understand Jesus within his conception of what a great prophet should be (likely the one spoken of in Malachi 4:4-5 or Isaiah 40:3), and finds that Jesus does not meet his qualifications (7:39). However, as argued above, Jesus's ability to (1) forgive sins (7:48) and (2) perceive Simon's thoughts (7:39-40) positions Jesus as one greater than a prophet, though operating in a similar role. Though both Simon and Luke's reader have a shared image of an eschatological prophet that will come for Israel's benefit, there are starkly different conclusions drawn as to how that image should be seen in Jesus's ministry. Simon sees Jesus as a failed would-be prophet, while Luke's ideal reader sees Jesus as the divine prophet. Luke portrays the Jews as primarily misunderstanding who Jesus is in relation to their shared imagery. The implication Luke draws is that the one who follows Jesus is the one who truly understands how this image and others like it (e.g., the coming Davidide) are accomplished.[229] Thus, Lincoln's idea of shared eschatological images can help the reader understand (1) one way Luke justifies Christian belief by arguing that Jesus offers genuine understanding and (2) how Luke nuances traditional characterizations of the prophetic office to articulate Jesus's divine identity.

Conclusions

[228] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society,* 39-41.

[229] Using Simeon's oracle as a programmatic prophecy, Luke constantly shows that those who truly understand what Jesus is doing and who he is are those who follow him and accept his lordship. See, vv. 6:6-11, 7:36-48, 10:21-23, 11:45-52, etc.

I have tried to side-step Luke's conception of Jesus's ontological identity. The discussion of the Luke's understanding of various uses of images like Son of Man, Son of God, Christ, savior, or Lord largely remains outside the scope of this paper. However, this discussion of Luke's use of prophetic trope busting can prove fruitful in some sense. Namely, it can show one way that Luke substantiates Jesus's authority for the infant Christian community, since he places Jesus as the ultimate figure of the Israelite tradition. If, as Sterling and Adams argue, Luke is concerned with an act of self-definition for the early Christian movement, then this understanding of Luke's construction of Jesus's authority serves to legitimate Jesus as one who fulfills YHWH's purposes for Israel, and subsequently, for the whole world. Luke constantly alludes to other Old Testament prophets throughout Jesus's ministry to show how the Christian movement is deeply tied to Israel's history. Jesus's ability to bust prophetic tropes thereby places him as one who is greater and has greater authority than the prophets before him. This is one method by which Luke can show that Jesus has the authority to move the early Christian community in a direction that can sometimes seem at odds with other Jewish leaders. Jesus is not causing his followers to break with Judaism; such a claim would negate the immense work Luke put into aligning Jesus with the previous bearers of YHWH's word. Rather, Jesus has the authority to articulate a clearer picture of what YHWH is doing in the world which ties into his previous work through the law and the prophets (24:27). Further research needs to be done in order to show how Luke constructs Jesus's authority along the lines of the other titles used of Jesus. But, as one considers how Luke constructs Jesus's prophetic authority, one must recognize how important and revolutionary Jesus's work is for God's people. I find Paul Minear to summarize this idea the best. When studying Peter's Pentecost sermon in Acts 2, Minear writes the following.

> These observations concerning Peter's sermon demonstrate the importance in Luke's mind of this typological metaphor: Abraham, Moses, and Jesus are three prophets without whom Israel would lose its identity, its mission, its destiny. Without them, "all the families of the earth" would be without hope.[230]

Luke describes Jesus's work as the ultimate prophetic work; one that fulfills Israel's purpose and whose followers can fully understand YHWH's work in the world.

[230] Minear, *To Heal and Reveal: The Prophetic Vocation According to Luke*, 106.

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