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JOHN THE BAPTIST AND ELIJAH:  
A STUDY OF LUKE 1 IN RELATION TO  
THE REST OF THE GOSPEL WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO CONZELMANN'S THEORY

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by

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May 1967

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem

In 1953 Hans Conzelmann's book, Die Mitte der Zeit, first appeared. An English translation was published in 1961 under the title, The Theology of St. Luke. Conzelmann attempts to show that Luke's Gospel reveals a well-developed theory of Heilsgeschichte. According to Conzelmann, Luke presents the story of salvation in three distinct stages: The period of Israel, the period of Jesus' ministry, and the period since the Ascension. Jesus' ministry is the "middle of time."

Conzelmann's theory has far-reaching implications for the concept of eschatology in Luke's Gospel. Conzelmann accepts the fact that Luke utilizes the traditional material which regards the last days as having arrived.<sup>1</sup> Luke has a "definite theological attitude" toward the problem of eschatology, however. Luke modifies his sources so that he replaces the early eschatological expectation with a comprehensive scheme of salvation history. Conzelmann believes that Luke was led to develop a specific theory of Heilsgeschichte because

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<sup>1</sup>Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, translated from the German by Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 96. Pages 95-97 contain Conzelmann's interpretation of Luke's eschatology.

of the delay of the Parousia of Christ. As a second-generation Christian, Luke found it necessary to explain the delay in Christ's return. As a result, Luke transforms the belief in the nearness of the Kingdom into a history of salvation. The Creation and the Parousia form the limits of this history of salvation.

Conzelmann interprets Luke's theology to be non-eschatological. Eschatology envisions two epochs--the Old Age and the New Age. According to Conzelmann, Luke's history of salvation envisions three distinct stages. The first stage is the period of Israel. This stage ends with the imprisonment of John the Baptist, who is the last of the prophets. The second stage, the period of Jesus' ministry, begins with Jesus' baptism and his anointing with the Spirit. Jesus' ministry includes the time between His baptism and His ascension. Jesus' ministry is the "middle of time." The third stage is the period of the church. This period begins with Jesus' ascension and ends at the Parousia. According to Conzelmann, the outpouring of the Spirit marks the beginning of a longer epoch in the course of redemptive history. "The Spirit Himself is no longer the eschatological gift, but the substitute in the meantime for the possession of ultimate salvation."<sup>2</sup>

My original intention in this thesis was to trace the Elijah theology of Luke's Gospel in comparison with the other Synoptic Gospels. An article in the Festschrift for Paul Schubert published in 1966 called my attention to a significant problem in Conzelmann's study of

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

Luke's Gospel, however.<sup>3</sup> In the article Paul Minear maintains that Conzelmann is able to establish his theory of Heilsgeschichte in Luke's Gospel only if the birth narratives in Luke 1 and 2 are ignored. Minear suggests that Conzelmann has produced a distorted picture of Luke's theology because he fails to take the birth narratives into account.

This thesis purposes to serve as a test of Conzelmann's theory. If Conzelmann is correct, Luke's Gospel modifies the eschatological scheme of two ages, replacing this eschatological scheme with a three-stage history of salvation. If it can be shown that the first two chapters of Luke do contain eschatological thinking, Conzelmann's theory is seriously weakened. If it can further be shown that Luke's conception of "redemptive history" is closely tied to eschatology and the distinction between the Old Age and the New Age, Conzelmann's definition of Heilsgeschichte must be modified.

The means of testing Conzelmann's theory has been limited to a study of the Elijah theology in Luke 1, followed by a tracing of the Elijah theology in the rest of the Gospel. Since Conzelmann heavily stresses the fact that John is not the forerunner of Jesus but the last of the prophets, it will be necessary to examine carefully the relationship between John and Jesus in Luke 1 and the rest of the Gospel. I believe that such an approach is relevant to the problem posed.

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<sup>3</sup>Paul Minear, "Luke's Use of the Birth Stories," Studies in Luke-Acts, edited by Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 111-130.

### Methodological Considerations

Eschatology and redemptive history are closely related concepts. For the purposes of this study, a definition of each term is needed. When the term "eschatology" or the corresponding adjective "eschatological" are used, they refer to

a future in which the circumstances of history are changed to such an extent that one can speak of a new, entirely different, state of things, without, in so doing, leaving the framework of history.<sup>4</sup>

This definition underscores two important facts. First of all, eschatology implies two ages or epochs, the Old Age and the New Age. Secondly, the definition given above distinguishes between eschatology and apocalyptic. Eschatology recognizes the coming of the New Age as taking place within history. Apocalyptic tends to stress the coming of the New Age as beyond or outside of history.

Heilsgeschichte, like eschatology, recognizes that God's redemptive activity takes place within history. The two terms are therefore not necessarily mutually exclusive. Conzelmann's definition of Heilsgeschichte in Luke, however, makes a sharp distinction between redemptive history and eschatology. He believes that Heilsgeschichte and eschatology must be distinguished from one another chronologically. Conzelmann defines redemptive history in Luke's Gospel in such a way that the Eschaton is still in the future. The usual definition of eschatology

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<sup>4</sup>E. Jenni, "Eschatology of the Old Testament," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 126.

regards the New Age ushered in by Jesus Christ as the dawning of the Eschaton, viewing the two as simultaneous realities. Thus Conzelmann understands Heilsgeschichte and eschatology as mutually exclusive concepts. For the purposes of this study the term Heilsgeschichte (redemptive history, salvation history) will be used to mean that theological interpretation of history characterized by the belief that God has acted and continues to act redemptively in history.

Chapter II of this study deals with the fulfillment of redemptive history in Luke 1. The stress in Chapter II falls on the word "fulfillment." If it can be shown that Luke 1 presents a decisive shift in God's redemptive plan before Jesus' baptism, Conzelmann's theory is weakened. Chapter III deals with the question of eschatology in relation to John, Jesus and Elijah. If Luke 1 presents John and Jesus in eschatological terms, Conzelmann's theory is seriously weakened again. Chapter IV is an investigation of the relationship between John and Jesus in the Elijah theology of Luke 3-24. If it can be shown that the relationship established between John and Jesus in Luke 1 is consistent with the rest of Luke's Gospel, Conzelmann's failure to deal with the evidence in Luke 1 weakens his position still further. Chapter V contains the conclusions reached.

Chapter 2 of Luke is usually included in the expression "birth narratives" or "infancy narratives." A thorough study of Luke 2 is beyond the scope of this paper. Chapter 2 of Luke is mentioned throughout the study only when significant theological points are found there that shed light on the discussion of Luke 1. Throughout

this study the assumption is made that Luke-Acts come from the same hand.

Many of the scholarly interpretations of Luke 1 reflect source theories regarding the composition of Luke. An effort has been made to avoid discussing such source theories wherever possible. The question of interdependence between the infancy narratives in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 is beyond the scope of this study. The thesis subject is not mentioned in Matthew 1-2; these chapters therefore do not play a significant part in the interpretation offered for Luke 1. An effort has been made to note significant divergences between the Synoptic accounts when such divergences suggest clues for interpretation. Since Conzelmann's theory deals primarily with Luke's theology, the emphasis through the thesis falls upon the theological interpretation of given passages.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FULFILLMENT OF REDEEMPTIVE HISTORY IN LUKE 1

#### Introduction

Whether or not one agrees completely with MacNeill's radical statement concerning the content of Luke 1 and 2,<sup>1</sup> it is an unquestioned fact that these two chapters breathe the spirit of the Old Testament. Various attempts have been made to prove that Luke drew upon Hebrew sources, Aramaic sources, or perhaps Greek translations of such Hebrew and Aramaic originals. Others, following Harnack, have suggested that Luke wrote chapters 1 and 2 in conscious imitation of Septuagintal style.<sup>2</sup> Such source inquiries are beyond the scope of this thesis. The fact that such studies in Luke's use of sources have been made does point up the problem with which this thesis deals--the theology of Luke 1. It is a source theory which led Hans Conzelmann to regard the theology of the birth stories as different from that of Luke-Acts. According to Conzelmann, the birth stories belong to Luke's Proto-Lucan

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<sup>1</sup>H. L. MacNeill, "The Sitz im Leben of Luke 1:5-2:20," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXV (1946), 126-127. He says, "It is, first of all, a very surprising and striking fact that in these two chapters there is nothing whatever that is distinctively, necessarily, Christian. Everything in these two chapters, on the contrary, is definitely, positively, patriotically, and enthusiastically Jewish."

<sup>2</sup>For a concise summary of the main source theories about Luke 1 and 2 from Harnack's time to the present see H. H. Oliver, "The Lucan Birth Stories and the Purpose of Luke-Acts," New Testament Studies, X (1963-1964), 202-226.

source. "He is therefore content to omit the nativity stories from his presentation of Lucan theology and to base his whole analysis upon the ministry of Jesus."<sup>3</sup> Following this presupposition, Conzelmann says of John the Baptist: "John is not the precursor, for there is no such thing, but he is the last of the prophets."<sup>4</sup> Paul Minear has challenged Conzelmann's conclusions about Lucan theology, however. He attempts to show that Luke's conception of history and eschatology in Luke 1 and 2 contradicts Conzelmann's findings and should be taken into account when assessing Luke's theology. He concludes:

In short, those very elements which Conzelmann claims are ways of separating the three epochs are used in the prologue to suggest compresence, continuity, and contemporaneity.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter is an attempt to crystallize Luke's theology of redemptive history as found in Luke 1. Luke's first chapter draws heavily upon Old Testament models of piety such as Abraham and Sarah, the story of Hannah and Samuel, and the like. Old Testament hopes and their fulfillment form the theme of the entire chapter, so much so, in fact, that two scholars have concluded that "virtually the whole of the chapter consists of coincidences with the Old Testament, which are followed through where

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>4</sup>Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of Luke, translated from the German by Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>Paul S. Minear, "Luke's Use of the Birth Stories," Studies in Luke-Acts, edited by Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 125.

necessary from the evangelist's imagination."<sup>6</sup> The question naturally arises as to what purpose Luke had in mind when he incorporated the narratives of chapter one into his gospel. The abrupt shift from good Greek style in the prologue to a crude type of Jewish Greek beginning with verse five has often been observed.<sup>7</sup> This shift in language suggests a theological purpose behind the retaining and use of the narratives in their original form. As Reicke has observed,

It is clear that Luke has included this material without Hellenizing it to suit the stylistic ideal which he expressed in the prologue. The simplest explanation is that he had a special reverence for these traditions, and included them in unamended form, since these traditions were Jewish Christian and went back to the early church in which Luke, because of his conception of redemptive history, had a vigorous interest.<sup>8</sup>

Lohse further states that the Old Testament style of the narratives in Luke 1 has been retained because it corresponds to Luke's theme: salvation history is fulfilled in the same style that God had given it.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>M. D. Goulder and M. L. Sanderson, "St. Luke's Genesis," Journal of Theological Studies, VIII (1957), 12. This observation leads the authors to conclude that "the first two chapters of the third gospel are a pious meditation by St. Luke himself, a piece of Haggadah, in which the evangelist has superimposed upon such historical knowledge as he thought he possessed a pattern from the book of Genesis embroidered upon from the prophets, after the Rabbinic manner." Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Bo Reicke's statement about this shift in language is typical: "Immediately after the superb prologue which points to the Hellenistic culture and historical hopes of a cosmopolitan thinker, the author then quite surprisingly introduces a series of popular tales in crude Jewish Greek which deal exclusively with revelations granted to devout Jews through angels within the confines of the Temple, 1:5-2:52 (from the birth of the Baptist to the discovery of Jesus in the Temple.)" The Gospel of Luke, translated from the Swedish by Ross Mackenzie (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 30-31.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 31. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>9</sup>Eduard Lohse, "Lukas als Theologe der Heilsgeschichte," Evangelische Theologie, XIV (1954), 270.

Thus by analyzing Luke's use of the narratives in chapter one, according to these theologians, his theological conception of redemptive history becomes clear.<sup>10</sup>

### Models and Types of Piety

Luke begins his presentation of the infancy narratives with a chronological reference: "In the days of Herod, King of Judea" (Luke 1:5). This reference suggests that God's appointed time has arrived as Reicke observes when he says,

The history of redemption has now reached its midpoint, the transition from the period of the old covenant to the new, but this does not take place on a supramundane level alone but also among men as a verifiable part of world history. Thus the significance of Luke's chronological reference is to point to the revelation of saving history among men and not to imply that world history is fundamental.<sup>11</sup>

Thus Luke immediately alerts his readers to the redemptive significance of the infancy narratives he is about to recount.

Having introduced the drama that is about to unfold, Luke sets his readers into the world of Old Testament expectations. Zechariah's name itself is symbolic of the account that is to follow; his name means

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<sup>10</sup> Reicke has called attention to Luke's use of material which is strikingly Jewish in style and content in other parts of his gospel as well. He includes Luke 16:19-31 (the rich man and Lazarus), 17:11-19 (the ten lepers), 22:15-18 (introduction to the Lord's supper), and 23:6-16 (Jesus' trial by Herod). This observation supports the fact that Luke's theological purpose is to be discovered in the use he makes of the particular material. Reicke, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 51-52. Compare Luke 2:1 and 3:1.

"Yahweh has remembered."<sup>12</sup> Zechariah is also a priest of the course of Abijah (1 Chronicles 24:10). His wife Elizabeth is "of the daughters of Aaron" (Luke 1:5). She has the distinction of sharing the name of Aaron's wife (Exodus 6:23).

The description of this couple recalls the highest conceptions of Old Testament piety. Both Zechariah and Elizabeth are *δίκαιοι*. They are faithful to God's covenant relationship with them and to God's Law as well.<sup>13</sup> Their piety is further emphasized in characteristic Old Testament language. They walk "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord," (Luke 1:6).<sup>14</sup> The distinction between "commandments" and "ordinances" is typically Old Testament (Genesis 26:5; Leviticus 26:3; Numbers 36:13; Deuteronomy 4:40; 10:13). "Walking" in a commandment or a law is also a frequent Old Testament thought (Leviticus 26:3; 1 Kings 3:3; Jeremiah 7:23; Psalm 26:1; 78:10; 119:1). The fact that Luke uses the characteristic *ἐν τοῖς καὶ δικαίωμασιν* is theologically significant for two reasons. The phrase suggests a near parallel in Ezekiel 36:27 (*ἐν τοῖς δικαίωμασιν μου πορεύησθε καὶ τὰ κρίματά μου*). In Ezekiel 36:26-32 God speaks to Ezekiel of the new covenant He will make with Israel. God promises to give Israel a new heart and to cause Israel to walk in his statutes (*δικαίωμασιν*) and to observe his

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<sup>12</sup>T. M. Mauch, "Zechariah," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), IV, 941.

<sup>13</sup>Gottlob Schrenk, "*δίκαιος*," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel and translated from the German by Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 189.

<sup>14</sup>Holy Bible. Revised Standard Version. Hereafter referred to as RSV.

ordinances (κρίματα). Thus Luke may have the new covenant of God with Israel in mind when he further characterizes Zechariah and Elizabeth as "blameless" (ἀμεμπτοι). They are legitimate representatives of the Old Covenant.<sup>15</sup> According to Ezekiel 36, their piety fulfills the conditions expected in the New Covenant.

Zechariah and Elizabeth show a strong typological similarity to the Old Testament.<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth is barren. Grundmann points out that Luke is careful to mention that Elizabeth is "blameless"; her barrenness is therefore not a curse or punishment as it is so often viewed in the Old Testament (Psalm 127; Psalm 128; Job 1:1; 1 Samuel 1:5; 2 Samuel 2:5).<sup>17</sup> It is therefore correct to look for some theological significance in Elizabeth's barrenness and the subsequent birth of a child.

Reicke says,

In the light of Luke's scheme of history the connection acquires a deeper significance in view of the fact that he regards the whole of the old covenant as coming to its climax in the Baptist. The unspoken verdict which Jewish Christian readers would easily understand was that the old covenant had for long been sterile. Now it was finally to bear fruit through the coming of the forerunner of Jesus.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Reicke, p. 52.

<sup>16</sup>The word "typological" is used here and throughout the thesis to mean events in the past that find repetition and fulfillment in the end-time. Luke's conception of eschatology is taken up in Chapter III.

<sup>17</sup>Walter Grundmann, Das Evangelium nach Lukas, in Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, n.d.), III, 49.

<sup>18</sup>Reicke, p. 53.

Rengstorf suggests that the presentation and then alleviation of Elizabeth's barrenness suggests that the time of the Messiah's coming is to be one of uncommon fruitfulness.<sup>19</sup> The fact that Elizabeth is barren, however, and that both she and Zechariah are old (Luke 1:7), makes them counterparts to the parents of Isaac, Samson, and Samuel (Genesis 18:10; Judges 13:3; 1 Samuel 1:17).<sup>20</sup> There is a strong suggestion in the text that Luke has Abraham and Sarah specifically in mind as prototypes of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Luke uses the same participle (*προβεβηκότας*) that the Septuagint uses to describe the agedness of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18:11.<sup>21</sup>

Luke's theological purpose in the opening verses (Luke 1:5-8) of the infancy narratives is clearly to establish the context for a renewal of the mighty acts of God. Zechariah and Elizabeth serve as models of Old Testament piety. Their names, their position in life, their conduct--all of these suggest the best representation of the Old Covenant. Luke describes them at every point in typical Old Testament language. In addition, Luke has begun in these verses to unfold a familiar Old Testament pattern--the mighty acts of God and His mercy to His people Israel through the birth of children. Such births tend to follow a similar pattern: childlessness and consequent reproach, prayer for removal of the reproach, promise of a child, the birth, thanksgiving for the removal

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<sup>19</sup>Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, Das Evangelium nach Lukas, in Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), III, 20.

<sup>20</sup>Reicke, p. 53.

<sup>21</sup>Cited according to Alfred Ralphs, editor, Septuaginta Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1962). Hereafter referred to by the designation LXX.

of the reproach, although all of these elements are not always present.<sup>22</sup> By his use of this familiar pattern Luke has set the stage for the repetition of God's mighty act through John's birth. It now remains to trace the pattern as it unfolds.

Luke uses a temple-setting to develop his theological motif further.<sup>23</sup> The temple is the heart of Jewish piety. Zechariah is engaged in his priestly duty (Luke 1:9). Luke alerts his readers to the import of what is about to happen by his use of the expression, *πάν τὸ πλῆθος . . . τοῦ λαοῦ*. Not only does *λαός* designate Israel as the covenant people of God,<sup>24</sup> but its combination with *πάν τὸ πλῆθος* implicates those present completely in the events that are taking place.<sup>25</sup> Luke therefore emphasizes the national significance of this gathering in religious terms. Luke also notes that the people are praying (Luke 1:10) as well as Zechariah (Luke 1:13). These observations set the context

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<sup>22</sup>The three birth narratives Luke most often reflects in chapter one are those of Isaac (Genesis 16-18), Samson (Judges 13), and Samuel (1 Samuel 1-2). That Luke intends to use these narratives theologically as well as typologically can be seen from the fact that he seldom uses specific events in the lives of his types beyond the fact of their birth. Burrows' statement is significant in this regard: "Samuel is a very exact 'type' of John, being Levite, precursor and anointer of the King, and the first of the prophets; yet L[uke] makes a point of none of these resemblances." Eric Burrows, The Gospel of the Infancy, edited by Edmund F. Sutcliffe (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., 1940), p. 11, n. 1.

<sup>23</sup>The next section of this chapter deals extensively with the temple and the priesthood. Here only passing reference is made. Infra, pp. 20-28.

<sup>24</sup>Hermann Strathmann and Rudolf Meyer, "*λαός*," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, n.d.), IV, 34-35.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

for the angel's announcement that Zechariah's prayer is heard (Luke 1:13).

The details surrounding the announcement of John's birth develop the picture of piety also. The angel's statement that John will drink neither wine nor strong drink (Luke 1:15) suggests that he will be a Nazarite, separated or consecrated to the Lord (Numbers 6:3). As a Nazarite John resembles Samuel, the great prophet of Israel.<sup>26</sup> Luke later pictures John and his parents as true children of the covenant. John is circumcised on the eighth day as both the original covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:12) and its reiteration to Israel (Leviticus 12:3) require. The child thus is brought into the stream of Israelite piety.

Zechariah's response to the angel's word immediately links him with Abraham, for *κατὰ τί γινώσκειται* is the question Abraham addressed to God at the promise of an heir (Genesis 15:18, Septuagint). Luke stresses the similarity between Abraham and Zechariah still further by relating Zechariah's reason for doubting. Like Abraham and Sarah, he and his wife are old and Elizabeth is presumably beyond child-bearing (Luke 1:18). Unlike the father of the nation with whom he is linked typologically, Zechariah receives punishment for his doubt. He will be dumb until the birth of the child (Luke 1:20). Reicke provides us with an interesting suggestion concerning the theological purpose of Zechariah's punishment when he says,

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<sup>26</sup>The LXX version of Hannah's vow to Yahweh contains the promise by Hannah that her son will drink no strong drink or wine if Yahweh will but give her a son. It reads, "*καὶ οἶνον καὶ μέθυσμα οὐ πίομαι*" 1 Samuel 1:11 LXX.

What is the significance of this silence in the context? Luke stresses that Zechariah was being punished in this way for his lack of belief. This suggests that Luke was not concerned merely with biographical details, for Zechariah has no significance as an individual but only as the father of the Baptist. We are particularly to bear in mind that on this day Zechariah stands in the center of the old covenant and that John represents the final resurgence of prophecy. The implication must be that according to the belief of postexilic Judaism the voice of prophecy was to be silent until the messianic age when the great prophet would appear (Zech. 13:2-6; Additions to Daniel 3:38; 1 Macc. 4:46, 9:27; 14:41; Josephus, Against Apion, 1, 41; 2 Bar. 85:1,3). We must not, of course, try to discover allegories in every chapter of the Bible. In the present narrative, however, there are so many allusions to the old covenant and in the subsequent hymns so many predictions about the re-establishment of the covenant after a period of abasement that it will not be unreasonable to suppose that such an allusion to the old covenant may also underlie the silence of Zechariah. . . . Thus, it is a conceivable possibility that Zechariah's skepticism and silence are intended to reflect the incapacity of the Jews to receive the revelation given to them during the last moments of the old covenant right up to the coming of the Baptist.<sup>27</sup>

In Luke's presentation of redemptive history Elizabeth serves as a model of the pious also. After her conception she hides herself for five months (Luke 1:24). Her statement concerning the purpose of her withdrawal finds its counterpart in Rachel's response to the birth of her firstborn son (Genesis 30:23). Elizabeth's response also bears strong resemblance to Hannah's plea for removal of her affliction of childlessness (1 Samuel 1:11). Elizabeth thus joins the ranks of those saintly women whose prayers were heard. Luke extends the comparison between Elizabeth and the favored women of the Old Testament later in the chapter. When Gabriel appears to Mary, he announces that Elizabeth

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<sup>27</sup>Reicke, pp. 55-56.

will have a child (Luke 1:36). He follows this announcement with the reminder that "with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37). In Genesis 18:14 God makes the same statement to Abraham after Sarah had laughed at the idea of bearing a son in her old age. Though it appears in question form in Genesis, the connection of Elizabeth with Sarah seems clear.

The final reference to Elizabeth's piety is used by Luke to make a significant theological point. When Mary greets Elizabeth (Luke 1:41), the babe in Elizabeth's womb leaps. It is highly probable that Luke here wishes his readers to connect this incident with the struggling of Jacob and Esau in Rebekah's womb (Genesis 25:22). The verb in the Septuagint, *ἐγκίπτω*, is the same verb Luke uses at Luke 1:41.<sup>28</sup> The theological overtones for John and Jesus are obvious if one considers the explanation of the struggling of her two sons in Rebekah's womb given in Genesis 25:23. The elder will serve the younger! It is highly probable that Luke intends to suggest that John, who is Jesus' elder chronologically, will nevertheless "serve" him as forerunner. Luke has already prepared for this insight in his description of John's mission (Luke 1:17), as we will see later.<sup>29</sup> Thus the events surrounding Elizabeth not only cast her in the role of a pious Israelite but also serve Luke's theological presentation of redemptive history.

The last figure Luke uses as a model of Israelite piety is Mary. What is said of her gains its full significance in most cases by a

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<sup>28</sup>Gen. 21:22 LXX.

<sup>29</sup>Infra, p. 53.

negative comparison with another figure in the first chapter, or through a breach of the normal pattern of things. Unlike Matthew (Matthew 1:18-25), Luke presents the announcement of Jesus' birth from Mary's perspective (Luke 1:26-38). This fact in itself is unusual. The sending of the angel to a woman is a singular event in Judaism.<sup>30</sup> In addition, the angel's greeting contains a play-on-words which is difficult to reproduce in English.<sup>31</sup> The greeting itself and the title used to address Mary suggest that the time of salvation has come upon her. She is further told that the Lord is with her (Luke 1:28). The angel's statement echoes the greeting of the angel to Gideon (Judges 6:12). Since the context in Judges prepares for an act of deliverance by God, the language of this greeting suggests both the singular nature of what is about to happen and the fact that God is acting in deliverance.

In verse 31 the promise of conception and the birth of a son recalls a cluster of Old Testament promises. Both Hagar (Genesis 16:11) and Manoah's wife (Judges 13:3) received the same promise. The fact that this promise is linked to the naming of the child no doubt indicates that Luke has Isaiah 7:14 in mind. He has already called Mary a virgin in 1:27 and therefore does not need to mention it in 1:31, since it does not fit well with a direct address to Mary.

Mary's response to the angel's announcement of the birth of her son underscores her purity (Luke 1:34). By the use of  $\piνευμα \acute{\alpha}γιου$

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<sup>30</sup>Grundmann, p. 55.

<sup>31</sup>As Rengstorf points out, the German language reproduces the play-on-words with, "Heil dir, der Heil widerfahren ist!" Rengstorf, p. 24.

without the article Luke emphasizes that the creative power of God (Genesis 1:2) will effect this birth.<sup>32</sup> The verb ἐπιγκλιᾶται seems to suggest the idea of the Shechinah, for "the cloud of glory signified the Divine presence and power, and it is under such influence that Mary is to become a mother."<sup>33</sup> In this light Mary's child will be called holy, for the firstborn was considered holy to God (Exodus 13:12). The words ἅγιον κληθήσεται are found in Isaiah 4:3, an extremely important passage. Isaiah 4:1 pictures God's judgment upon the daughters of Zion. Seven women will beg one man to give them his name and thus take away their reproach (Isaiah 4:1). Isaiah 4:2-5 portrays the glory of "that day" in the future when he who is left in Zion will be called holy (4:3). Verse five depicts Jahweh restoring the cloud by day and "the shining of a flaming fire by night"--a renewal of God's presence among His people in the language of Exodus. Verse 4 reveals that "the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion" before his presence is restored. Thus Isaiah 4:2-5 predicts the eschatological restoration of Israel in feminine terms.

If Luke has Isaiah 4:2-5 in mind, Mary serves as a type of the purified daughter of Zion. The Shekinah cloud descends upon her and her offspring is called holy. This reference to Isaiah may also help to explain why Mary herself is pictured as descended from a Levitical

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<sup>32</sup>Grundmann, p. 58.

<sup>33</sup>Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke, in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), p. 15.

tribe (Luke 1:36) while her offspring Jesus is referred to in the language of the Davidic messiah (Luke 1:31-33).<sup>34</sup>

The emphasis upon Mary's piety and humility receives added support in Luke 1:38. She is God's obedient servant.<sup>35</sup> In contrast to Zechariah, Mary receives the Word of God's salvation in faith.<sup>36</sup>

Elizabeth's enthusiastic blessing of Mary's offspring (Luke 1:42) underscores the theme of Mary's obedience. The greeting is couched in the language of Deuteronomy 28:4 which promises a blessing upon the fruit of the womb to those who obey the Lord's voice. Out of Elizabeth's mouth, too, comes the final praise of Mary's faith in believing that God would fulfill his Word (Luke 1:45).

The final testimony to Mary's position within pious Israel is her song, the Magnificat. At key points this song reiterates the song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10). Once again Mary finds her counterpart in an Old Testament saint. Her life is a testimony to God's faithfulness, for He is a God who rewards the patience of those who wait on Him.

#### Priest and Temple

It has already been noted<sup>37</sup> that Luke introduces the infancy

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<sup>34</sup>In Luke 1:46 the variants substitute Ἐλιζάβητ for Μαριάμ because the content of the Magnificat seems to suit Elizabeth's situation rather than Mary's. It may be that Luke has already prepared for this eventuality in Luke 1:26-38. The reading Μαριάμ is better attested in the manuscripts.

<sup>35</sup>Rengstorf, p. 26.

<sup>36</sup>Helmut Flender, Heil und Geschichte in der Theologie des Lukas (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1965), p. 32.

<sup>37</sup>Supra, pp. 11-14.

narratives by picturing Zechariah and Elizabeth as models of Levitic piety. Since the Levitic origin especially of Zechariah stands in juxtaposition to the announcement of John's birth in the Temple, the question poses itself: Is John's priestly origin of any theological importance?

Conzelmann treats the reference to John's priestly descent as a piece of unassimilated tradition when he says,

The emphasis on the priestly descent is not found anywhere outside the prologue. Here it is a question of a very slight special tradition, and scarcely that. The manner in which it is present is more significant than the fact that it is present. The motif is taken from a source, but is not made full use of even in the prologue itself. It is a remnant, not a developed theological motif.<sup>38</sup>

Kraeling has observed, however, that the very fact that such a priestly reference is included deserves explanation. He writes,

The important fact to keep in mind in this connection is that the circles with which the Jews of the period associated the coming of a national deliverance were normally those of the royal Davidic family, rather than the priestly clan. . . . The departure of the Baptist. Infancy Narrative from this common standard is remarkable and cannot be the product of Christian influence. The only analogy to its point of view is that of the Book of Jubilees and of the original form of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. In these products of the Maccabean uprising and monarchy, it is the priestly family of Levi that prepares the way for, or produces, the nation's deliverer.<sup>39</sup>

Kraeling concludes that there is one significant difference between the Maccabean literature and the deliverance to be wrought by John. "In the

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<sup>38</sup>Conzelmann, p. 23, n. 2. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>39</sup>Carl H. Kraeling, John the Baptist (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 21-22.

Baptist birth story the deliverance has been spiritualized, for it is accomplished in connection with the remission to the people of their sins (Luke 1:77). . . .<sup>40</sup> He concludes that because we know that the urban priesthood was secularized, the account in Luke 1 originated in the Baptist movement in Judea among rural priestly circles.<sup>41</sup>

Both Conzelmann and Kraeling are primarily concerned with the source of the priestly material in Luke 1. Conzelmann's position assumes that because the priestly origin of John is not developed outside Luke 1, it is not a theological motif for Luke. This viewpoint disregards the context in which Luke introduces the material. No sooner has Luke informed his readers of John's priestly ancestry than he introduces one of his favorite motifs--the temple. It is quite possible that Luke introduces the priestly origins of John and the temple-motif together for theological reasons and that they do not appear together later in the Gospel because they have served their purpose already in chapter 1. As evidence for the intertwining of John's origins and function with the temple-motif I would cite a passage which, to my knowledge, has not received consideration up to this point--Psalm 132.<sup>42</sup>

There are two references in Luke 1 which echo Psalm 132. Elizabeth says to Mary, "καὶ εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>42</sup> This is Psalm 131 in the LXX. The evidence I wish to offer is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew because it contains significant modifications which appear in Luke 1.

60V," (Luke 1:42). Verse 11 of Psalm 132 contains the phrase, "Ἐκ καρποῦ τῆς κοιλίας σου .". Of even greater importance, however, is the reference in Luke 1:69. Zechariah says, "καὶ ἤγειρεν κέρας σωτηρίας ἡμῖν ἐν οἴκῳ Δαυὶδ παιδὸς αὐτοῦ. . . ." The underscored words are found in Psalm 132. Psalm 18:3 in the Septuagint contains the expression "horn of my salvation" also. What makes Psalm 132 of particular interest is the context of the Psalm. It is the Psalm used when David brought the ark up to the temple. This fact, in itself, is significant. The major portion of the Psalm with which we are concerned is in verses 11-18. The affinity of thought between these verses and Luke 1 is remarkable.

Verse 11 rehearses the fact that David has received the oath of Jahweh that one of his sons will sit on the throne. Luke alludes to this when he says that the horn of salvation has been raised up "in the house of his servant David" (1:69). Verse 12 supplies the conditional promise that if the sons of David keep Jahweh's covenant and his testimonies, they will sit on his throne also. Verses 13-15 contain the statement that Jahweh has chosen Zion as his habitation. Verse 14 is especially pointed when it says, "This is my resting place for ever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it." Verses 16-18 then rehearse the consequent blessings for Israel of Jahweh's presence. Verse 16 reads, "Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout with joy." Verse 17, the verse from which Luke takes his quote, reads, "There I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed." Verse 18 in the Revised Standard Version reads, "His enemies I will clothe with shame, but upon himself his crown will shed its luster." This reproduces the Massoretic text, but the Septuagint

changes the last half of the verse completely. The Septuagint reading is, "ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτὸν ἐξάνθησει τὸ ἁγίασμα μου ." This can be rendered, "But because of him my sanctuary will burst forth (break out, or flourish)."<sup>43</sup> This interpretation seems to make the best sense in the context, since verse 15 of the Psalm says, "I will abundantly bless her (Zion's) provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread." The picture here is one of plenty, of fruitfulness. The enemies of God's anointed will be clothed with shame (verse 18), but because of God's anointed God's sanctuary will burst forth. Such prosperity is a frequent Old Testament figure for God's blessing upon covenant obedience (Deuteronomy 28:1-6).

How, then, does this affect our understanding of Luke 1? First of all, Luke uses the horn of David in verse 69 of the Benedictus to suggest that God has raised up salvation in Israel. Elizabeth's reference to the fruit of Mary's womb has its counterpart in Psalm 132:11. One of David's sons will sit on his throne; this son is Jesus. Verse 12 of the Psalm assures David that with covenant obedience the throne is assured forever. Luke presents every figure in chapter 1 as a model of Old Testament piety and obedience. Verse 16 pictures Zion's priests as clothed with salvation. Luke introduces the infancy narratives with a priest. The last half of verse 16 is particularly fitting by comparison. The Greek text reads, "καὶ οἱ ὄβιοι αὐτῆς ἀγαλλιάσει ἀγαλλιάσονται ."

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<sup>43</sup>Bauer lists a usage of ἐπί with the accusative "to introduce the person or thing by reason of whom (or which) someth. happens. . . ." Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated from the German and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957?), p. 289.

Although the word itself does not appear in Luke 1, Luke presents Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary as οἱ ὀβίοι . The verb ἀγαλλιάομαι occurs three times in Luke 1 (Luke 1:14,44,47), however. It is the word for eschatological joy and the theme of the rejoicing is the "eschatological act of divine salvation."<sup>44</sup> The Magnificat of Mary and the Benedictus of Zechariah are indeed hymns of joy over the "eschatological act of divine salvation." The similarity between Psalm 132:17 and Luke 1 seems to be more than a coincidence also. The Greek reads, "ἤτοιμάσα λύχρον τῷ χριστῷ μου ." It is highly significant that one of the acts predicated for John in Luke 1:79 is "to give light to those who sit in darkness." This fact takes on added significance because the Septuagint version of Psalm 132:17 connects the lamp with "χριστῷ μου ," a term which the early church attached to Jesus. This would suggest John as the forerunner of Jesus. If my rendering of verse 18 of the Psalm is correct, the Psalm would help to explain why Luke relates the announcement of John's birth in the temple and that John's Levitic origin plays a significant part in the fulfillment of this Psalm's expectations.

Luke recounts the announcement of John's birth within the precincts of the temple. The expectations associated with the temple play a major role in his Gospel. Caird has summarized the note of expectancy in Judaism as follows:

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<sup>44</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, "ἀγαλλιάομαι, ἀγαλλίασις," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel and translated from the German by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), I, 20.

The Old Testament contains many promises of the blessings that God purposes one day to pour on Israel, but the sovereign blessing, which comprehends all the others, is that God himself will come among his people in all his chastening, cleansing, redeeming and sanctifying power. . . . Just as Israel believed that God was eternally King and yet still prayed for the coming of his kingdom, so they believed in his presence and yet looked forward to his coming; and the temple had become the symbol both of the presence they enjoyed and of the fuller presence they expected. One of the latest prophecies to be added to the canon of scripture promised that the Lord whom ye seek will suddenly come to his temple and that before his coming Elijah would return to inaugurate a great repentance (Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6). It was appropriate, then, that the temple worship should provide the setting for the opening of the gospel story, as it does also for its close.<sup>45</sup>

Morgenthaler has further shown that Jerusalem and the temple give cohesion to Luke's whole Gospel.<sup>46</sup> Flender is no doubt correct

when he says that for Luke, Jerusalem and the temple are fixed theological concepts. Jerusalem is the "place of the fulfillment of redemptive history."<sup>47</sup> The fact that John's birth is announced in the temple therefore takes on important theological overtones.

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<sup>45</sup>George B. Caird, The Gospel of St. Luke (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 50.

<sup>46</sup>Robert Morgenthaler, Die lukanische Geschichtsschreibung als Zeugnis (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1949), pp. 163-166. He views Luke 1:5-4:13 as a series of temple scenes at the beginning of the Gospel and Luke 19:45-24:53 as the closing series of temple scenes. The pattern is repeated in Acts also. Of particular interest for this thesis is the fact that in Luke 1:5-4:13 there appear to be four major temple scenes: Zechariah, Simeon, the Twelve-Year-Old Jesus, and the Temptation of Jesus at the temple. Morgenthaler's observations have merit since Luke has modified his Marcan source by putting the temptation at the temple in Jerusalem last for emphasis. The fact that Jesus' disciples return to Jerusalem at the close of the Gospel and begin their mission after Pentecost in the temple in Jerusalem supports Morgenthaler's observations even more.

<sup>47</sup>Flender, p. 98.

The importance of what takes place in the temple in chapter 1 is emphasized by the singular occurrences that accompany it. Zechariah has been designated by lot to burn incense in the temple (Luke 1:9). According to the Mishnah, a priest was permitted this privilege only once in his lifetime.<sup>48</sup> This particular day, then, is the greatest in the life of any priest, for the offering of the incense was originally a function of the highpriest (Exodus 30:7). Luke alerts his readers to the theological import of what is about to happen by emphasizing that all the people of God are gathered for prayer.<sup>49</sup> While offering the incense, an angel appears to Zechariah (Luke 1:11), standing at the right side of the altar of incense. Reicke points out the importance of the presence of the people outside and the appearance of the angel when he says,

Now even at a festival there cannot have been more than a large number of representatives of the Jewish people present. Luke, however, uses this particular reference from a different perspective to underline the connection between the Baptist and the old covenant: The announcement of his birth concerns the whole of the people of Israel.

None other than the angel Gabriel who stands in the presence of God makes the announcement to Zechariah, verses 11,19. The angel stands on the right side of the altar of incense, which represents God Himself so that he takes a place of honor beside God and conveys a message directly from him. And all this takes place in the innermost holy place of the old covenant,<sup>50</sup> into which the high priest entered to offer sacrifice.

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<sup>48</sup>Grundmann, p. 49. He cites as evidence Tamid 5:2.

<sup>49</sup>Luke 1:10, supra, p. 14.

<sup>50</sup>Reicke, p. 54.

In every detail the Lukan narrative assumes a theological framework for the announcement of John's birth. The whole introduction of the infancy accounts therefore serves to highlight the transition from the Old Covenant to the New. Priest, people, and temple announce the coming of the precursor of Jesus. Redemptive history has reached its fulfillment.

### The Renewal of Prophecy

Central to Luke's presentation of redemptive history and to his understanding of the Baptist's mission is the renewal of prophecy. This renewal takes place through the Spirit (Luke 1:15,42,67). For Luke the operation of the Spirit serves as the "connecting thread" which binds his whole work together.<sup>51</sup> The question immediately is posed: How does Luke understand the working of the Spirit? To answer this question an examination of the Old Testament evidence and of the context of Luke 1 is necessary.

In the Old Testament the Spirit of God is a creative, transforming power (Psalm 51:12-13) whose purpose is to "create a sphere of religion and morals."<sup>52</sup> In this sense, the Spirit of God rests upon the Messiah (Isaiah 9:2) and works through the Servant of God (Isaiah 42:1). The

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<sup>51</sup>G. W. H. Lampe, "The Holy Spirit in the Writings of St. Luke," Studies in the Gospels, edited by D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), p. 159.

<sup>52</sup>Eduard Schweizer, "Spirit of God," Bible Key Words, translated from the German by A. E. Harvey (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), III, 1.

Spirit of God as power transforms stony hearts and "changes the nation into a community devoted to God" in the New Age (Ezekiel 36:26-27).<sup>53</sup>

The Spirit of God gives life to the physical world (Genesis 2:7), and sustains creation (Job 33:4). Leaders and rulers receive a more permanent gift of the Spirit which enables them to carry out the functions of their office with wisdom and judgment (Numbers 11:17,25; 1 Samuel 16:13; Isaiah 11:2; Judges 6:34).<sup>54</sup>

The Spirit of God is also associated with prophecy, enabling the recipient of the Spirit both to receive and to interpret divine revelation (Numbers 24:2; 1 Samuel 10:6; 2 Kings 2:15). The Suffering Servant of the Lord fulfills his prophetic office and the divine purposes of redemption as One possessed by the Spirit (Isaiah 42:1; 48:16; 61:1). The Spirit makes known the ethical requirements and judgments of God through the prophets (Psalm 106:33; Zechariah 7:12; Nehemiah 9:30).<sup>55</sup>

Finally, the Spirit of God is closely bound up with the eschatological hope (Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 32:15-16). In the future age God will pour his Spirit upon the seed of Jacob (Isaiah 44:3,5). In the New Covenant the entire community of Israel will participate in the Spirit (Ezekiel 37:14; 39:29).<sup>56</sup> The action of the Spirit is also

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Lampe, p. 160..

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 161-162.

portrayed under the imagery of cleansing, healing and life-giving water, particularly the  $\nu\delta\omega\mu$   $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\delta\epsilon\omega\varsigma$  flowing out from the ideal Temple of Ezekiel's vision.<sup>57</sup>

The Spirit of God in the Old Testament is a Spirit of power, of prophecy, and of the eschaton. Since there seems to be a reference to Ezekiel 36:26-32 in connection with Zechariah and Elizabeth,<sup>58</sup> Luke may well have had the ideal temple of Ezekiel 47 in mind when he related the announcement of John's birth in the temple. The  $\nu\delta\omega\mu$   $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\delta\epsilon\omega\varsigma$  of Ezekiel's vision is reiterated in one of the characteristic functions of the Baptist: He will give knowledge of salvation through the for-giveness of sins (Luke 1:77). The first act of John recorded by Luke picks up the other half of the Ezekiel reference. John "went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:3).

The developments in the intertestamental period shed light upon Luke's understanding of prophecy and the Spirit. Leaney describes these developments when he says,

After the destruction of the first temple, or, according to some, after the death of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the prophetic gift in Israel was quenched, and a weak substitute was given in the bath-qol, the "little prophecy" (lit. "daughter of a voice"). But soon rabbis held that the gift was preserved by the communication through laying-on of hands, appealing to Num. XXVII. 18 and Deut. XXXIV. 9 (P), both relating to Moses "ordination" of Joshua. It was

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 162. See Ezekiel 47:3, also Isaiah 1:16-20, Jeremiah 4:14, Ezekiel 36:25-27.

<sup>58</sup>Supra, p. 11.

also held that those who gave themselves for Israel or learnt and obeyed the Law, or taught it publicly, could receive the Spirit.

Thus reception of the Holy Spirit by the promised child (as here, i.e. i. 15), by Mary according to Gabriel's promise (i. 35), Elizabeth (i. 41), Zechariah (i. 67), and Symeon (ii. 25) is an entirely Judaistic notion.<sup>59</sup>

All of the characters in Luke 1 are pictured as models of obedience and piety and are therefore capable of receiving the Spirit.

Luke's verbal associations between "Spirit" and the results of the Spirit's presence indicate that he understands the renewal of prophecy as an eschatological reality. Every use of "Spirit" in Luke 1 stands in a context filled with eschatological phraseology. In Luke 1:14 before the prediction of John's reception of the Spirit the angel says of John's birth, "καὶ ἔσται χαρὰ σοὶ καὶ ἀγαλλίασις ." Elizabeth's reception of the Spirit is accompanied by the leaping of the babe in her womb in "ἀγαλλιάσει " (Luke 1:44). Mary receives the promise of the Spirit (Luke 1:35). Her hymn contains both the expression "μεγαλύνει " and "ἡγαλλιάσεν" (Luke 1:46-47). Luke 1:67 makes it abundantly clear that such a reception of the Spirit causes one to prophesy. Zechariah "ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ ἐπροφήτευσεν ." Bultmann has shown that χαρεῖν, ἀγαλλιάσθαι, and μεγαλύνειν are all eschatological words praising God for his "act of divine salvation."<sup>60</sup> Schubert has therefore suggested that Luke's

<sup>59</sup>A. R. C. Leaney, A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958), p. 39. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>60</sup>Bultmann, p. 20.

first two chapters are ample evidence of Luke's "proof-from-prophecy" theology.<sup>61</sup> Schubert concludes,

The Holy Spirit is (contrary to wide-spread modern opinion) a strictly eschatological reality for Luke. . . . The extraordinary emphasis on the Holy Spirit throughout Luke-Acts is but a part of his eschatological theology of history.<sup>62</sup>

Even the past tense of the verbs in the Benedictus (Luke 1:68-75) regard the eschatological salvation of God as already present.

Luke 1, then, suggests a renewal of God's mighty acts for His people. History has reached the appointed time. God's pious people, Zechariah and Elizabeth, receive the promise of a wondrous birth. Mary, too, is a model of piety. The angel's announcement to Mary indicates that God's salvation has come upon her. John's birth is announced in the temple, the heart of Old Testament piety. In the same context, however, the eschatological hopes of Israel are fulfilled. The Spirit is active once more through prophecy. The Spirit of power overshadows Mary. God's saints rejoice in His mighty deeds in typical eschatological language.

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<sup>61</sup>Paul Schubert, "The Structure and Significance of Luke 24," Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1954), p. 178. Paul Minear suggests that a more adequate title for Luke's theology would be "theology of the time of fulfillment." "Proof-from-prophecy" raises too many difficulties of definition. "Luke's Use of the Birth Stories," Studies in Luke-Acts, edited by Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 118-120.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

Luke 1, then, provides a picture of God's fulfillment of His redemptive promises which recognizes in God's activity both the God of Israel's history and the God of her eschatological hopes. In God's decision to act in behalf of His people there is continuity with the Old Covenant and evidence of the New. Redemptive history and eschatology meet in the infancy narratives of Luke 1.

## CHAPTER III

### JOHN, JESUS AND ELIJAH--THE ESCHATOLOGY OF LUKE 1

#### Introduction

The developments during the intertestamental period gave the eschatological hope of Israel a new content and a new direction. It was recognized that the gift of prophecy had ceased.<sup>1</sup> Statements that prophecy had ceased are found not only in the Old Testament itself (Zechariah 13:3-6, Psalm 74:9), but in the intertestamental literature (1 Maccabees 9:27) and the rabbinic literature as well.<sup>2</sup>

The cessation of prophecy had a marked effect upon the eschatological hopes of Israel. Scobie has characterized this effect as follows:

Yet if prophecy was thought to be dead, there was an equally strong opinion that at some point in the future prophecy would return. To be more precise, the return of prophecy would mark the dawning of the new age. In all the passages which refer to this belief, the revival of prophecy is an eschatological concept.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Variety of Eschatological Figures

At the arrival of the eschaton Israel also expected the appearance

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<sup>1</sup>Charles H. H. Scobie, John the Baptist (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 118.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

of a number of personalities who would usher in the days of Israel's salvation. Volz summarized the diversity of expectations regarding these eschatological individuals when he wrote,

Eine ganze Reihe von Heilspersönlichkeiten ist uns nun bekannt geworden: der Messiaskönig, der Mensch, der Priesterfürst, der Prophet, Mose, Elia, Henoch, der Engel, der Taeb. Die ausser dem Messias genannten Heilspersonen stehen nicht etwa neben dem Messias, sondern sie stehen an Stelle des Messias, sie sind nicht etwa Vorläufer des Messias (höchstens und ganz vereinzelt Elia), sondern sie sind Vorläufer Gottes, und sie sind selbst die Heilspersönlichkeiten. Das beweist also, dass das fromme Judentum im Zeitalter Jesus Christi nicht eine einheitliche, sondern eine mannigfaltige "Messiashoffnung" hatte, und es lässt sich vermuten, dass sich die verschiedenen eschatologischen Heilsgestalten auf verschiedene Kreise im Volk verteilt haben. Die verschiedenen Gruppen im Zeitalter Jesu werden sich ihren besonderen "Messias," Erlöser, Heilbringer erdacht und ihn in sehr verschiedener Gestalt erwartet haben: die Pharisäer anders als die Essener, die Priester anders als die Politiker, die Apokalyptiker anders als die Torastudenten, die Gebildeten anders als die Masse, die Zeloten anders als die Stillen im Lande. Henoch (Daniel, Esra, Baruch) waren wohl die Heroen der Apokalyptik, Mose der Heros des gesetzesgelehrten Judentums, Elia and von allem der Messiaskönig vermutlich der Heros der volkstümlich Eschatologie, der "Mensch" wohl der Ersehnte eines Kreises besonders innerlicher Menschen. In gewissen Kreisen, wohl vor allem in literarischen Kreisen, hat man bisweilen auch die verschiedenen Gestalten und Ämter vereinigt und einen Heilbringer geblaut, der zugleich König, Prophet and Priester war. Zudem wird man annehmen dürfen, dass die Ämter weder im Leben noch in der Anschauung so scharf getrennt waren, wie wir zunächst vermuten möchten.<sup>4</sup>

Thus a number of eschatological figures were envisioned, corresponding to a variety of groups within Israel. Several of these eschatological

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<sup>4</sup>Paul Volz, Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1934), p. 201. The emphases are the author's.

figures might have a possible bearing upon the theology of Luke 1.

The High Priest of Levi and the King of Judah

Volz has shown that in chapters 8 and 18 of the Testament of Levi a priestly-king (Priesterkönig) was expected.<sup>5</sup> His star shall arise in heaven like a king. Sanctification comes upon him from the temple of glory. The spirit of understanding and sanctification will rest on him. The Gentiles will receive knowledge in his priesthood. He opens the doors of paradise. He will give the saints food from the tree of life. The spirit of holiness will be on them. The Lord will rejoice in his children. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will exult, and Levi will be glad. All the saints shall clothe themselves in joy.<sup>6</sup> Volz goes on to point out that this description reminds one of Psalm 110 and its Melchisedek typology but that the function of this priestly-king is chiefly in a spiritual sphere.<sup>7</sup> This similarity to Psalm 110 has led many to suspect that the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs stem from Maccabean circles and that this priestly-king is the bearer of the national hopes of the priestly Maccabees.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Volz's statement reads: "Unterschied von Ps 110 liegt aber hier die Tätigkeit dieses Priesterkönigs, wie es auch dem Charakter des Melchisedek entspricht, vorzugsweise auf geistigem Gebiet." Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

Chapter 8 of the Testament of Levi contains further evidence of the eschatological hopes connected with the tribe of Levi. Volz says,

Schwierig ist t. Levi 8. Nach der hier ausgesprochenen Weissagung wird Levis Same in drei Reiche geteilt zum Zeichen der Herrlichkeit des kommenden Herrn. Der erste *Κληρος* (Hdschr. R) wird gross sein, grösser als er wird kein anderer sein; der zweite wird im Priestertum sein; der dritte wird mit einem neuen Namen genannt werden (griech. Text; armen. Text: er wird mit seinem Namen genannt werden), denn als König wird er in Juda aufstehen und ein neues Priestertum schaffen nach dem Vorbild der Heiden für alle Heiden (armen. Text: er wird Barmherzigkeit üben an allen Völkern). Sein Auftreten (*παρουσία*) ist unaussprechlich wie eines hohen Propheten aus dem Samen unseres Vaters Abraham (armen. Text A: unaussprechlich wie des Höchsten; armen. Text B: unaussprechlich wie ein Prophet des Höchsten aus dem Samen Abrahams, unseres Vaters). Auch hier also wie in c. 18 träumt der Verfasser von einem Priester, der zugleich ein König ist, und der mit Abraham in Verbindung steht; wie der König in t. Juda 24 ist er für alle Völker da. Ein neuer Zug (im Verhältnis zu c. 18) ist die Vergleichung des Priesterkönigs mit dem Propheten, so dass hier alle drei Organe des Volkes, König, Priester und Prophet, in Eine Person zusammengebunden erscheinen.<sup>9</sup>

Testament of Gad 8 speaks of a savior that God will raise up from Levi and Judah, and the Testament of Simeon 7 speaks of a highpriest from Levi and a king from Judah.<sup>10</sup> The third figure in the Testament of Levi 8 is not identified and is not mentioned in any other references in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. What is of significance is the unification of the three offices of king, priest, and prophet in one person.<sup>11</sup> Philo sees the fulfillment of this threefold office in

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 191-192.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

Moses, as does the Samaritan view of Moses.<sup>12</sup>

In a recent study by Karl Georg Kuhn the author supplies new evidence which supports some of Volz's observations about the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, but also corrects him at places.<sup>13</sup> Kuhn's study shows that a recently published fragment from Qumran, the Order of the Congregation,<sup>14</sup> agrees with the previously published Manual of Discipline in recognizing two Messiahs. One is the Messiah of Aaron, a highpriest, and the other the Messiah of Israel.<sup>15</sup> 1QSa ii, 12-17 has the same conception of the Messiah of Aaron as highpriest and the Messiah of Israel as the political leader of Israel, and the Messiah of Israel is the subordinate of the two.<sup>16</sup> Kuhn goes on to show that the understanding

of the messianic concept in Test. XII Patr. had for a long time been misdirected by the theory of R. H. Charles that the statements concerning a Messiah from the tribe of Levi and a Messiah from the tribe of Judah, both of which are found side by side in Test. XII Patr. were two competing concepts. Charles was of the opinion that the original text of the Test. XII Patr. expressed only the expectation of the Messiah of Levi. Under the

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Karl Georg Kuhn, "The Two Messiahs of Aaron and Israel," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by Krister Stendahl (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 54-64.

<sup>14</sup>Hereafter this document will be referred to by the accepted symbol 1QSa, followed by the column number and the verse number.

<sup>15</sup>Kuhn, p. 56.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

powerful influence of the priestly dynasty of the Hasmoneans and especially of John Hyrcanus, this concept should have canceled out the otherwise current Jewish concept of the Messiah of Judah, the Davidic Messiah. Consequently, Charles thought it possible to find allusions in the original text to John Hyrcanus. . . .

Yet the Test. XII Patr. have no allusions to John Hyrcanus, nor are the Messiah of Levi and the Messiah of Judah mutually competing concepts. Much rather, the Test. XII Patr. show, with complete unanimity, the expectation of two Messiahs, one a high priest from the tribe of Levi and one royal from the tribe of Judah. The priestly Messiah receives the highest place, the royal Messiah ranks second.<sup>17</sup>

Kuhn further points out that the Damascus Document has three references to "the coming Messiah of Aaron and Israel" and thus indicates that it was later altered by a later copyist who knew nothing of Essene expectations and did not know what to do with a plural messianic conception.<sup>18</sup>

Another part of Kuhn's study is of particular interest for our purposes also. The author finds support for the concept of two Messiahs in the Old Testament already when he says,

The concept of the two Messiahs, a priestly and a political one, is actually not as strange as it first appears to be. The entire structure of post-exilic Israel shows the side-by-side position of the priestly hierarchy and a worldly political leadership. This structure is given already in the juxtaposition of the priests and the "princes" as worldly leaders, found

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid. . Pages 57 and 58 give the rest of the references in the Test. XII Patr. which speak of two Messiahs also.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 58-59.

in Ezekiel (44-46). In Zech. 4:14 (ca. 520 B.C.) we see, side by side, the Aaronite Joshua, the high priest, and the Davidic Zerubbabel, the worldly leader of the Israelite community, as "the two anointed ones."<sup>19</sup>

The distinction between the office of the high priest and the political office were thus an integral part of Jewish tradition.<sup>20</sup> The distinction between the priestly and the kingly offices was rigidly maintained. When Aristobulus I, a Hasmonean of Levitic descent, assumed the title "king," "the Hasmoneans adapted themselves to their Hellenistic environment. Thereby they placed themselves in opposition to Jewish tradition."<sup>21</sup> That the blending of the two offices was considered a sacrilege to pious Jews can be seen from Psalms of Solomon 17:4-6, a passage which dates from shortly before 63 B.C.<sup>22</sup>

Kuhn concludes his article by stating that the original passage from the Manual of Discipline (1QS ix, 11) that speaks of "the coming of a Prophet and the (two) Messiahs of Aaron and Israel"

actually speaks of three different heroes of redemption, who were to stand side by side in the Eschaton: (1) the new prophetic lawgiver, (2) the "Messiah of Aaron," the new highpriest out of the tribe of Levi, and (3) the "Messiah of Israel," the new king out of the tribe of Judah.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. .

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 61-62.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 63. The emphasis is mine.

Kuhn's study, taken together with Volz's findings, play an important part in establishing the background of thought in which the composition of Luke 1 took place. Conclusions from their findings will be drawn later in the chapter.<sup>24</sup>

### The Eschatological Prophet--Moses

Israel's hopes for the renewal of prophecy and the beginning of the eschatological age of the Spirit found classical expression already in the days of the prophet Joel. Joel 2:28-29 reads,

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit.<sup>25</sup>

In connection with this passage Cullmann says,

As a result of his absence at that time, the Spirit was looked upon in Judaism as an eschatological element. There had been prophets in the past, and there would be prophets again at the end of days. Thus prophecy became more and more the subject of eschatological expectation.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Infra, pp. 65-66.

<sup>25</sup> RSV. The LXX is Joel 3:1-2 and reads, "καὶ ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἐκχέω ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος μου ἐπὶ πάντα βάρβαρα, καὶ προφητεύσουσιν οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες ὑμῶν, καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ὑμῶν ἐγύπνια ἐνυπνιασθήσονται, καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι ὑμῶν ὄραβεις ὄψονται, καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐκχέω ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος μου."

<sup>26</sup> Oscar Cullmann, The Christology of the New Testament, translated from the German by Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 14-15.

In the intertestamental period the expectation of the renewal of prophecy underwent a highly significant alteration. One prophet came to be expected at the dawning of the new age.<sup>27</sup> In 1 Maccabees 4:45-46 the stones of the altar are stored during the rebuilding of the temple until a future prophet would appear to solve the question of what to do with them. In 1 Maccabees 14:41 Simon is made high priest forever "until a trustworthy prophet should arise . . . ."28 "In these two cases the coming prophet is to settle any outstanding problems and reveal God's will."<sup>29</sup> The Testament of Benjamin 9:2 envisions the coming prophet as the bringer of salvation when it says,

And the twelve tribes shall be gathered together there (at the temple), and all the Gentiles; until the Most High shall send forth his salvation in the visitation of an only-begotten prophet.<sup>30</sup>

Cullmann has made an interesting suggestion to explain why it was possible to expect a single prophet representing the whole of prophecy. He says,

The idea that a single prophet would represent the whole of prophecy may have another root besides eschatology in Judaism, one which rests more on a theological speculation. It is the idea that since all prophets have proclaimed basically the same divine truth, the same

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<sup>27</sup>Scobie, p. 119.

<sup>28</sup>Quoted in Scobie, p. 119.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>As quoted in Scobie. The emphasis is mine.

prophet was successively incarnated in different men. Thus the idea arose that actually the same prophet always appeared and that each time he merely took a different form.<sup>31</sup>

It was almost inevitable, therefore, that the prophet expected at the dawning of the New Age should be identified with Moses. He was the first great prophet of Israel, the leader of the Exodus, the prophetic intermediary between God and His people, and the author of the Torah.<sup>32</sup> The Rabbis had no trouble finding scriptural support for this position. Deuteronomy 18:15 contains the promise of Moses that "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren--him you shall heed."<sup>33</sup> Deuteronomy 18:15 does not speak of Moses' return but of a prophet who will be like him.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, it was only a simple step for the rabbis to conclude that it was Moses himself who would return at the beginning of the New Age.<sup>35</sup> The Qumran scrolls supply important evidence that Moses was expected as the eschatological prophet. The Qumran community expected three eschatological figures, one of whom was expected to be Moses. Scobie says,

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<sup>31</sup>Cullmann, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup>Volz, p. 194.

<sup>33</sup>RSV. The LXX reads, "προφήτην ἕκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου ὡς ἐμὲ ἀναστήσει σοι Κύριος ὁ θεός σου, αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε...."

<sup>34</sup>Cullmann, pp. 16-17.

<sup>35</sup>Volz, p. 195. Cullmann reaches the same conclusion, p. 17.

In the Testimonia text from Qumran, this threefold expectation is expanded and explained by the texts which are quoted--Deut. 5:28,29 and Deut. 18:18,19, referring to the prophet like unto Moses . . . . Here is clear proof of the expectation of the eschatological prophet in the person of the returning Moses.<sup>36</sup>

### The Eschatological Prophet--Elijah

No prophet of Israel played a greater role in the eschatological hopes of Judaism than Elijah, the Tishbite who saved "Yahweh religion from destruction by the cult of Baal" in the ninth century B.C.<sup>37</sup> Jeremias lists two reasons for Elijah's prominence "in popular legend, in theological discussion and in eschatological expectation,"--his mysterious rapture and the prophecy of his return in Malachi 4:5 and following.<sup>38</sup> The text of Malachi 4:5-6 reads,

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Scobie, p. 122.

<sup>37</sup>Joachim Jeremias, "Ἡλιείας," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel and translated from the German by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), II, 928.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 930.

<sup>39</sup>RSV. The quote in the LXX is Malachi 3:22-23 and reads: καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποπέμψω ὑμῖν Ἡλίαν τὸν θεσβίτην πρὶν ἔλθειν ἡμέραν κυρίου τὴν μέγαλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ, ὅς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ, μὴ ἔλθω καὶ πατάξω τὴν γῆν ἀρδην.

It is possible that this passage is an interpolation designed to show "that the messenger and precursor of Yahweh mentioned in 3:1 is the returning Elijah."<sup>40</sup> The Malachi 4:5 passage sees in Elijah an eschatological figure. "He prepares the divine way for the heavenly King (3:1) by purifying the priesthood (3:2-4) and establishing peace (4:6)."<sup>41</sup> It is to be noted that at least three separate functions are attributed to Elijah in these references. Malachi 3:1 sees Elijah as the preparer of the way for God. Malachi 3:2-4 attributes to him the purification of the Levites. Malachi 4:5-6 sees Elijah as an eschatological figure who will restore peace in Israel.

In the apocryphal literature of the intertestamental period Elijah receives some attention in the Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), especially in Sirach 48:10. The passage reads,

You who are ready at the appointed time, it is written to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury, to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob.<sup>42</sup>

The passage apparently depends on Malachi 4:5-6.<sup>43</sup> A significant addition to the expectations of Elijah is made in this verse. Elijah

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<sup>40</sup>Jeremias, p. 930. The LXX text of Malachi 3:1 reads, "ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξαποπέμψω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου, καὶ ἐπιβλέψεται ὁδοὺν πρὸ προσώπου μου, καὶ ἐκίφνης ἡξει εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἐκυτοῦ κυρίου, ὃν ὑμεῖς ζητεῖτε, καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς διαθήκης ὃν ὑμεῖς νέεσθε. ἰδοὺ ἐρχεται, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ."

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 931.

<sup>42</sup>As quoted in Scobie, p. 120.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

is expected to "restore the tribes of Jacob." In the Septuagint version of Isaiah 49:6 this function of restoring the tribes of Jacob is attributed to the Ebed Yahweh.<sup>44</sup> Thus Sirach, too, seems to have expected Elijah himself as the Messiah.<sup>45</sup> Oesterley has questioned how much emphasis may be placed on the Sirach passage, however.<sup>46</sup>

In rabbinic Judaism Elijah occupied an especially important place. The expectations surrounding Elijah as the eschatological prophet were threefold, corresponding to the three explanations given to his obscure origin.<sup>47</sup> Some held that Elijah was a Gadite and therefore not only God's forerunner but the redeemer of Israel as well.<sup>48</sup> A second line of thought regarded Elijah as a Benjamite and the

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<sup>44</sup>Jeremias, p. 931. The LXX reads, "καὶ εἶπέν μοι, Μέγα βολὴ ἔστιν τοῦ κλητῆος ἐπεὶ πατέρα μου τοῦ βτηῆδος τῆς φυλῆς ἰακωβ...."

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>W. O. E. Oesterley, "Sirach," The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, edited by R. H. Charles (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913), I, 501. He says, "This is one of the few passages (Ecclesiasticus 48:10) in which Ben-Sira refers to the Messianic Hope (see also xliv. 21, lxxv. 25, xlvi. 11, 22, xlviii. 24, 25, xlix. 12, l. 24, li. 12); but neither the nature of the book nor the historical circumstances of the time, by which Messianic conceptions were always conditioned, were such as to lead one to expect much stress to be laid on this subject. During the third century B.C. the Jews lived in quietude and prosperity, and the hopes concerning the Messianic Age seem to have dropped into the background; not that the Jews ever really abandoned (until quite modern times) their Messianic expectations; these only ceased, for the time being, to play an important part."

<sup>47</sup>Jeremias, p. 930.

<sup>48</sup>Herman L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), IV, 2, 782-784. There is a long and valuable excursus on pages 783-784.

forerunner of the Messiah.<sup>49</sup> Jeremias comments,

Far more widespread, however, was a second view which saw in Elijah the forerunner of the Messiah rather than of God. This is prepared in the pseudepigrapha inasmuch as Elijah here comes with Enoch before the parousia of the Messiah (Eth. En. 90:31; cf. 89:52; 4 Esr. 6:26). That Elijah alone was also expected as the forerunner of the Messiah is attested in Just. Dial., 8, 4; 49, 1 . . . several Rabb. passages and the ancient blessing of the wine at the New Year feast as preserved in Soph., 19, 9: "Elijah the prophet come to us soon; may the King Messiah sprout forth in our days." We know from the NT how widespread this view was in popular eschatology.<sup>50</sup>

Some controversy has arisen as to whether Elijah was really regarded as the forerunner of the Messiah or not. George F. Moore,<sup>51</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel,<sup>52</sup> and Joseph Klausner<sup>53</sup> agree in seeing Elijah as the expected forerunner of the Messiah. J. A. T. Robinson has recently challenged the assumption that Elijah must have been thought of as the

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 784-789.

<sup>50</sup>Jeremias, p. 931.

<sup>51</sup>Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, the Age of the Tannaim (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), II, 357. Moore says, "It was the universal belief that shortly before the appearance of the Messiah Elijah should return."

<sup>52</sup>He That Cometh, translated from the German by G. W. Anderson (New York: Abingdon Press, n.d.), p. 299. He says, "The thought of Elijah as the forerunner of the Messiah seems to have been widespread in Judaism."

<sup>53</sup>The Messianic Idea in Israel: From Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah, translated from the Hebrew by W. F. Stinespring (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), pp. 454-456. Klausner qualifies his statements when he says on p. 456, "The Tannaitic literature has little to say with respect to the activity of Elijah in his role as the Messiah's forerunner."

forerunner of the Messiah.<sup>54</sup> Robinson does not believe that Elijah was thought of as the forerunner of the Messiah because Malachi 4:5 and Ecclesiasticus 48:10 view Elijah as the forerunner of God rather than of the Messiah.<sup>55</sup> In Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho 8:4 and 49:1 Elijah is regarded as the precursor and anointer of the Messiah. Robinson questions how much weight may be placed on the passages because "it is always perilous to reconstruct the creed of an opponent from a work of apologetic."<sup>56</sup> He also takes Cullmann to task for maintaining the position that Elijah was regarded both as the forerunner of God and the forerunner of the Messiah without sufficient evidence.<sup>57</sup> Robinson states his own position in these words:

On the contrary, all recent evidence points to the fact that there was no such graduated messianic programme. It would probably be nearer the truth to see a considerable number of figures, in various strands of popular expectation, all of whom carried "messianic" or eschatological overtones.<sup>58</sup>

A third line of rabbinic thought regarded Elijah as descended from the tribe of Levi. This line of descent was established by combining

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<sup>54</sup>"Elijah, John and Jesus: An Essay in Detection," Twelve New Testament Studies (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1962), p. 37.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 36. Regarding the Ecclesiasticus passage, Robinson quotes G. F. Moore's statement with approval: "Sirach does not connect the return of Elijah with the appearance of the Messiah, of whom, indeed, there is no mention in the book." Moore, p. 358, n. 2.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 37, n. 21. Robinson is referring to Cullmann, p. 23.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

the Septuagint version of Malachi 2:4 with the "angel of the covenant" mentioned in Malachi 3:1 and 3:23.<sup>59</sup> Under the influence of the priestly Maccabean line, the rabbis interpreted Elijah as the high priest of the messianic age and a colleague of the Messiah rather than his forerunner.<sup>60</sup> In support of this understanding of Elijah the rabbis appealed to Numbers 25:11-13. Because Phineas had cleansed Israel from impurity by association with two Midianites, he received the promise of a perpetual priesthood. Phineas became associated with the high priestly office in the Messianic Age because of the perpetual promise. Later, the figures of Phineas and Elijah were joined.<sup>61</sup> The identification of the two was a simple matter when priestly descent was attributed to Elijah.<sup>62</sup> We have already seen that the expectation of an eschatological high priest was firmly established in the two centuries preceding the New Testament Age.<sup>63</sup>

The main task of Elijah is that of the eschatological restoration of Israel. Both Malachi 3:23 in the Septuagint and Sirach 48:10 use

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<sup>59</sup>Strack and Billerbeck, p. 789. The LXX of Malachi 2:4 reads, "καὶ ἐπιγνώσεσθε διότι ἐγὼ ἐξαπέστειλα πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὴν ἐντολὴν ταύτην τοῦ εἶναι τὴν διαθήκην μου πρὸς τοὺς λευίτας, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ."

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 790.

<sup>62</sup>Jeremias, pp. 932-933. Jeremias points out that this identification of Phineas and Elijah belongs to the post-Christian era. The Targum of Jerusch on Numbers 25:12 contains the identification of the two in specific terms.

<sup>63</sup>Supra, pp. 35-41.

the verb "to restore."<sup>64</sup> In the Old Testament the verb "becomes a technical term for the restoration of Israel to its own land by Yahweh."<sup>65</sup> Jeremiah 16:15; 23:8; 24:6; and Hosea 11:11 are examples of such a use of ἀποκαθίστημι. Oepke points out that such a restoration

was increasingly understood in a Messianic and eschatological sense. On the other hand, under prophetic influence it was more fully perceived that inner restitution is the condition and crown of the outer.<sup>66</sup>

Under the influence of Malachi 3:24 in the Septuagint Elijah was regarded as the eschatological prophet who would usher in such a restoration.<sup>67</sup>

Elijah's task of restoration found at least six major interpretations among the rabbis. He was expected to restore the purity of Jewish families by securing the marriage bond and ridding Israel of illegitimate families at the beginning of the Messianic era.<sup>68</sup> A second interpretation of Elijah's task expected him to restore the purity of teaching in Israel. Disputed points of teaching and other religious

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<sup>64</sup> Malachi 3:23 LXX has "ἀποκαταστήσει." The Wisdom of Sirach uses "καταστήσει."

<sup>65</sup> Albrecht Oepke, "ἀποκαθίστημι, ἀποκατάβιβας," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel and translated from the German by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), I, 388.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Strack and Billerbeck, IV, 792-794.

questions were to be solved by Elijah.<sup>69</sup> That this is an eschatological function of the returning Elijah may be seen from the recurring phrase, "it must be left until Elijah comes."<sup>70</sup> Thirdly, Elijah was expected to restore peace in Israel.<sup>71</sup> The clearest reference to this function of Elijah is found in Eduyoth 8:7:

R. Joshua said: I have received as a tradition from Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai, who heard from his teacher, and his teacher from his teacher, as a Halakah given to Moses from Sinai, that Elijah will not come to declare unclean or clean, to remove afar or bring nigh, but to remove afar those (families) that were brought nigh by violence and to bring nigh those (families) that were removed afar by violence. The family of Beth Zerepha was in the land beyond Jordan and Ben Zion removed it afar by force. The like of these Elijah will come to declare unclean or clean, to remove afar or bring nigh. R. Judah says: To bring nigh but not to remove afar. R. Simeon says: To bring agreement where there is matter for dispute. And the Sages say: Neither to remove afar nor to bring nigh but to make peace in the world, as it is written, Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet . . . and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers.<sup>72</sup>

One notices here not only the differences in rabbinic interpretation but also the key role that Malachi 4:5-6 played in the expectation of what the returning Elijah would do. It was apparently expected that

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 794-796.

<sup>70</sup>Herbert Danby, The Mishnah (London: Oxford University Press, 1950). The phrase occurs repeatedly in the following references: Shekalim 2:5 (p. 154); Sotah 9:15 (pp. 306-307); Baba Metzia 1:8 (p. 348); 2:8 (pp. 349-350); 3:4 (p. 351); and 3:5 (p. 351).

<sup>71</sup>Strack and Billerbeck, IV, pp. 796-797.

<sup>72</sup>Danby, pp. 436-437.

Elijah's restoration of peace would affect both individuals and nations.<sup>73</sup> A fourth view saw Elijah as the restorer of repentance to Israel,<sup>74</sup> although this is probably a rather late development.<sup>75</sup> A fifth view regarded Elijah's task as the restoration of the three pieces of property which characterized the first temple--the vessel of manna, the vessel of water for purification, and the vessel of oil for anointing.<sup>76</sup> According to the Testament of Levi, chapter 2, and Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho the Jew 8:4 Elijah will identify and anoint the Messiah. It may be that Elijah's expected restoration of the temple properties is reflected in these two references.<sup>77</sup> Finally, Elijah was expected to gather the dispersed of Israel.<sup>78</sup> The Targum of Jerusalem I on Deuteronomy 30:4 is important in this regard because Elijah as the high priest of the last times is connected with the messianic king.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Werner Foerster, "εἰρήνη," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel and translated from the German by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), II, 409.

<sup>74</sup>Strack and Billerbeck, p. 797. He cites Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer as evidence, a source which again quotes Malachi 4:5-6 as the scriptural basis for what is expected.

<sup>75</sup>Moore, p. 359. Moore says, "None of the earlier sources makes it Elijah's special mission to bring Israel to repentance."

<sup>76</sup>Strack and Billerbeck, p. 797.

<sup>77</sup>Jeremias, p. 934.

<sup>78</sup>Strack and Billerbeck, IV, pp. 797-798.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 797.

## John and Elijah in Luke 1:14-17

Luke 1:17 is the only verse in Luke's entire Gospel which mentions John the Baptist and Elijah in connection with each other.<sup>80</sup> It is extremely important, therefore, that the relationship between the two men be determined as precisely as possible. John is pictured as going before "Him" "Ἐν πνεύματι καὶ δυνάμει ἁγίου." Some scholars simply assume that John is identified as the returning Elijah in Luke 1:17;<sup>81</sup> others interpret the passage as an identification of John as the returning Elijah.<sup>82</sup> Other scholars have noted a more subtle meaning in the phrase "in the spirit and power of Elijah." Scobie equates John with the returning Elijah, but his footnote suggests he is sensitive to

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<sup>80</sup>Luke 7:27 quotes Malachi 3:1 to describe John but does not mention Elijah. Luke 9:7-9 describes John's possible resurrection from the dead in the person of Jesus and the appearance of Elijah as alternate possibilities. Luke 9:18-20 likewise describes Jesus' identification with John the Baptist or Elijah as alternate rather than identical possibilities.

<sup>81</sup>So George B. Caird, "The Gospel of St. Luke," The Pelikan Gospel Commentaries, edited by D. E. Nineham (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 50. Caird says, "One of the latest prophecies to be added to the canon of scripture promised that the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple and that before his coming Elijah would return to inaugurate a great repentance (Mal. 3:1, 4:5-6). It was appropriate, then, that the temple worship should provide the setting for the opening of the gospel story, as it does for its close." The emphasis is Caird's.

<sup>82</sup>Robinson, p. 46. He says, "Luke omits both the passages in which Jesus proposes his tentative identification of John with Elijah. For him the person of the Baptist is no longer a mystery: he is Elijah from birth (1.16 f.)." In a footnote on the same page he says, "The phrase 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' cannot, in view of the functions predicated of him, be interpreted as a denial that John is Elijah. For similar expressions, meaning Elijah redivivus, cf. Justin, Dial. 49.3-7." The emphasis is Robinson's.

the subtle language in which John's relationship to Elijah is described.<sup>83</sup>

Lampe displays sensitivity to the problem in verse 17 when he says,

All the Synoptic writers, as opposed to the Fourth Evangelist, unite to portray him as Elijah redivivus. In some respects, however, John's character as Elijah is not brought out so clearly by St. Luke as by St. Mark. Thus, the Marcan description of John's personal appearance with its resemblance to Elijah's is omitted in this Gospel, as is also the discussion of Elijah's coming in the person of John. On the other hand, the office of the Baptist is to precede the Lord in the Spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. This is set out most plainly in the angelic annunciation to Zacharias, whose language recalls ben Sirach's description of the future work of Elijah and also, but less clearly, the prophecy of Mal. 4:5.<sup>84</sup>

Grundmann suggests that John is not identified with the returning Elijah in Luke 1:17. He says,

Die erste Doppelzeile des nun folgenden Verses stellt die Beziehung zu Elias her, und zwar in der für Lukas charakteristischen Form, dass Mal. 3,1.23f. nicht auf den wiederkehrenden Elia interpretiert wird. Lukas meidet in seinem Evangelium alle Aussagen, die Johannes als den wiederkehrenden Elia bezeichnen (vgl. Mark 9, 11-13; Matth. 11,14, die bei Luk. fehlen). Johannes gleicht in seinem Auftreten dem Elia, der bei seinem Wiederkommen nach verschiedenen Aussagen jüdischer Theologie auch als messianischer Hoherpriester gilt.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Scobie, p. 126, n. 2. Scobie says, "The concept of the returning Elijah seems to be somewhat 'spiritualized' in the phrase 'he will go before him by the spirit and power of Elijah' (Luke 1:17); contrast the rather more literal tone of Matt. 11:14." The emphasis is Scobie's.

<sup>84</sup>G. W. H. Lampe, "The Holy Spirit in the Writings of St. Luke," Studies in the Gospels, edited by D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), p. 166.

<sup>85</sup>Walter Grundmann, Das Evangelium nach Lukas in Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, n.d.), III, 51. The emphasis is mine.

In Matthew and Mark there is a close connection between John's personal identification and his office or function. Since Luke omits the Marcan description of John's personal appearance (Mark 1:6) which would suggest his identification as Elijah as well as the passages where John and Elijah are equated (Matthew 11:14; Matthew 17:12), it would seem that Luke does not intend John to be equated with Elijah. The context of the passage suggests other accents.

We have noted above<sup>86</sup> that Luke heavily accents the Levitic origins of John's parents as well as their piety. The importance of the announcement of John's birth in the temple has also been treated.<sup>87</sup> The context of Luke 1:14-17, then, supports Grundmann's suggestion that Luke casts John in the role of the Messianic high priest. The description of eschatological joy at John's birth in Luke 1:14 supports Grundmann's position also.<sup>88</sup> The fact that John "shall drink no wine nor strong drink" suggests his priestly function. Schlatter says,

Als für Gott geweiht wird Johannes dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass er sich vom Wein und berausenden Trank enthält. Ihm gilt die Regel, unter der die Priester stehen, solange sie ihren Dienst im Heiligtum tun. Vielleicht ist daran gedacht, dass Johannes durch seine Geburt zum priesterlichen Dienst berechtigt war.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Supra, pp. 6-10.

<sup>87</sup>Supra, pp. 22-25.

<sup>88</sup>The eschatological nature of the language in Luke 1:14 has been treated above. Supra, p. 20.

<sup>89</sup>Adolf Schlatter, Das Evangelium des Lukas aus seinen Quellen erklärt (zweite Auflage; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1960), p. 154.

The rabbis attributed Levitic descent to Elijah on the basis of a combination of Malachi 2:4, 3:1 and 3:23.<sup>90</sup> It is highly significant, therefore, that Luke seems to avoid quoting the Malachi 3:23 passage which contains the characteristic verb used to describe Elijah's function of restoring Israel, ἀποκαταστήσει . The verb from Sirach 48:10, ἐπιγτρέψαι , does appear in Luke 1:16, however. The rest of the quote in Luke 1:17 reproduces neither the Septuagint version of Malachi 3:23 nor that of Sirach 48:10. The appearance of the verb of Sirach 48:10 at Luke 1:16 suggests some connection between the passages.

Grundmann's suggestion is most attractive as an explanation of Luke 1:17.

He says,

Die Bestimmung der Aufgabe des Johannes, "Herzen der Väter zu den Kindern zu bekehren" steht in Parallele zu "Ungehorsame durch die Gesinnung Gerechter." Es entsprechen "Väter-Ungehorsame, Kinder-Gerechte." Deshalb scheidet aus, bei den Vätern an die Erzväter im Himmel zu denken, die ihr Herz den missratenen Kindern zuwenden. Auch als eine Abkürzung von Mal. 3,24 ist die Aussage nicht zu verstehen: die zerütteten Familien wieder zusammenführen. Die Aussage steht vielmehr Sir. 48.10c (hebr. Text) nahe, wo im Unterschied zum griechischen Text im Zusammenhang mit den Vätern und Söhnen sich der Gedanke des "Zur-Einsicht-Führens" findet. Die Fassung des Lukas dürfte von den Voraussetzungen der chasidischen Bewegung her zu verstehen sein; die Chasidim, aus denen die Leute von Qumran ebenso wie die Pharisäer hervorgehen, sind ihrem Ursprung nach eine Jugendbewegung, während die Vätergeneration die Abefallenen, die Blinden gegenüber den Sehenden sind (vgl. Jb. 23,26: Und in jenen Tagen werden die Kinder anfangen, die Gesetze zu suchen . . . und auf den Weg der Gerechtigkeit umkehren; aeth. Hen. 90, 6.7: gegenüber den Lämmern, denen die Augen aufgegangen sind und die die verblendeten Schafe warnen, bleiben diese

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<sup>90</sup>Supra, p. 49.

"über die Massen taub und ihre Augen waren sehr verblendet"). . . . Johannes wird als der Vollender der chasidischen Bewegung gesehen, der Bote des zu seinem Volke kommenden Gottes, und bereitet ihn durch sein Wirken des eschatologische Gottesvolk.<sup>91</sup>

The  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  in verse 17 refers back to  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon \lambda\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  in verse 16 and pictures John as the forerunner of God Himself.<sup>92</sup>

In view of the evidence presented above, Luke seems to describe John as a messianic figure and a colleague of the Messiah rather than his forerunner.<sup>93</sup> He fulfills the functions of the Elijah figure by preparing the way before God (Malachi 3:1), by his Levitic descent (Malachi 2:4), and by his bringing of peace in Israel.<sup>94</sup> The echo of Sirach 48:10 at Luke 1:16 could suggest to his readers that John is the Messiah.<sup>95</sup> Luke 3:15-17 may be intended as the counterbalance to such a suggestion of John's messiahship. Luke may further wish to avoid identifying John with Elijah because Jesus Himself resembles Elijah at many points in the Gospel.<sup>96</sup> If Robinson is correct, there

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<sup>91</sup>Grundmann, pp. 51-52.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 51. Alfred Plummer interprets  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  as referring back to  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon \lambda\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  in verse 16 also. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke, in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), p. 15.

<sup>93</sup>Supra, p. 49.

<sup>94</sup>Supra, p. 42.

<sup>95</sup>Supra, p. 45.

<sup>96</sup>Lampe, pp. 176-177.

may also be an echo of Jesus' similarity to Elijah in Acts 3:21.<sup>97</sup>

That John is pictured as the forerunner of God rather than of the Messiah in Luke 1:17 does not mean that John is not the forerunner of the Messiah. Luke pictures John as the Messiah's forerunner elsewhere. A. R. C. Leaney says,

At i. 24 Elizabeth hides herself on learning of her pregnancy. The verb is emphatic, perhaps meaning 'concealed herself entirely.' The reason for this close concealment is probably to be found in Luke's desire to present John as important less in himself than as the forerunner of Jesus, and to show this as part of the divine plan. He therefore connects Elizabeth's retirement closely with the Annunciation to Mary: Elizabeth hides herself 'five months' (i. 24) and 'in the sixth month' (i. 26) Gabriel is sent to Mary. When Mary visits Elizabeth, John even in the womb acknowledges the mother of his Lord (i. 44); and after his birth he is concealed from the public (i. 80) until the time is ripe for him to announce the nearness of the Messiah. When he begins his ministry Luke, along with the other evangelists, quotes of him Is. xl. 3, and unlike the other evangelists, prolongs the quotation to add Is. xl. 4-5; the passage from Isaiah ends with the words, 'And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' (Luke iii.6). By this sentence Luke makes John prophesy the imminent appearance of the Messiah; for the phrase 'the salvation of God' is apparently equivalent to 'the Messiah.'<sup>98</sup>

There is strong evidence that in Luke 1:14-17 John is presented as the eschatological prophet as well as the eschatological high priest. Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich suggest that " *ἐν πνεύματι καὶ δυνάμει Ἠλίου* " in Luke 1:17 means "equipped with the spirit and power of Elijah."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Robinson, p. 47.

<sup>98</sup>A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958), p. 42. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>99</sup>Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated from the German and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 258. The emphasis is mine.

Lampe says,

St. Luke, moreover, emphasizes the prophetic character of John most strongly . . . . If the appearance of the angel to Zacharias, and the announcement that John is to resemble the Nazarites in his abstention from wine and strong drink, recall the birth-story of Samson, the circumstances of his birth and to some extent also his Nazarite characteristics suggest a resemblance to Samuel, whom St. Luke regards, no doubt because he stands at the head of the prophetic line as a pre-eminent prophet, superior, like Elijah and Elisha, to the generality of inspired men in the ancient prophetic succession. Like Samuel, he is the agent by whom, though in a very different manner, the Davidic and Messianic king is anointed; thus his action recalls the account of Samuel that is given in Ecclus. 46:13. As one who is possessed by the Spirit from the womb he resembles Jeremiah, and the manner in which his prophetic ministry opens ('the word of God came to John') directly recalls the beginning of Jeremiah's prophesying ('the word of God which came to Jeremiah') . . . . In every respect the forerunner of the Christ is an outstanding prophet, reflecting the characteristics of the greatest inspired figures of the Old Testament. In this setting of the renewed activity in Israel of the long dormant energy of the Spirit, St. Luke places the birth and infancy of Jesus. It is a most appropriate circumstance for the Messiah's birth, for in St. Luke's view the Spirit is the instrument or power through which God's entire plan of salvation is carried out.<sup>100</sup>

The two offices of prophet and eschatological high priest seem to be woven together in Luke 1:14-17. Both the description of his personal origin and of his function present John as an extraordinary figure. He will be "great before the Lord" (Luke 1:15) and "will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). These descriptions suggest his prophetic role. Many of the sons of Israel will turn to the Lord their God as a result of his work (Luke 1:16). His equipment is the "spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17). Verses 16 and 17 suggest

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<sup>100</sup>Lampe, pp. 166-167.

his role as the eschatological high priest. Grundmann provides an excellent summary of John's combined role when he says,

Er ist ein Berauschter, aber nicht von Wein und Rauschtrank, sondern von Gottes Geist. Während der Prophet Gottes Geist auf Zeit zur Erfüllung seines jeweiligen Auftrages empfängt, erhält ihn Johannes als ihn bestimmende Macht für seine ganze Lebenszeit, schon ehe er zum Bewusstsein erwacht. Darin besteht seine Grösse. Er ist also "mehr als ein Prophet", der Grösste unter allen von einer Mutter Geborenen (Luk. 7,26,28). . . . Sein Auftrag besteht darin, dass er viele der Söhne Israels Gott zuwenden wird. Im vollen Wortlaut der heiligen Schriften wird gesagt: der Herr, ihr Gott. Dieser Auftrag ist nicht nur ein prophetischer, sondern ein hochpriestlicher, denn der Hohepriest versöhnt das Volk mit Gott. . . . Der Geist gibt ihm seine Worte, und die Kraft ermöglicht ihm die Durchführung seiner Berufsaufgabe.<sup>101</sup>

John 1:21 indicates that John's priestly descent was no hindrance to his being identified with Elijah by his contemporaries. Scobie therefore says,

We should note that the eschatological prophet was sometimes regarded as being a priest as well as a prophet. This would be a logical consequence of the fact that both Moses and Elijah were priests. It is clear that the contrast between prophet and priest has been overdrawn in modern times, and that in John's day prophecy and priesthood, so far from being opposed, were expected to be linked in the person of the eschatological prophet.<sup>102</sup>

As Luke presents the announcement of John's birth in Luke 1:14-17, the two offices of eschatological high priest and eschatological prophet are expertly blended in the description of the Baptist.

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<sup>101</sup>Grundmann, p. 51.

<sup>102</sup>Scobie, p. 125.

## John and Jesus--Luke 1:67-80

The Benedictus presents the interpreter with a number of problems. Primarily, the interpreter must decide whether the Benedictus describes John or Jesus or perhaps both of them. Bowen thought that the entire Benedictus described John.<sup>103</sup> Verse 69 of the Benedictus states that God has raised up a horn of salvation in the house of David. To explain this reference to David, Bowen attempted to show on the basis of 2 Samuel 8:18 that David was regarded as the progenitor of a priestly line.<sup>104</sup> He also believed that the genealogy in Luke 3:23-28 which Luke assigns to Jesus was originally a genealogy of John.<sup>105</sup>

More recently, A. R. C. Leaney<sup>106</sup> and J. A. T. Robinson<sup>107</sup> have suggested that the entire Benedictus was written in honor of Jesus. Leaney believes that such phrases as *ἔπεσκέψατο, ἐν οἴκῳ Δαυὶδ, ἀνατολὴν ἐξ ὑψους, ἐπιφανεῖ, εἰρήνης*, and particularly the expression *προφήτης ὑψίστου* in verse 76 show "that the Benedictus is really a hymn in welcome to the Messiah rather than a forerunner."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>Clayton R. Bowen, "John the Baptist in the New Testament," Studies in the New Testament, edited by Robert J. Hutcheon (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1936), passim., pp. 61-66.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., pp. 66-67.

<sup>106</sup>A. R. C. Leaney, "The Birth Narratives in St. Luke and St. Matthew," New Testament Studies, VIII (1962), 158-166.

<sup>107</sup>Robinson, pp. 51-52.

<sup>108</sup>Leaney, p. 161.

Robinson believes that the Benedictus was written in honor of Jesus because it reflects the same Christology and vocabulary as Acts 3:22-26.<sup>109</sup> He points out that by the time the Gospel of Luke was written John had already been identified with "the one who goes before the face of the Lord."<sup>110</sup> As a result of this identification, the Benedictus was understood as a description of John and Jesus rather than John alone. Robinson bases his argument on the reference in Luke 1:69 to the "house of his servant David," suggesting that out of its present context the Benedictus would naturally be connected with Jesus rather than John.<sup>111</sup>

The reference to the Davidic family in verse 69 has led to a third line of interpretation regarding the Benedictus. Plummer<sup>112</sup> and Rengstorf<sup>113</sup> suggest a break in the Benedictus between verse 75 and verse 76; verses 68-75 refer to Jesus and verses 76-79 refer to John. Scobie thinks that Luke inserted the Davidic reference in verse 69 into his source with the object of "toning down the high estimate of John."<sup>114</sup> The traditional interpretation which regards the Benedictus as a description of both Jesus and John indicates, says Scobie, that Luke's effort to reduce the

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<sup>109</sup>Robinson, pp. 51-52.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>112</sup>Plummer, pp. 39-44.

<sup>113</sup>Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, Das Evangelium nach Lukas, in Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), III, 33-36.

<sup>114</sup>Scobie, p. 55.

high estimate of John has been highly successful.

In the light of the conflicting interpretations presented above, the present context of the Benedictus is important in its interpretation. A number of scholars have noted that chapters 1 and 2 of Luke's Gospel present a parallel series of episodes about John and Jesus. The episodes, these scholars say, have been interwoven to form a continuous narrative.<sup>115</sup> Kraeling says,

Each series of episodes--the one dealing with John, the other with Jesus--contains an act of annunciation, an account of birth, circumcision and namegiving, an encomium in praise of the newly-born infant, and a concluding statement about the growth of the child.<sup>116</sup>

Morgenthaler has observed that chapter 1 of Luke has a chiasmic structure which is built around Zechariah and Mary. Within this broader chiasmic structure he discerns a second chiasma between the content of the Magnificat of Mary (1:46-55) and the Benedictus (1:68-79).<sup>117</sup> If Morgenthaler is correct, there may be a break in the thought between verses 68-75 and verses 76-79 of the Benedictus. The Davidic reference in verse

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<sup>115</sup>For a parallel arrangement of the materials in table form see John Martin Creed, The Gospel According to St. Luke (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1965), p. 6. See also Carl H. Kraeling, John the Baptist (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 195-196, n. 15, and Rene Laurentin, Structure et Theologie de Luc I-II (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1957), pp. 32-33.

<sup>116</sup>Kraeling, p. 16.

<sup>117</sup>Robert Morgenthaler, Die lukanische Geschichtsschreibung als Zeugnis (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1949), I, 141-142. The first chiasma follows this sequence: The announcement to Zechariah, the announcement to Mary, Mary's hymn, Zachariah's hymn. The content of the two hymns forms a second chiasma as follows: Mary's personal reflections (1:46-49), Mary's general statement (1:50-55), Zachariah's general statement (1:68-75), Zachariah's person reflections (1:76-79).

69 would then suggest a description of Jesus. Verses 76-79 would apply to John.

Grundmann makes several significant suggestions concerning the interpretation of the Benedictus. He says,

Das Benedictus des Zacharias enthält den Lobpreis Gottes, zu dem sein Mund sich wieder öffnet (V. 64: ἐν ῥογῶν = ἐν ῥογητός) und gibt Antwort auf die Frage nach der Zukunft seines Kindes (V. 66a). In dieser doppelten Weise ist der in sich selbständige Hymnus mit dem Vorhergehenden verknüpft.<sup>118</sup>

Grundmann believes that originally the Benedictus celebrated John's birth as the arrival of salvation. Later, John was extolled by certain Baptist groups as the Messiah. Jesus' own praise of John (Luke 7:28) seemed to support such a high estimate of John. Two passages in the Clementine Recognitions (I, 54, 60) and a passage in Ephrem Syrus show that John was held by the groups that produced this literature to be the Messiah rather than Jesus. In addition, the Mandaean literature regarded John as the initiator and fulfiller of salvation. Without altering the Baptist tradition, Luke blocks the lines of thought that see John as the Messiah by designating Jesus as the Messiah from David's seed and as the Lord whom John precedes. The birth narrative of Jesus which follows the Benedictus underscores the unity between Christ Jesus and His forerunner John.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Grundmann, p. 69.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., p. 70. Robinson questions the historical value of the Clementine Recognitions. He suggests that they are second century documents. He also questions whether there was ever a Baptist group who were rivals of Jesus. According to Robinson, the Mandaean literature has no references to John the Baptist in its earliest strata either. Ibid., p. 50.

On the basis of the evidence he cites, Grundmann concludes,

Das alte Lied spricht von zwei messianischen Gestalten, dem messianischen König, dem die nationalpolitische Befreiung zufällt, die das priesterliche Leben des ganzen Volkes vor Gott ermöglicht, und von dem messianischen Propheten und Hohenpriester, der dieses neue Leben des Volkes vor Gott wirkt. Während der messianische König noch namenlos ist, trägt der messianische Prophet und Hohepriester den Namen Johannes und ist in dem neugeborenen Kind da. In seiner Aufbauordnung bekommt durch Lukas der messianische König ebenfalls seinen Namen: Jesus . . . . Das Problem der Komposition der Kindheitsgeschichten durch Lukas mit ihrer Zuordnung von Johannes und Jesus löst sich aus der Erkenntnis der verschiedenen messianischen Erwartungsgestalten.<sup>120</sup>

Grundmann's suggestions about the interpretation of the Benedictus seem to find support in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Both the last date of their composition and the evidence they give of acquaintance with Luke's Gospel in particular<sup>121</sup> suggest caution in using the Testaments as supporting evidence. Most scholars today think the Testaments were originally composed in the first century B. C. but that their present form contains many Christian interpolations.<sup>122</sup> If Kuhn is correct, the Testaments do indicate the expectation of two Messiahs, a high priest from the tribe of Levi and a royal Messiah from

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<sup>120</sup>Grundmann, p. 73.

<sup>121</sup>Plummer, Introduction, pp. lxxviii-lxxix. Plummer provides a table of references from the Testaments and from Luke's Gospel which suggest verbal similarities between the two works. Plummer believes the Testaments were written between 70 and 135 A. D.

<sup>122</sup>Jean Danielou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity, translated from the French and edited by John A. Baker (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), p. 14.

the tribe of Judah.<sup>123</sup> What is important is that all of the messianic passages in the Testaments rank the Messiah of Levi above the royal Messiah of Judah.<sup>124</sup> Not only were two Messiahs envisioned by the group or person who produced the Testaments, but the Messiah of Levi was given definite precedence over the royal Messiah. If the Testaments have been interpolated by Christian hands, the Testaments may indicate that a Jewish Christian saw in John and Jesus the Levitic Messiah and the royal Messiah of David.

The Qumran literature seems to provide evidence that Grundmann's suggested interpretation of the Benedictus is possible. The Qumran community seems to have expected three eschatological figures--the prophet and the two messiahs of Aaron and Israel.<sup>125</sup> The Qumran literature also regards the priestly Messiah as superior to the Messiah of Israel.<sup>126</sup>

In Luke, John seems to be described as both a prophet and also a priest. Jesus is described as a king (Luke 1:33). That John as prophet and priest and Jesus as king could be brought together in the Benedictus

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<sup>123</sup>Karl Georg Kuhn, pp. 57-58.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., p. 58. See especially Test. Judah 21:2-5, Test. Iss. 5:7, Test. Judah 25:1-2, Test. Napht. 5:3-5.

<sup>125</sup>Kuhn, supra, pp. 34-38. See also F. F. Bruce, Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), pp. 80-90, and William H. Brownlee, "Messianic Motifs of Qumran and the New Testament," New Testament Studies, III (1956-1957), pp. 195-210.

<sup>126</sup>Kuhn, pp. 54-64, passim.

seems quite possible. John 1:21 indicates that the popular eschatological expectations included a number of figures. Whatever the original form and intention of the Benedictus was, in its Lucan context it appears to describe Jesus in verses 68-75 and John in verses 76-79.

What, then, is the relationship between John and Jesus in Luke 1? Dibelius was perhaps the first scholar to comment on the fact that Luke 1 does not emphasize John's subordination (Unterlegenheit) to Jesus.<sup>127</sup> Other scholars, such as Scobie<sup>128</sup> and Benoit<sup>129</sup> believe that Luke regarded John as inferior to Jesus. Oliver sees a contrast between the description of John as *προφήτης ὑψίστου* (Luke 1:77) and of Jesus as *υἱὸς ὑψίστου* (Luke 1:31). He thinks that this contrast brings out the superiority of Jesus.<sup>130</sup> Oliver sees further indications of John's inferiority to Jesus in the fact that John is described as "great before the Lord" in Luke 1:15 while Jesus is simply designated as "great"

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<sup>127</sup>Martin Dibelius, "Jungfrauensohn und Krippenkind: Untersuchungen zur Geburtsgeschichte Jesu im Lukas-Evangelium," Botschaft und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze von Martin Dibelius, edited by Günther Bornkamm (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953), I, 8. Dibelius does feel (pp. 2-5) that Luke 1 and 2 taken together as a whole stress the superiority of Jesus.

<sup>128</sup>Scobie, p. 55.

<sup>129</sup>Pierre Benoit, "L'Enfance De Jean-Baptiste Selon Luc I," New Testament Studies, III (1956-1957), 188. I am indebted to H. H. Oliver for this summary of Benoit's position. See "The Lucan Birth Stories and the Purpose of Luke-Acts," New Testament Studies, X (1963-1964), 213.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

without qualification (Luke 1:32).<sup>131</sup> John's leaping in Elizabeth's womb at the presence of Jesus (Luke 1:41) receives a similar interpretation by Oliver.<sup>132</sup>

Many scholars agree that Luke presents John as the forerunner of Jesus.<sup>133</sup> For some scholars "forerunner" seems to be synonymous with "inferior." Vielhauer says, "Der Prophet des Höchsten (v. 76) ist natürlich dem 'Sohn des Höchsten' (i. 32) untergeordnet, er ist Vorläufer des Kyrios, dem seine Mutter Elisabeth gehuldigt hat (i. 41, 44)."<sup>134</sup> If Grundmann is correct, there may not be a conscious effort to stress John's inferiority in Luke 1. Luke 1 may rather reflect an apologetic purpose as Grundmann suggests. The priestly-prophetic Messiah serves as Jesus' forerunner.<sup>135</sup> Luke may well have regarded Jesus' work as more important than John's.<sup>136</sup> As Minear says, however,

Although the prologue preserves a distinction between the task of the two figures, at no point does it make an invidious or apologetic effort to downgrade or to deny the eschatological significance of John . . . . The work of both men is seen as essential to the

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>133</sup>Laurentin, pp. 37-40, as cited in Oliver, p. 212. See also Benoit, pp. 179-188. So also Philipp Vielhauer, "Das Benedictus des Zacharias," Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, XLIX (1952), 264.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

<sup>135</sup>Grundmann, p. 73.

<sup>136</sup>Paul Minear, "Luke's Use of the Birth Stories," Studies in Luke-Acts, edited by Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 123.

fulfillment of the promise, as ground for the joy of redemption. Both are included within the same consolation of Israel.<sup>137</sup>

It seems likely, therefore, that a distinction should be made between John's person and his work. John is a prophet. His birth is celebrated in eschatological language. He may be the Messianic high priest. He fulfills his task in the prophetic "spirit and power of Elijah." He is apparently not Elijah, but he is the forerunner of Jesus. He fulfills the functions of Elijah by preparing the people for God and by bringing peace. John's importance lies in his work as part of the fulfillment of God's plan.

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<sup>137</sup>Ibid., pp. 122-123. The emphasis is mine. By "prologue" Minear means Luke 1 and 2. Ibid., p. 119.

## CHAPTER IV

### JOHN, JESUS AND ELIJAH IN LUKE 3-24

#### Introduction

In a recent article in the Festschrift for Paul Schubert Paul Minear discusses the birth narratives of Luke 1 and 2 and their implications for interpreting the rest of Luke's Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Minear holds that Hans Conzelmann ignores the birth narratives in his presentation of Lucan theology. As a result, Conzelmann is able "to establish his thesis that Luke visualized the story of salvation as emerging in three quite distinct stages. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Minear further shows that Conzelmann's failure to take the birth narratives into account has important implications for his assessment of Luke's theology in general. "Many words and concepts lose their eschatological character," especially the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> Certain temporal phrases such as those in Luke 16:16, 4:21, and 22:36 become "much more influential than the whole of chapters 1 and 2."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Paul S. Minear, "Luke's Use of the Birth Stories," Studies in Luke-Acts, edited by Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 111-130.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

Conzelmann's treatment of Luke 16:16 is especially important. John the Baptist is the last representative of the old epoch; he does not proclaim the Kingdom of God nor is he an "authentic eschatological figure."<sup>5</sup> John "does not represent the arrival of the new age, but serves to bring out the comparison between the old age and the new one which has come with Jesus."<sup>6</sup> Since John is not an eschatological figure, his ministry rather than his person serves as a preparation for Jesus. Thus John "is subordinate to the work of Jesus in the same way as is the whole epoch of the Law."<sup>7</sup> John is not the precursor but the last of the prophets.<sup>8</sup>

In this chapter a survey of significant passages in Luke 3 to 24 will be offered. Conzelmann's interpretation will be treated, followed by an evaluation of his position in the light of the findings of other scholars.

#### John--The Man and His Message (Luke 3:1-22)

Conzelmann believes that Luke has recast 3:1-22 to give it a historical perspective.<sup>9</sup> The account of John's imprisonment in 3:19-20

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 121-122.

<sup>6</sup>Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, translated from the German by Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 185, n. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 26, n. 3.

provides the key to Luke's composition of chapter 3.<sup>10</sup> Luke 3:1 is a synchronism of world history. Concerning Luke 3:1 Conzelmann says,

There is no trace of a "theology of history" as a comprehensive view of world history as a whole. This allotting of Jesus to a definite point in time is in harmony with the fact that the "today" of Luke iv, 18 ff. belongs to the past and is now described as a historical phenomenon. There is no other view of history in iii, 1 than that implicit in the view of redemptive history which prevails throughout Luke.<sup>11</sup>

According to Conzelmann, Luke omits Mark 1:5 and the reference to Judea in Luke 3:3 for two reasons. Luke wishes to connect John with the Jordan area to mark off John's ministry from that of Jesus.<sup>12</sup> Judea is consistently omitted in connection with John because "the Jordan is the region of the Baptist, the region of the old era, whereas the ministry of Jesus lies elsewhere."<sup>13</sup> Conzelmann admits, however, that this interpretation contradicts the prologue.<sup>14</sup>

In Luke 3:3 John comes "Κηρύξων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἠφροσύνην ἁμαρτιῶν ." In 3:18 John's message to the people is

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 20, n. 3. He says, "This is in plain contradiction to the prologue, according to which it is the very place to which John belongs. We can only prove that the "desert" is the desert of Judea if the prologue is original. Besides, right from his first appearance there is no suggestion that John has been in the desert previously. In any case, the desert in this context is not so much a geographical as a symbolical element, for it signifies the prophet. It is important for us to see that instead of the desert preaching, which has the character of an eschatological sign, the emphasis is on the desert as a place for ascetics."

characterized with the verb  $\epsilon\upsilon\eta\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\tau\omicron$  . Conzelmann explains Luke 3:3 in connection with the works of repentance demanded in 3:8 and says,

The connection between  $\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$  and Baptism is no longer thought of as eschatological, but primarily as psychological. It is not Baptism itself that brings about conversion, but Baptism, which does indeed bring forgiveness and the Spirit, can be granted on condition of a previous change of conduct. This is the meaning of the expression  $\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\iota\alpha \epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\tau\epsilon\iota\upsilon$  in Luke's sense (iii,3).<sup>15</sup>

Conzelmann interprets  $\epsilon\upsilon\eta\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\tau\omicron$  in 3:18 as "to preach" and adds,

In Luke, John is thought of as quite unconnected with the message of the Kingdom. The praeparatio is not conceived by Luke in eschatological categories, as in the other Synoptics, but is seen in the simple fact of the preaching of repentance, which is valued therefore not because it is a sign, but because of its content.<sup>16</sup>

John is described by Luke in 3:4-6 with a quotation of Isaiah 40:3-5. With the inclusion of Isaiah 40:4-5 Luke has expanded the quote found in Mark which stops at Isaiah 40:3. Conzelmann offers an interpretation of Luke's use of prophecy when he says,

Scripture points to Christ, the dawn of salvation. This is made clear right at the beginning. In iii, 4 ff. Luke alters and expands the quotation in Mark

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 23, n. 1. For the non-eschatological content of  $\epsilon\upsilon\eta\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\tau\omicron$  Conzelmann appeals to Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, translated from the German by Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 87.

1, 2 f . . . . The completion of the quotation beyond what Mark gives introduces a universal note (cf. Luke ii, 30 f., and especially Acts xviii, 28). There is a correspondence between the beginning and the end of the whole work, Scripture providing the theme. The Eschaton and the Judgment, however, do not seem to come within range of Scriptural prophecy.<sup>17</sup>

What Conzelmann is saying is that since prophecy is applied to John in Luke 3:4-6 and John belongs to the period of Israel, prophecy cannot reach into the Kingdom of God. This point becomes clear in a later quotation. According to Conzelmann, Old Testament prophecy is limited;

it reaches as far as the coming of the Spirit (Luke xxiv, 49) and the dawn of the Eschaton (Acts ii, 16 ff.), but not as far as the Kingdom of God. Only Jesus' prophecy touches on this.<sup>18</sup>

John does not preach the Kingdom of God and Luke 16:16 shows why, says Conzelmann. John can know nothing about the Kingdom because the Kingdom constitutes "the new element in the present epoch of salvation."<sup>19</sup> John is still part of the old epoch.

Luke 3:10-14 contains John's exhortations to the people. This passage is peculiar to Luke. Conzelmann regards this passage as an insertion by Luke to transpose the eschatological call to repentance into "timeless ethical exhortation."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

He goes on to say,

But the threat of judgment is now independent of the time when the judgment will take place, of whether it is near or far. John does not declare that judgment is near, but that the Messiah is near, whose period is still separated from the Parousia by an indeterminate length of time, or rather, by a length of time determined by God and known only by Him and by the Son. The fact that John proclaims the Messiah therefore does not, as Luke sees it, mean that he proclaims that the End is near.<sup>21</sup>

Conzelmann therefore states that John has no symbolic significance as the "arché" of the Gospel. Only the content of his preaching and ministry are significant because they prepare men for the preaching of Jesus.<sup>22</sup>

Luke relates the reactions of the people to John's preaching in 3:15-17. Conzelmann regards verse 15 as an editorial comment added by Luke. Conzelmann notes that the term used for "people," λαός, alternates with ὄχλος, and ἔθνος in Lucan usage.<sup>23</sup> Conzelmann suggests that Luke 3:21 is a parallel to 3:15, for in Luke 3:21 it is said that "all the people" were baptized.<sup>24</sup> Comparing the usage of ἐπαντα τὸν λαόν in 3:21 with Luke 7:29-30, Conzelmann concludes,

The phrase πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος sometimes means all those present. The story of John the Baptist is an exception. According to Luke's account "all the people" were baptized, but the leaders remained apart. This is assumed in Luke

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid. .

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 102, n. 1.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 164, n. 1.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

vii, 29 f. In this way Luke creates two groups in his description of redemptive history. The leaders place themselves outside the saving events, that is, outside of "Israel."<sup>25</sup>

What Conzelmann wants to show is that "all," which usually has an eschatological connotation in Mark, has been "historicized" by Luke.<sup>26</sup>

Conzelmann places a great deal of weight on the omission by Luke of *ὁπρίσω μου* in Luke 3:15. He interprets this omission to mean that "John is great, but not in the Kingdom of God."<sup>27</sup> He later adds, "John is not the precursor, for there is no such thing, but he is the last of the prophets."<sup>28</sup> The preaching of repentance is John's real task, and it is this preaching that persists on into the new epoch.<sup>29</sup>

Conzelmann finds significance in two other references in chapter 3. He considers 3:19-20, the reference to John's imprisonment, as the dividing between the epochs of salvation. This incident divides the section concerning John from the story of Jesus that is about to begin.<sup>30</sup> Luke 3:21-22 follows John's imprisonment with an account of Jesus' baptism. Concerning Jesus' baptism Conzelmann says,

According to iii, 21 f. Jesus is baptized as one of the people, like everyone else. Luke excludes any

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 164, n. 1.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21, n. 5. Compare the eschatological tone of "all" in Mark 1:5.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

suggestion that John plays an important part in the incident. This is in keeping with his whole conception of the significance of John.<sup>31</sup>

Thus John is not part of the new epoch according to Conzelmann.

Conzelmann's analysis of Luke 3:31-22 indicates that he believes that Luke plays down the eschatological significance of John at every point. According to Conzelmann, John assumes a well-defined position within Luke's presentation of Heilsgeschichte. Numerous scholars have shown that both the context and content of Luke 3:1-22 suggest other lines of interpretation than those Conzelmann follows.

Flender has shown that the early chapters of Luke's Gospel contain an "overriding parallelism" between the old and the new world, between heavenly and earthly events.<sup>32</sup> Chapter 3 of Luke sets forth this parallel between John and Jesus. Both "preach" (3:18; 4:18), but Jesus is the Son of God (3:22) on whom the Spirit of the Lord rests (4:18). According to Luke 7:33 and following John is rejected just as Jesus is. By contrast, John as the forerunner is nothing (3:16) compared to the One he precedes. He is a Greater One in the old world, but in the Kingdom of God the least is greater than he (7:28; 16:16).<sup>33</sup> In a later chapter Flender draws the conclusions from his previous statement. He points out that Luke 3:1, which Conzelmann acknowledges as Luke's device

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid. .

<sup>32</sup>Helmut Flender, Heil und Geschichte in der Theologie des Lukas in Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie, edited by E. Wolf (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1965), XLI, 24.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26.

for dating Jesus' own appearance,<sup>34</sup> is not directly connected with the beginning of Jesus' ministry.<sup>35</sup> If Luke wished to establish a clear distinction chronologically between John and Jesus, he could not present the beginning of both their ministries at the same time.<sup>36</sup> If the synchronism in Luke 3:1 applies to both John and Jesus, then they share the same time reference.<sup>37</sup> Flender points out that this chronological difficulty resolves itself if John and Jesus are distinguished from each other qualitatively rather than chronologically.<sup>38</sup> In this way both John and Jesus can work side by side, but they have different missions.<sup>39</sup> Flender can therefore suggest,

Für Lk. dagegen ist der Täufer der Repräsentant der alten Zeit und steht ausserhalb des eschatologischen Heilsgeschehens. Da aber für ihn diese alte Zeit bis in die Gegenwart hinein währt, überschneiden sich alte und neue Zeit in der Gegenwart als qualitative Gegensätze.<sup>40</sup>

Luke 3:1 and 3:23 separate the sphere of old and new, but in the figure of John the Baptist the eschatological Christ event finds its historical

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<sup>34</sup>He refers to Hans Conzelmann, "Jesus Christus," Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, dritte Auflage, edited by Kurt Galling (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1959), III, col. 624.

<sup>35</sup>Flender, p. 111.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 111, n. 157. The German reads, "Wenn der Synchronismus auch auf die "Jesuszeit" bezogen ist, dann sind Johannes und Jesus als gleichzeitig zu denken."

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 111, n. 159.

continuity with Israel and the Church.<sup>41</sup>

Luke 3:2 says that "the Word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness." John is described in terms that suggest an Old Testament prophet (Jeremiah 1:1; Hosea 1:1).<sup>42</sup> Against the background of the first century, John's prophetic status is important.

Scobie says,

Prophecy was dead; its rebirth would be a sign of the new age. It is quite wrong therefore to speak of someone claiming to be "merely a prophet" in contrast to someone claiming to be "a Messianic figure." Anyone who claimed to be a prophet was automatically claiming to be the prophet. Anyone claiming to be a prophet was claiming to be a Messianic figure, not in the sense that he was the Messiah himself, but in the sense that he was preparing for the ushering in of the new age.<sup>43</sup>

In Luke 3:2 Jesus' appearance is as closely connected with John's as it is in the prologue.<sup>44</sup>

Conzelmann consistently emphasizes that John is not the forerunner. The fact that Luke follows Mark and Matthew in substituting  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  for  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\ \nu\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  at Luke 3:4 suggests that the Messiah is meant by  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ .<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>42</sup>Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), p. 85.

<sup>43</sup>Charles H. H. Scobie, John the Baptist (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 123.

<sup>44</sup>Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, Das Evangelium nach Lukas in Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), III, 55.

<sup>45</sup>Plummer, p. 87. In the Benedictus,  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  means Jesus. Luke has already established the interpretation of  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  as Jesus in the prologue.

In this way John is made the forerunner of Jesus. Verse 6 seems conclusive, however. The expression "the salvation of God" is "for Luke apparently equivalent to the Messiah, or the Messiah and his kingdom."<sup>46</sup> In the Song of Symeon "thy salvation" is Jesus (Luke 2:30). Jesus is both a light for revealing to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel (Luke 2:32). Luke 2:30 also refers to Isaiah 40:5. Salvation is closely connected with "the personal presence of the Messiah" in Luke 1:69, 71 and 77.<sup>47</sup> Acts 28:28 alludes to Isaiah 40:5 when the Gospel has reached Rome. All nations have seen the salvation of God.

Conzelmann believes that the baptism of John lacks an eschatological dimension in Luke 3:3. The context seems to suggest another interpretation, however. Immediately after the reference to John's preaching and baptizing Isaiah 40:3-5 is quoted. John's baptism prepares the way for God's Messiah (Luke 3:6). Scobie links John's baptism with his message when he says,

To this demand for repentance, John added the further demand that the repentance of man and the forgiveness of God be symbolized by the rite of baptism. As we have already suggested, John would not think of forgiveness being conferred at the moment of baptism, but at the judgment itself. This very close connection between John's preaching and his baptism is witnessed to by the rather curious phrase used by Mark and Luke--John appeared "proclaiming a baptism in token of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." The baptism could not be understood, and had no significance apart from the preaching of the message.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>A. R. C. Leaney, A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958). p. 106.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Scobie, pp. 112-113. The emphasis is mine.

The fact that John is to prepare the way (Luke 3:4) suggests that his preaching and his baptism serve as the preparation of a new people for God.<sup>49</sup> The unworthy are made worthy according to God's standards (Luke 1:46-55; 2:34-35).<sup>50</sup> In the light of Luke 3:6, John's preaching (Luke 3:18) is also a message of salvation.<sup>51</sup>

Conzelmann regards Luke 3:10-14 as "timeless ethical exhortation" which replaces the eschatological call to repentance. Rengstorf may be right when he connects John's ethical teaching with the similar statement about Zechariah and Elizabeth in Luke 1:6.<sup>52</sup> Since Elijah was expected to restore the purity of teaching in Israel and to decide religious questions, there may be an echo of that expectation in verses 10 to 14. If verses 10 to 14 do contain an echo of Elijah's expected function, Luke's omission of Mark 1:6 might reflect a pattern similar to that in chapter 1. John performs the functions of Elijah but is not equated with him.

Conzelmann regards Luke's omission of *ὀπίσω μου* in Luke 3:16 as further evidence that John is not the precursor. Acts 13:25, part of Paul's sermon at Pisidian Antioch, preserves the expression of John *μετ' ἐμὲ*. Grundmann thinks that Luke dropped the phrase to offset

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<sup>49</sup>Rengstorf, p. 56.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Flender, pp. 26-27, n. 69. Flender notes that Luke 16:16 indicates that John's message is surpassed by the preaching of the Kingdom, however. Compare the use of *εὐαγγέλιον βασιλείας* in Luke 1:19 in an eschatological context.

<sup>52</sup>Rengstorf, p. 56.

the messianic expectations of the Baptist circles.<sup>53</sup> It is difficult to see how John is not regarded as the forerunner. His description of the coming one disagrees with Jesus' view of himself (Luke 4:18-21). John's question to Jesus in Luke 7:19 reflects his puzzlement with Jesus, but his question is meaningless if he is not the forerunner.

Conzelmann considers the account of John's imprisonment the key to chapter 3. Flender's arguments showing the parallelism between John and Jesus in Luke 3 seriously weaken Conzelmann's interpretation. A more probable interpretation is that John resembles Elijah in his upbraiding of the king and queen (1 Kings 21:17-24).<sup>54</sup> Caird suggests that the positioning of Luke 3:19-20 may simply be Luke's way of rounding out one account before going on to another.<sup>55</sup> Conzelmann sees Luke's omission of a specific reference to John at Jesus' baptism as further proof of John's insignificance. Justin's Dialogue with Trypho 8:4 shows that one of the functions of Elijah was to find and anoint the Messiah. It is possible that Luke omits John's name in Luke 3:21 to avoid John's identification with Elijah.

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<sup>53</sup>Walter Grundmann, Das Evangelium nach Lukas, in Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, n.d.), III, 105.

<sup>54</sup>Grundmann, p. 106. See also Rengstorff, p. 58.

<sup>55</sup>George B. Caird, The Gospel of St. Luke, in The Pelican Gospel Commentaries, edited by D. E. Nineham (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 75.

## Jesus and the Spirit (Luke 4:18-21)

Conzelmann believes that there is a decisive shift in Luke's Heilsgeschichte in these verses, notably in verse 21. Focusing his attention on the word "today" in verse 21, Conzelmann can say that "Luke sees salvation has come about in history, as a period of time which . . . is now over and finished."<sup>56</sup> The ἄμερον saying of Luke 4:21 designates Jesus as the center of the story of salvation.<sup>57</sup> Conzelmann can therefore say,

Compared with Mark 1, 15 there is a shift of emphasis in Luke. The declaration of the coming of the Kingdom, that it is near, is omitted, and thus the connection between the nearness of the Kingdom and repentance is severed. . . . What is new in Jesus' teaching, compared with John's, is not the message that the Kingdom is near, but the message of the Kingdom itself. It is true that his preaching presupposes the call to repentance, but in the sense that it is Good News it does not point primarily to the coming but to the nature of the Kingdom, which is set out in iv, 18-21.<sup>58</sup>

Conzelmann refers to Luke 4:18-21 no less than twenty-one times throughout his book. From his statements one senses that Conzelmann recognizes Luke 4:18-21 as a pivotal point in Luke's Gospel.

Paul Minear shows that Conzelmann's understanding of ἄμερον as emphasizing punctiliar, linear, chronological time is difficult to establish on the basis of Luke's use of the word elsewhere in his Gospel.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, p. 36.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>59</sup>Minear, p. 123.

Luke uses *σήμερον* as often in Luke-Acts as the rest of the New Testament combined. In the other passages where the word "today" occurs, the context suggests that the eschatological age is meant (2:11; 3:22; 19:9; 23:43).<sup>60</sup> Minear further points out that the birth narratives "carry the beginning of the message of salvation back to a period before the sermon of Jesus of Nazareth . . . ."<sup>61</sup>

Flender sees a definite connection between Luke 1:35 and Jesus' reception of the Spirit in Luke 3:21-22. The presence of salvation in Luke's writings is twofold. Salvation is present through the presence of Christ and through the gift of the Spirit.<sup>62</sup> Jesus' earthly life is the creation of God (Luke 1:35). Jesus' "adoption" as God's Son through the Spirit is the historical actualization of what Jesus already is from birth (Luke 3:21-22).<sup>63</sup> In Luke 4:1 Jesus returns from the Jordan "filled with the Holy Spirit." Flender points out that other pious people are described in the same way such as John (1:15), Elizabeth (1:41), Zachariah (1:67), Symeon (2:35), Peter (Acts 4:8), Stephen (Acts 7:55), and others.<sup>64</sup> Jesus is one who is close to God in an incomparable way and yet who receives the gift of the Spirit as other men do.<sup>65</sup> If Morgenthaler is correct, Luke 1:5-4:30 serves as the

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.; p. 125.

<sup>62</sup>Flender, p. 122.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

prologue for Luke-Acts.<sup>66</sup> His observation does not contradict the programmatic significance of Luke 4:18-21, but it does suggest a broader context of interpretation for the passage.

Minear, Flender, and Morgenthaler all find a continuity between the birth narratives and chapter 4 of Luke. Their findings do not support a strictly chronological interpretation of *ἐν ἡμέρῳ* in Luke 4:21.

#### John and Jesus (Luke 7:18-30)

This section of Luke's Gospel contains several key references to the relationship between John and Jesus. Luke 7:27 is the only passage where Jesus mentions John in connection with the prophecy of Malachi 3:1. It is surprising, therefore, that Conzelmann alludes to this verse only twice. In a discussion of the typological use of Moses and Elijah in Luke's Gospel Conzelmann says,

In the case of Elijah we can go so far as to note the deliberate elimination of any significance attaching to the figure as such. Moses and Elijah are treated by Luke in the same way as John the Baptist, whose message remains valid but who, as a person, belongs entirely to the past epoch of redemptive history.<sup>67</sup>

In a footnote to this quote Conzelmann points to the "traditional motifs" regarding Moses and Elijah in Luke's Gospel--Luke 9:7-9 and Luke 7:27. Conzelmann notes that the alternation of "my" and "thy" in the quotation

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<sup>66</sup> Robert Morgenthaler, Die lukanische Geschichtsschreibung als Zeugnis (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1949), I, 155.

<sup>67</sup> Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, p. 167.

of Malachi 3:1 gives rise to some sort of identification. Then he says,

Luke's aim, however, does not lead him to accept the tradition, but to reject it. There is no "forerunner" in the special sense either before the coming of Jesus or before the future Parousia. The Parousia comes "suddenly." Although John announces the coming of Jesus, he has no essentially higher status than the other prophets. This also affects the conception of Elijah. Cf. in particular the exclusion from Mark ix, 11 f., of the idea that Elijah must come first. His eschatological function, that of ἔρχεται ἔσχατος, is also excluded by Luke.<sup>68</sup>

It is difficult to see how Conzelmann reached his conclusions about this passage. Luke 7:26 contains Jesus' statement that John is more than a prophet, a fact which Conzelmann directly contradicts. The fact that Luke omits Mark 9:11 and the reference to Elijah coming first certainly does not suggest Conzelmann's interpretation of Luke 7:27. His interpretation of Luke 7:28-30 shows that Conzelmann takes the reaction of the people to John's baptism as the point of the passage.

He says,

Verses 28-30 presumably contain the author's interpretation, although perhaps influenced by the source. In the tradition John was more than a prophet; now he becomes the greatest prophet. This agrees with xvi. 16. He is included within the saving events, for it is God's will that men should be baptized, but not that one should think of John in an eschatological sense. The people fulfill God's will, whilst the leaders keep themselves apart; in this way John gives support to the claim made by Christians that they are Israel.<sup>69</sup>

One further reference to Luke 7:28 is instructive. In a passing reference, Conzelmann says, "Luke vii, 28 can be taken without alteration

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., The emphasis is mine.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26. The emphases are mine.

from Q, as it contains no reference to time.<sup>70</sup> It is clear that Conzelmann's interpretation reflects his conception of time and of redemptive history. As a result, he minimizes John's eschatological significance in Luke 7:27-30. Taking the statement on page 167 together with the one on pages 25-26, Conzelmann comes close to contradicting himself. Essentially John has no higher status than the other prophets, but now he becomes the greatest of prophets.

The context of Luke 7 provides many helpful clues to an interpretation of Jesus' statement about John in Luke 7:27. Luke 7:11-17 is an account of Jesus' raising of the widow's son at Nain. The account parallels Elijah's raising of the widow's son in 1 Kings 17:17-24. Luke 7:15 reproduces the phrase in 1 Kings 17:23, *καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ*.<sup>71</sup> Jesus' miracle is strongly suggestive of Elijah. Luke 7:18 relates that John's disciples told him "about all these things." Luke 7:19-23 contains John's questioning of Jesus through two of his disciples and Jesus' response. Jesus' description of his ministry is reminiscent of the messianic program of Isaiah 61:1. One can well understand John's puzzlement about Jesus in the light of John's description of the "coming one" in Luke 3:15-17. John associates Jesus' message with his own.<sup>72</sup> Jesus, however, does not fit the description of John. The emphatic form of his question underscores the earnestness of his question.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 115. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>71</sup>Grundmann, p. 159.

<sup>72</sup>John Martin Creed, The Gospel According to St. Luke (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1965), p. 105.

<sup>73</sup>Plummer, p. 201. The Greek reads, "Σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος."

Luke 7:24-28 is Jesus' statement about John. John came preaching in the wilderness and the people flocked to hear him (Luke 7:24). They found a prophet like the prophets of old (Luke 7:25-26). In Jesus' words, however, John is more than a prophet (Luke 7:26). John is a figure who shares the task of Moses and Elijah.<sup>74</sup> Two messianic traditions are fused in John, "one which said that Elijah would appear as herald of the day of the Lord, and one which said that God would raise up in Israel a prophet, a second Moses (Deut. 18:15-19) . . ."<sup>75</sup> Yet he who is least in the Kingdom is greater than John (Luke 7:28).

Luke 7:24-28 forms a close parallel with Matthew 11:7-15 with two notable alterations. Luke omits Matthew's identification of John with Elijah and transposes Matthew 13:13 to 16:16 in his own Gospel. Thus John is apparently not to be identified with Elijah. "John is more than a prophet because he is the messenger who is to herald the arrival of the Messiah."<sup>76</sup> John had prepared the way by his preaching of baptism for forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3, Luke 7:29-30). Yet John remains outside the new order (Luke 7:28). He has fulfilled his mission of preparing the way for the bringer of salvation (Luke 1:17).<sup>77</sup> "John's Messianic ideal is rejected; instead of the ruler and judge of his expectation there comes one who is first and foremost God's servant among

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<sup>74</sup>Caird, p. 112. The quote in Luke 7:27 is a collation of Exodus 23:20 (Moses) and Malachi 3:1 (later interpreted as Elijah).

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>76</sup>Creed, p. 107. See also Rengstorf, p. 100.

<sup>77</sup>Grundmann, pp. 165-166.

men."<sup>78</sup> John entertains the possibility that Jesus is the Coming One of popular expectation, that is, Elijah. Jesus "invites John to go further and accept him as the Messiah . . . ."79

The most likely interpretation of Luke 7:18-30, then, is that John is the forerunner of the Messiah Jesus. He is not Elijah, however. John stands on the threshold of God's year of salvation (Luke 4:18-21).<sup>80</sup> Jesus treats him as a colleague in God's service<sup>81</sup> (Luke 7:31-35). In the light of the prologue and the high praise of John in Luke 7:26-28 Luke does not seem to be "rejecting" the tradition. John is a forerunner of Jesus in a very special sense. As Barrett has observed, "The motives which introduced the Spirit into the infancy narratives were rather Messianic and eschatological."<sup>82</sup> In view of the prologue and Luke 7:27 it is difficult to see how John is not to be thought of in an eschatological sense.

#### John and the Kingdom (Luke 16:16-18)

Conzelmann regards Luke 16:16 as one of the significant turning points in the history of salvation in Luke's Gospel.<sup>83</sup> For Conzelmann,

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<sup>78</sup>T. W. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1954), p. 71.

<sup>79</sup>Leaney, p. 144.

<sup>80</sup>Grundmann, p. 165.

<sup>81</sup>Caird, p. 111.

<sup>82</sup>C. K. Barrett, The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition (London: S. P. C. K., 1954), p. 23.

<sup>83</sup>Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, p. 16.

Luke 16:16 shows, as a point of principle, that John does not proclaim the Kingdom of God.<sup>84</sup> Luke 16:16 shows that John is not to be regarded as an authentic eschatological figure.<sup>85</sup> John's arrival does not mean that "the Kingdom is near, but that the time for the preaching of the Kingdom has come."<sup>86</sup> Luke 16:16 shows why John does not proclaim the Kingdom; it is not yet possible for him to know anything about the Kingdom.<sup>87</sup> Since John appears only in the role of a prophet, Luke 16:16 is a direct encounter between Jesus and Israel.<sup>88</sup>

One can see how much weight Conzelmann places on this passage. Minear points out that Conzelmann does not relate Luke 16:16 to its context, raise the question of its source, or consider the many syntactical problems involved.<sup>89</sup> He concludes,

It must be said that rarely has a scholar placed so much weight on so dubious an interpretation of so difficult a logion. For him this logion determines the lines of exegesis and, in fact, the whole schematization of Luke's view of redemptive history.<sup>90</sup>

Minear further points out that Conzelmann's exegesis of Luke 16:16 contradicts the prologue at many points. "In the prologue Luke perceives the decisive shift in God's decision to fulfill his promise and to satisfy

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 25. See also p. 101.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>89</sup>Minear, p. 122.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

the prayers of the patient."<sup>91</sup> The language of the prologue speaks of both John and Jesus in eschatological terms. Minear summarizes by saying that

the mood, resonance, and thrust of the birth narratives are such as to discourage the neat assignment of John and Jesus to separate epochs. The prologue may preserve symbolic geographical distinctions between Judea (Zechariah and Elizabeth) and Galilee (Joseph and Mary) and again in the presentation scene, where Simeon may represent the south and Anna the north (the territory of Asher), but the point of the distinction is surely not to separate the old aeon from the new . . . .<sup>92</sup>

Underlying Conzelmann's interpretation of Luke 16:16 is the assumption that Luke intended the passage to be taken in a chronological sense. Frederick W. Danker has shown that the context, grammar, style, and source of Luke 16:16 point in quite a different direction.<sup>93</sup>

Danker believes that

the saying in Luke 16:16 is best understood as emanating from Jesus' and the early church's critics, who take a dim view of the popularization of the kingdom and its alleged antinomian universalism.<sup>94</sup>

Danker shows that the verb  $\beta\acute{\iota}\alpha\delta\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$  in verse 16 is to be taken in a negative sense and forms the key to the interpretation of the verse.<sup>95</sup>

The context of Luke 15 and 16 suggests a running conflict with the

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>93</sup>Frederick W. Danker, "Luke 16:16--An Opposition Logion," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXVII (1958), 231-243.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 233-236.

Pharisees.<sup>96</sup> Dunker summarizes the meaning of the passage in its immediate context as follows:

"As far as the Pharisees are concerned the reign of law and order has come to an end. This has been going on ever since John came. The Kingdom of God has been publicly proclaimed and popularized, with the result that not only the righteous, but everyone, including the publicans and sinners, forces his way in." This is the Pharisees' basic objection. Jesus picks it up. They--the Pharisees--are the ones who justify themselves. They are the ones who complain that the standards of the kingdom have been hopelessly lowered. But, says, Jesus, that is not at all the case. Though the universalizing of the kingdom message seems to prejudice legal interests, every precept of the law is safeguarded.<sup>97</sup>

Danker's exegesis of Luke 16:16-18 solves many long-standing problems in the interpretation of the passage. If his findings are correct, the contrast in Luke 16:16 is not between Jesus and John at all. On the contrary, Jesus and John are to some extent associated over against the Pharisees. Danker's findings render Conzelmann's interpretation of Luke 16:16 highly suspect on contextual, grammatical, and theological grounds. Rengstorf arrives at a very similar conclusion to Danker's.<sup>98</sup> There is a vast literature available on the interpretation of Luke 16:16-18. The interpretations are many and varied. Danker's article does not indicate the point to be made, however. Conzelmann lays great stress on Luke 16:16 without establishing his interpretation. There is at least one clear passage in Luke's Gospel which mentions the

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., pp. 236-237.

<sup>98</sup>Rengstorf, p. 192.

nearness of the Kingdom without any qualifications at all--Luke 10:11.

To this passage Conzelmann devotes four lines. He says,

Here we meet something which is rare in Luke, an assertion of the nearness of the Kingdom. The saying mentions the signs of its nearness. It should also be noted, that Luke emphasizes the fact of judgment.<sup>99</sup>

Luke 10:11 provides a wholesome caution and a balance. This is a passage that is clearly eschatological.

#### Conzelmann on Luke--An Evaluation

In his doctoral dissertation published in 1965 Helmut Flender addresses himself to the problem of salvation history in the Gospel of Luke. Flender demonstrates that Luke is concerned with the simultaneous existence of history and eschatology.<sup>100</sup> Flender says of Luke's

#### Heilsgeschichte:

Aber auch eine positive Würdigung der "Heilsgeschichte" kann dem Entwurf Lukas nicht gerecht werden. Denn mit der Verwendung dieses Begriffes ist für den heutigen Menschen unweigerlich die Vorstellung einer menschlich (in Parallele zu sonstiger Geschichtserkenntnis) überschaubaren Offenbarungsgeschichte verbunden. Der Unterschied zwischen Aussagen des Glaubens und der Reflexion wird verwischt. Sicher bekennt sich der Glaube dazu, dass Gottes Heil in die Geschichte eingeht. Hier liegt das Recht, von einer Heilsgeschichte zu sprechen. Aber der reflektierende Rückblick in die Vergangenheit darf darum nicht das göttliche Heil und die menschliche Geschichte auf eine Denkebene rücken. Hier muss der qualitative Unterschied zwischen göttlichem und menschlichem Handeln bewahrt bleiben, um nicht einem Geschichtspantheismus zu verfallen.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, p. 107.

<sup>100</sup>Flender, p. 146.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

Flender's observations express a carefully balanced understanding of the caution which must accompany the use of the term "Heilsgeschichte." Flender admits his indebtedness to Conzelmann for many insights into Luke's theology. Then he says,

Aber Conzelmanns Gesamtverständnis der lukanischen Theologie scheint uns verzeichnet zu sein. Er erfasst nicht scharf genug die eigentümlichen begrifflichen Voraussetzungen des Lukas und zwingt ihn dadurch in das Gefüge moderner Denkkategorien.<sup>102</sup>

Conzelmann simply fails to differentiate between the thought categories of the first century and the present day.

Others who agree with Conzelmann's basic presuppositions about Heilsgeschichte are much more cautious in expressing their conclusions.

Kümmel says,

It is . . . hardly correct to say that for Luke the imminent expectation is completely given up, but it has lost its urgent character, and the present is emphasized more strongly as the time of salvation.

If, therefore, it does not prove correct that Luke replaces the imminent expectation with his conception of salvation history . . . there can be no doubt that he depicts the history of Jesus as the decisive period in the course of salvation history and not as the eschatological event.<sup>103</sup>

Kümmel criticizes Conzelmann for describing Luke's conceptions with too much certainty.<sup>104</sup> One of Conzelmann's major contentions is that

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>103</sup>Paul Feine and Johannes Behm, Introduction to the New Testament, completely reedited by Werner Georg Kümmel and translated from the German by A. J. Mattill, Jr. (14th revised edition; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 101.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

John is not the forerunner. Oliver, who accepts Conzelmann's basic analysis of redemptive history in Luke, still finds it necessary to ask: "Is it not possible for John to belong to the Period of Israel and still be the forerunner?"<sup>105</sup> It is Oliver who shows that the birth narratives are not irrelevant to Luke's theological purpose as Conzelmann supposes. Later in his article Oliver says,

While agreeing with Conzelmann that there is a conscious suppression of the relationship between Jesus and John in the early days of the ministry, we will try to show that this suppression was made because the relationship between the two men had already been well established in the birth stories.<sup>106</sup>

Minear notes that this statement of Oliver's is far more damaging to Conzelmann's theory than even Oliver realizes.<sup>107</sup> If Oliver's statement is correct--and our research indicates that it is--Luke can hardly be accused of a conscious effort to play down John's eschatological significance.

Minear calls attention to another problem with Conzelmann's approach when he says,

One finds it most difficult to read the prologue as Luke's readers must have read it, and to conclude that for Luke "the time of salvation . . . is now over and finished."<sup>108</sup>

Minear goes on to point out that Conzelmann's treatment of linear time

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<sup>105</sup>H. H. Oliver, "The Lucan Birth Stories and the Purpose of Luke-Acts," New Testament Studies, X (1963-1964), 203.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 217. The emphasis is Oliver's.

<sup>107</sup>Minear, p. 123.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

is exaggerated and schematized.<sup>109</sup> Minear feels that Conzelmann

has missed the subtle sense in which each prophetic message opens the way to the whole sequence of events which follows, each message a programmatic announcement of God's whole design.<sup>110</sup>

Conzelmann's study is rich in theological learning. There is much to be gained from a study of his book. A full-scale treatment of the birth narratives would have enriched the book even more.

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<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

Luke's Gospel seems to avoid the identification of John the Baptist with Elijah. Luke seems to have drawn on a number of Elijah traditions to describe John's function in relation to Jesus. It is probable that Luke avoids a direct identification of John with Elijah because of the messianic associations attached to the Elijah figure. It is in relation to Jesus that the picture of John's person and mission becomes clear. To assign John to one epoch and Jesus to another as Conzelmann does obscures the person and mission of both.

The arrival of both John and Jesus is hailed in pervasively eschatological language. The early ministries of both men continue the parallel between John and Jesus already established in the infancy narratives. The attempt to define the relationship between John and Jesus in chronological terms as Conzelmann does is an oversimplification. The entire structure of the early chapters of Luke points to the contemporaneity of John and Jesus. Luke does not seem to establish the sharp chronological distinction between John and Jesus that Conzelmann says he does.

John's mission is to be the forerunner of the Messiah. This interpretation of John's role stems from Jesus Himself (Luke 7:27). Both John's person and his mission find their fulfillment and meaning in relationship to Jesus. To emphasize the task of John at the

expense of his person as Conzelmann does is to obscure both his person and his work.

Luke's Gospel maintains a distinction between John and Jesus, however. John is not part of the Kingdom of God. The distinction between John and Jesus seems to be qualitative rather than chronological. Conzelmann is forced to base his chronological separation of John and Jesus on passages which are capable of other interpretations. John and Jesus carry out their early ministries side by side. Their respective missions distinguish them from one another.

Conzelmann's definition of Heilsgeschichte rests upon a dubious chronological scheme. As a result, redemptive history and eschatology become mutually exclusive realities. Luke does not seem to make such a distinction between redemptive history and eschatology. Luke 1 contains both elements within the same chronological period. Luke's conception of redemptive history is closely bound up with eschatological hope in Luke 1. In addition, Luke 1 presents a decisive shift in redemptive history which suggests a new development in God's plan of redemptive history prior to Jesus' baptism. This observation renders Conzelmann's overly-neat scheme of redemptive history suspect. To assign John to a specific chronological frame of reference is difficult and hazardous. His birth fulfills the hopes of the Old Age, but his ministry as Jesus' forerunner is described in terms of the New Age. John is a prophet as the prophets of old were, but he is at the same time more than a prophet. He is the messenger who will go before Jesus. He spans the gap between Old and New as the "clasp between the Testaments."

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