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Your Faith Has Saved You: A Literary Understanding of the Relationship between Physical Healings, Faith, and Salvation in Luke-Acts

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YOUR FAITH HAS SAVED YOU:
A LITERARY UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
PHYSICAL HEALINGS, FAITH, AND SALVATION IN LUKE-ACTS

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Bachelor of Arts with

Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By

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2014

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ABSTRACT

The two-volume first-century work, Luke-Acts, presumably written by Paul's sometime companion, Luke the physician, follows the story of Jesus's birth, earthly ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension in the first volume and then the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome by the apostles in the second. Within this story lies a recurring motif of physical healings from various diseases and even death. These healings are predominantly performed by Jesus; however, in Acts especially, the apostles also perform healings similar to those of Jesus. Often, these physical healings are accompanied by faith, forgiveness of sins, and salvation. This thesis has two goals: 1) to model a literary reading of the germane passages in Luke-Acts, and 2) to argue that Luke uses these physical healings in order to allude to the salvation in forgiveness of sins and membership in God's people received through Jesus by repentance and faith after his resurrection.

Keywords: Luke, Acts, Jesus, Healing, Faith, Salvation.

For Isaac, Sophia, Eliana, Asa, Liora, Lucy,
and those little ones whose names we have yet to hear.
That God would chase you all down
like he did your uncle.

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I am thankful for my brothers and sisters in Christ at Rich Pond Baptist Church. We are covenanted to one another through the blood of Jesus and the power of the Spirit, and together, in step with Jude, we strive to keep ourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life (Jude 21). We are not always beautiful on the surface, but by God's grace, we are a tiny painting of the bride of Christ in God's kingdom.

The elders at Rich Pond Baptist Church have led us faithfully. They are a gift from God to our church. God has set them over us, and they wield their authority like our Savior, dying daily for their flock. Under their leadership, I have learned what it means to study scripture in its native context, the local church.

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Finally, I give all praise and glory to the triune God, who pulled me back from the ledge of judgment, toward which I ran with all my strength, and made me, through the blood of Jesus on the cross and the power of his Spirit, his very own, a member of his people. With Jude, I sing, “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (Jude 24-25).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Luke-Acts, a two-volume work¹ presumably written by Paul's companion Luke² sometime between the late sixties and mid eighties A. D.,³ follows the story of Jesus's birth, earthly ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension in the first volume and then the

¹ For a defense of the unity of Luke-Acts as a two-volume work, see D. L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts* (Biblical Theology of the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 55-61; and J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 6-10.

² While there is no clear indication of authorship within Luke-Acts, the author apparently claims to have been a sometime companion of Paul (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16). Since the traditional view is that Luke the physician and companion of Paul wrote Luke-Acts, this paper will refer to the author and narrator of Luke-Acts as Luke. This paper operates under the same assumption made by Green, *Luke*, 20: "Our ability or inability to identify the author of the Third Gospel is unimportant to its interpretation."

³ While L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Sacra Pagina; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 2-3; and J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (2 vols.; The Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1981), 53-56, argue for a composition between eighty and eighty-five A. D., after the composition of Mark and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem but before the canonization of Paul's letters, Bock, *Theology*, 38-41, argues for a composition in the late sixties A. D., among other reasons, discounting Jesus's prediction of the fall of Jerusalem as "one that Jesus was capable of making solely on the basis of his knowledge of how God acts to judge covenant unfaithfulness." Nevertheless, this paper will once again agree with Green, whose lack of even a section discussing the date of composition for Luke-Acts shows that an exact date is unnecessary for a literary reading of the Gospel. Suffice it to say that Luke was written first in this window between the late sixties and mid-eighties A. D. with Acts falling within the same window, shortly after Luke.

spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome by the apostles in the second. Luke writes his book to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1), whose Greek name suggests, at the least, that he is a Gentile. Within this story lies a recurring motif of physical healings⁴ from various diseases and even death. These healings are predominantly performed by Jesus; however, in Acts especially, the apostles also perform healings similar to those of Jesus. This thesis has two goals: 1) to model a literary reading⁵ of the germane passages in Luke-Acts, and 2) to argue that Luke uses these physical healings in order to allude to the salvation in forgiveness of sins and membership in God's people received through Jesus by repentance and faith after his resurrection. The second chapter provides a broad overview of the purpose of physical healings in Luke-Acts, which is to portray the

⁴ For a defense of miracles in general, see C. S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011). Furthermore, while exorcisms in Luke-Acts sometimes include some aspect of physical healing (Luke 8:36), this thesis will address only those healings not occasioned by demon possession in order to isolate physical healings caused from natural means alone as opposed to those caused by supernatural means and in order to narrow the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the line between natural and supernatural is gray, if existent, in Luke-Acts, and the reader should understand this narrowing mainly as a tool for this thesis rather than a statement on Luke-Acts as a whole.

⁵ D. Rhoads, J. Dewey, and D. Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (3rd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 5-6, give four guidelines for reading, in their case Mark, as story: 1) read it as story not history, 2) read it independently from the other Gospels, 3) avoid reading modern cultural assumptions back into the first-century story, and 4) avoid reading modern theological assumptions about Jesus back into the story. These four guidelines are important to reading Luke-Acts, as well as Mark, as a narrative piece of literature. It is, indeed, stand alone, and one must consider Luke-Acts on its own to understand the story as Luke intends it. They also give five "key features for narrative analysis," which this thesis will touch on: narrator, setting, plot, character, and rhetoric. For a primer on reading the Gospels in general as narrative, see J. T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospel Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012). R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (2nd ed.; New York: Basic Books, 2011), is one of the first primers on reading scripture as literature, and although it deals with the Old Testament, many of its principles equally apply to the Gospels and Acts.

breaking of the kingdom of God into the world through Jesus, to show God's inclusion of those excluded by society, and to allude to the salvation in forgiveness of sins and membership in God's people received through Jesus by repentance and faith after his resurrection. Chapters three through five will focus on the third aspect of this purpose, which coincides with the second goal of this thesis, by walking closely through nine passages in Luke-Acts.

CHAPTER 2

THE PURPOSE OF PHYSICAL HEALINGS IN LUKE-ACTS

Luke uses physical healings within his narrative to portray the breaking of the kingdom of God into the world through Jesus, to show God's restoration of the unclean to the community and the inclusion of Gentiles normally excluded by society, and to allude to the salvation in forgiveness of sins and membership in God's people received through Jesus by repentance and faith after his resurrection.

The kingdom of God [ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ] is a dominant theme in Luke-Acts, occurring thirty-eight times. The first instance is from the lips of Jesus (Luke 4:43), but the idea begins even earlier when the angel Gabriel prophesies to Mary that her son Jesus will be “great and will be called son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end” (1:32-33).⁶ In a similar manner, John the Baptist's quotation of Isaiah 40:3-5 hints at a new era in which “every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be made low, and the crooked will be straightened, and the rough ways will become level, and all flesh will see the salvation of God” (Luke 3:5-6). This restoration that John speaks of is closely connected to the “baptism of repentance for the

⁶ All New Testament translations, unless otherwise noted, are the author's own, from E. Nestle, E. Nestle, B. Aland, K. Aland, and H. Strutwolf (eds.), *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

forgiveness of sins” of which he is preaching (3:3). Repentance [μετάνοια] is an idea deeply rooted in the Old Testament passages where prophets pronounce judgment on the Israelites for not “turning” from their sin (Jer. 15:7; Isaiah 59:20; Ezek. 3:19, 13:22) or when prophets call the people to “return” to God after acknowledging their sin (Hos. 6:1; Isaiah 10:21; Jer. 3:7; Amos 4:6).⁷ In 1 Kings 8:35-36, Solomon prays that God would “forgive the sin of your [his] people Israel” when they “turn from their sin.” Here, John the Baptist preaches the same idea: that God will forgive the sins of those who repent of their sins and turn back to God.

This restoration that John preaches also harkens back to his father Zechariah’s prophecy, in which God will raise “up a horn of salvation... in the house of David” (Luke 1:69). This salvation includes both “salvation from our [Israel’s] enemies” (1:71) and “forgiveness of their sins” (1:77). This “forgiveness of sins,” when understood as N. T. Wright describes as “return from exile,”⁸ makes perfect sense in conjunction with “salvation from our [Israel’s] enemies.” Wright goes on to explain that this return from exile is what the Israelites were waiting for by quoting Lam. 4:22, which reads, “The punishment of your iniquity, O daughter of Zion, is accomplished; he will keep you in exile no longer.”⁹ This idea is even clearer in Ezek 34:20-24, as Ezekiel prophesies while the people of Israel are exiled in Babylon:

⁷ J. Lunde, “Repentance,” in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 669.

⁸ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 268.

⁹ All Old Testament quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001).

Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: . . . I will rescue [or save] my flock; they shall no longer be prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.

Then in 37:23, Yahweh speaks through Ezekiel once again, “They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” These ideas—salvation from sins (37:23) and salvation from enemies (34:22)—work in tandem for Ezekiel. Furthermore, he prophesies “one shepherd, my servant David,” who “shall feed them and be their shepherd . . . prince among them” (34:23-24). God rescues them from the Babylonian exile but into another—the Persian exile. Thus, Jesus, of whom the angel Gabriel said, “The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David” (Luke 1:32), proclaims the long awaited kingdom of God, which comes with the forgiveness of Israel’s sins, which put them into exile in the first place, salvation from their enemies, and the subsequent return from exile.

Shortly after Jesus’s baptism at the hands of John the Baptist, the devil tempts him in the desert (4:1-13). In one of his temptations, the devil takes Jesus up and shows him “all the kingdoms of the world” and says to him, “I will give all this authority and their glory to you, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I want. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours” (4:5-7). Jesus, however, understands his vocation as proclaiming “the good news of the kingdom of God” (4:43), not the kingdom of the devil. Therefore, after Jesus begins to heal (Luke 4: 38-39), he says, “I must

proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities as well, for I was sent for this” (4:43). Physical healings are an integral part of this purpose.

Shortly after raising a widow’s son from the dead in a town called Nain (7:11-17), John the Baptist sends his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the one to come, or should we expect another?” (7:19). This question is reminiscent of John’s words earlier in Luke when the people wonder if “he might be the Christ” (Luke 3:15). The Christ [ὁ χριστός] simply means “anointed one.” Its Jewish overtones, however, are what make it such an important word. The Hebrew equivalent, Messiah, is used in the Old Testament to designate someone in a special office, like a king or priest (Ex. 28:41; 1 Sam. 9:15-16; 10:1; 16:3, 12-13; 1 Chron. 29:22). Later, however, after the idea of the renewal of the Davidic throne became a part of prophecy (Zech. 9:9-10; 12:7-13:1), this term, Christ, became, as L. W. Hurtado describes, “a designation for a future agent (“messiah”) to be sent by God, usually to restore Israel’s independence and righteousness.”¹⁰ This does not, however, mean that every Jew had this expectation. Indeed, some texts from the Jewish Qumran community suggest that they believed there to be two coming Messiahs.¹¹ From John the Baptist’s answer, nevertheless, this messianic expectation seems clear.

John the Baptist answers them, “I baptize you with water, but one mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to bring the grain into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire” (Luke

¹⁰ L. W. Hurtado, “Christ,” in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 106-107.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 107.

3:16-17). With this description by John, the reader¹² receives another layer of Jesus's purpose. Judgment is an important aspect of Jesus's ministry. Indeed, John's description is reminiscent of Ezekiel's prophecy, "I will rescue [or save] my flock; they shall no longer be prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep" (Ezek. 34:22). Jesus has come to "bring the grain into his barn," which is also "his flock," Israel, of Ezekiel. "The chaff," however, "he will burn with unquenchable fire." The chaff is those who are not a part of his flock—those who have preyed on his sheep, those whom he has come to judge (Ezek. 34:22). John, therefore, has this expectation of Jesus as the one who is coming after him, yet he still sends his disciples to make sure that Jesus is this one to come. Jesus's answer gives the reader deeper insight into his mission.

Jesus answers John's disciples, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the crippled walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me" (Luke 7:22-23). Jesus alludes to various passages in Isaiah with his response, which only indirectly answers John's question. Isaiah speaks of the dead living in 26:19; the deaf hearing and the blind seeing in 29:18, 35:5, and 43:18; the lame man leaping in 35:6; and the poor having good news preached to them in 61:1, which Jesus has already quoted in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:18-19). While Isaiah does not speak of lepers being cleansed, Jesus could be referring to the cleansing of Naaman by Elishah in 2 Kings 5:1-14.¹³ Furthermore, Jesus has performed almost all of these signs in

¹² "The reader" refers to the ideal reader, who, in this case, is Theophilus, Luke's intended first-century Greek audience. The ideal reader understands Luke-Acts as Luke himself intended the work to be understood.

Luke's story. He heals a blind beggar in 18:35-43, a paralyzed man in 5:17-26, lepers in both 5:12-16 and 17:11-19, and while Luke does not record a specific healing of a deaf person, it is certainly possible that deaf people receive their hearing when Jesus heals multiple unnamed people in 4:38-29 and 6:17-19. He raises the widow's son in 7:11-17 and Jairus's daughter in 8:49-56. While Jesus's response is certainly indirect, as Nolland writes, "The point is . . . that in Jesus's deeds the time of salvation heralded by Isaiah has dawned."¹⁴ Isaiah writes,

Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isaiah 35:4-6, 10)

This salvation is, once again, from their sin, which results in God's punishment through their enemies. Thus, Luke wants his reader, along with John, to understand that Jesus, indeed, is the one to come, who proclaims the return from exile back to the kingdom of God, which, according to Isaiah, is accompanying by these signs.

As the reader progresses through Luke, there are two passages in close proximity that further connect Jesus's proclaiming of the kingdom of God with his healing ministry. Shortly after Jesus raises Jairus's daughter from the dead (Luke 8:49-56), he gives the twelve disciples "power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases" and then sends "them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal" (9:1-2). The reader then finds out that the disciples follow his command, going through the villages, "proclaiming good news and healing everywhere" (9:6). Then shortly thereafter, Luke portrays Jesus as

¹³ J. Nolland, *Luke* (3 vols.; Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 330.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 330.

he speaks “to them [the crowds in Bethsaida] about the kingdom of God” and cures “those who needed healing” (9:11). This juxtaposition of the disciples and Jesus shows that the disciples’ ministry is to carry on Jesus’s work in proclaiming the kingdom of God.¹⁵ Indeed, Jesus’s, and then the disciples’, performing physical healings is one of the key signs of God’s kingdom breaking into the world. The disciples continue on with this healing ministry with this purpose even after Jesus’s death and resurrection, healing the crippled (Acts 3:1-10; 14:8-11), the sick (5:12-16), the paralyzed (9:32-35), and even raising the dead (9:36-43; 20:7-12).

A closely related reason why Luke recounts physical healings is to show God’s restoration of the unclean back to the community and the inclusion of Gentiles normally excluded by society. After his temptation, Jesus begins his ministry by speaking at the synagogue in Nazareth. He stands up and reads from Isaiah 61:1-2: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, to preach liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed into liberty, to preach the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19). Once again, this passage in Isaiah refers to the proclamation of God working to bring restoration as the Israelites come out of exile and back under God’s rule. Jesus, thus, uses this passage to describe his own ministry. Like God brings Israel out of exile back under his rule, Jesus brings those excluded back into the community. Luke uses physical healings as examples of Jesus and the disciples after him fulfilling this mission to the outcast. The outsiders whom Jesus and then his disciples bring into community through physical healings

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 426, 440-441.

include lepers (Luke 5:12-16, 17:11-19), a woman with a flow of blood (Luke 8:43-48), and even Gentiles (Luke 7:1-10, 17:11-19; Acts 14:8-10, 20:7-12).

Leprosy [λέπρα] is a blanket term that covers many different skin diseases.¹⁶

While there are skin conditions, like an eruption (Lev. 13:1-8) or a boil (13:18-23) or a burn (13:24-28), that do not make one unclean for an extended period of time, the Mosaic law is clear about the separation that is to occur when someone has leprosy: “The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp” (13:45-46). This uncleanness mentioned refers to the ritual impurity that occurs, to name a few, when someone eats unclean meat (11); has a skin disease (13), which may or may not last for an extended period of time; has a bodily discharge (15), which again may or may not last for an extended period of time; has just given birth (12); or has had any of a number of types of unclean sexual relations (18:1-23).

Uncleanness was a common occurrence, which is clear from the fact that there are very clear provisions for reentry into the community once someone becomes clean again. For example, a woman who is in her “menstrual impurity” is unclean for seven days, but once her “menstrual impurity” goes away, she is clean once again (15:19-24). This uncleanness, however, is not simply to protect the Israelites’ health. Lev. 15:31 reads, “Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst.” Israel being unclean

¹⁶ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 573; P. Ellingworth, “Leprosy,” in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 465, notes that leprosy could “probably cover psoriasis, lupus, ringworm and favus.”

results in the defiling of God's tabernacle, which represents his very presence in their midst. Later after giving several laws against practices held by other nations (18:1-23), God says to Israel,

Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God. (18:24-25, 30)

Uncleanness results in expulsion from the land and punishment from God; therefore, uncleanness, though some types may be common occurrences and relatively easily made clean, is taken quite seriously by the Jews.¹⁷

The isolation that one with leprosy experiences in the Jewish community is thus extreme. W. Cotter writes in reference to the leper in Mark 1:40-45, "The fear and disgust on the faces of people and the expectation for distance would have resulted in certain loneliness, the end of intimate relationships, and for the Jew, the separation from one's community for prayer and simple social intercourse."¹⁸ The leper had to live in complete seclusion, living alone or with other lepers outside the camp and signaling his unclean presence to those who might cross his path.

Jesus, however, by healing lepers, takes away their uncleanness that excludes them from society. After calling his first disciples, Jesus cleanses a leper who says to him, "Lord, if you want to, you are able to cleanse me" (Luke 5:12). Afterward, Jesus

¹⁷ S. Westerholm, "Clean and Unclean" in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 125.

¹⁸ W. Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories: Portrait through Encounter* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 27.

tells him, “Go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing as Moses commanded, for proof to them” (5:14). This process is to provide for the man’s lawful pronouncement as clean and subsequent reentry into the community, which required a series of sacrifices and cleansing rituals performed by the priest (Lev. 14:1-32). Later on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus cleanses ten lepers between Samaria and Galilee and tells them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests” (17:11-14). The lepers in both stories are excluded by society because of their disease, yet Jesus heals them and thus reintegrates them into the community.

On his way to heal Jairus’s daughter, “a woman with a flow of blood” touches Jesus’s garment and is immediately healed (Luke 8:43-44). This woman is unclean by the standard in Mosaic law:

If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness. As in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean. Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, shall be to her as the bed of her impurity. And everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her menstrual impurity. And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. (Lev. 15:25-27)

While this law is not as isolating as the ones for lepers, requiring them to live alone outside the camp and shout “Unclean, unclean” when anyone comes near (13:45-46), the fact that anyone who touches the woman’s bed or a chair on which she sits becomes unclean for the rest of that day certainly discourages social interaction, like being a part of a large crowd and touching a well-known teacher.¹⁹ Indeed, if she had simply been in

¹⁹ Green, *Luke*, 346, writes, “Although her physical condition was not contagious, her ritual condition was, with the consequence that she had lived in isolation from her community these twelve years.” Nolland, *Luke*, 419, writes, “She would be ritually unclean from her condition (Lev 15:19-27; Ezek 36:17) and should not have been

her menstrual impurity, she would have been able to be clean again after seven days (15:19), but since it has prolonged past the time of her menstrual impurity, she is unclean until her flow of blood stops. She has also spent all of her money for the past twelve years on doctors who have been unable to cure her (Luke 8:43). Luke thus makes it a point to show the reader that this woman is in a terrible situation: poor, sick, unclean, and unfit to function normally in society. Jesus, nevertheless, though he does not initiate contact with the woman, is able to heal her of her flow of blood and, in doing so, gives her the ability, after the required seven days and sacrifice (Lev. 15:28-30), to be ritually clean and reenter the community of God's people.

Gentiles are those who are not members of Israel; therefore, simply by birth, they are excluded from God's people. The Mosaic law, however, does make provision for Gentiles to live in the camps with the Jewish people and even to receive some of the same benefits as long as they abide by many of the same laws (e. g., Ex. 12:19; Lev. 17:10-15; 24:16; Deut. 31:12; 29:11).²⁰ Lev. 19: 33-34 reads, "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who

anonymously in the crowd." Green and Nolland may be referring to Num. 5:1-4, where Yahweh commands Israel through Moses to "put out of the camp everyone who is leprous or has a discharge and everyone who is unclean through contact with the dead." There is certainly tension between this command and the laws concerning a woman with a flow of blood in Lev. 15:25-30. It is odd that Lev. would be concerned with the cleanness of a bed or chair on which she sits (15:26) or even a person who touches said bed or chair (15:27) if the woman is to be outside the camp. Though this tension exists, whether or not the woman was allowed inside the camp or was to be put outside the camp does not change the fact that she experienced some level of exclusion because of her uncleanness. Whatever the extent of her exclusion, she still would not have been comfortable and welcomed in a large crowd of people.

²⁰ R. J. D. Knauth, "Alien, Foreign Resident," in T. D. Alexander and D. W. Baker, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 30.

sojourns with you as the native among you and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.” While in the first century there was even the possibility for a Gentile to be a proselyte as long as one forsook paganism and became Jewish, there were still quite clear boundary markers between Jews and Gentiles.²¹ For example, even proselyte Gentiles were not allowed into the inner court of the Temple.²² There is, however, some precedent for belief in an eventual mass conversion of Gentiles to worship God (e.g., Isaiah 19:23; Zech. 8:21; Jer. 3:17).²³ On the other hand, in the first century when the Jews were living in the Roman Empire, the Gentiles in the camp were not exactly forced to follow Jewish law as they would have when Israel was a free nation. Therefore, in the New Testament, one sees that Gentiles and Jews were not to mix freely, as Peter says to the Gentile Cornelius, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation” (Acts 10:28).²⁴ Nevertheless, Jesus’s and then the apostles’ inclusion of Gentiles in their healing ministry is certainly an example of including those who are normally excluded.

Upon entering Capernaum, Jesus, by request of the Jewish elders, is asked to heal the servant of a centurion (Luke 7:1-5). Luke makes it clear to the reader that this centurion is a Gentile by having the Jewish elders describe him, “He loves our nation,

²¹ S. McKnight, “Gentiles” in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 259.

²² M. O. Wise, “Temple” in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 812. Paul is accused of bringing Greeks into the inner court of the Temple (Acts 21:28-29).

²³ McKnight, “Gentiles,” 259.

²⁴ This unlawfulness is probably due to the fact that entering a Gentile’s house may have resulted in eating unclean food; therefore, Jews would have, in general, kept away from Gentiles’ houses.

and he built our synagogue” (7:5). This man is a Gentile yet has faith that Jesus will help even him, despite the clear social separation between Jews and Gentiles. He also tells Jesus that he can heal his servant without even going to him. Upon hearing this, Jesus says, “Not even in Israel have I found such great faith” (7:9). Then Jesus heals his servant. Nolland writes, “In Israel Jesus has found faith; but this is something extraordinary, and it comes from a Gentile!”²⁵ Later on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus cleanses ten lepers between Samaria and Galilee, who have already been mentioned as examples of those excluded because of uncleanness. Because of the location—between Samaria and Galilee—the ethnicities of these men are ambiguous, and Luke informs the reader, after they are healed and the one returns, that the one who returns is, indeed, a Samaritan. Samaritans were a religious group that lived between Galilee and Judea and had questionable Jewish lineage. They were considered by the Jews to be foreigners, and the fundamental dispute between Samaritans and Israelites was the proper place of worship: Jerusalem for Israel but Mount Gerizim for Samaria.²⁶ Jesus, however, heals this one man who returns and his friends, some of whom may have also been Samaritans, and then commends the one man who returns for his faith (17:19).

After Jesus’s death, resurrection, and ascension, the inclusion of Gentiles in God’s people becomes even more focused beginning with Cornelius, the centurion, who receives the Holy Spirit and is baptized into God’s people (Acts 10:44-48). Paul then begins travelling and preaching to Gentiles, and as he goes, he physically heals two

²⁵ Nolland, *Luke*, 318.

²⁶ D. L. Bock, *Luke* (2 vols.; The Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 1404; Green, *Luke*, 621; H. G. M. Williamson, “Samaritans” in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 724-728.

Gentiles on separate occasions. While in Lystra, he and Barnabus heal a man crippled from birth (14:8-10). Then while in Troas, a young man named Eutychus falls asleep and plummets to his death out of a third story window while Paul preaches (20:7-9). Paul goes down and raises him from the dead (20:10). Thus, within the larger context of God's people expanding to the Gentiles, which was prophesied in the Old Testament, made clear through Jesus, and then perpetuated through the apostles, the reader finds physical healings beginning with Israel but coming to include Gentiles.

Luke also describes physical healings in order to allude to salvation in forgiveness of sins and membership in God's people that comes through Jesus by repentance and faith after his resurrection. B. Witherington, in discussing passages where Luke uses the word *save* [σώζω], writes, "Perhaps one may conclude that Luke sees healing as a viable aspect but not always a necessary consequence of the 'salvation' Jesus brings."²⁷ This is certainly one aspect of how Luke views salvation in relationship to physical healings: that physical healings represent one reality that salvation through Jesus fixes. There is, however, a deeper literary purpose in Luke's juxtaposition of physical healings with the traditional language of salvation—words like *faith* [πίστις], *forgive* [ἀφίημι], and *save* [σώζω]—and that is to allude to salvation and a return to membership in God's people.

Right after Jesus calls the first disciples there is an interesting series of stories in which Luke uses physical healings to point toward the forgiveness of sins. First, a leper asks Jesus to heal him, and then Jesus does (Luke 5:12-16). Second, a group of men lower their paralyzed friend through a ceiling so that Jesus can heal him, but instead of

²⁷ B. Witherington, "Salvation and Health in Christian Antiquity: The Soteriology of Luke-Acts in Its First Century Setting," in I. H. Marshall and D. Peterson (eds.), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 151.

healing him at first, Jesus forgives him of his sins (5:17-20). While Jesus does end up healing the man, the reader should be surprised by his pronouncing the man's sins forgiven rather than healing him immediately. Third, Jesus eats with sinners and tax collectors at Levi's house, and when the Pharisees and their scribes ask him why he is doing this, he answers them, "The healthy do not need a doctor, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (5:29-32). Luke shows the reader a physical healing (5:12-16), then shows him another physical healing along with the forgiveness of sins (5:17-26), and then pulls the two together even more tightly by paralleling Jesus as one who heals physically and also calls sinners to repentance. In other words, he calls collective Israel, made up of individual sinners, to repent of their sins. The forgiveness of sins that accompanies this repentance (3:3; 24:47), again, is tied up in the idea of Israel returning from exile and once again being under God's rule. In this series of three stories, Luke makes it clear to his reader that physical healings serve this purpose of alluding to this salvation from exile and return to the membership in the kingdom of God, which Luke will present more clearly in Acts.

In Luke, there is also a recurring phrase on the lips of Jesus that serves this same purpose: "Your faith has saved you [ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε]." Jesus commends four characters' faith with this phrase. First, he says it to "a woman of the city," who may be a prostitute²⁸ and whose sins he forgives at a dinner party after she washes his feet with ointment, tears, and hair (Luke 7:36-50). Second, he says it to the previously mentioned woman with a flow of blood whom he heals (8:43-48). Directly after he heals that woman, he says something similar to Jairus, whose daughter has just died: "Only believe,

²⁸ Bock, *Luke*, 737; Green, *Luke*, 309; Nolland, *Luke*, 353; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 689.

and she will be saved” (8:50). Third, he says it to the lone leper who returns after being healed along with the other nine lepers (17:11-19). Fourth, he says it to the blind beggar whom Jesus gives his sight. Luke also uses a similar phrase in Acts when Paul sees that a crippled man has “faith to be saved,” and then heals him (Acts 14:8-10).

The first observation of Luke’s use of this phrase is that he first portrays Jesus saying it to someone whom he has not physically healed. The subsequent three uses, or five including the similar phrases, are all in conjunction with a physical healing, rather than a forgiveness of sins like the first. Thus, when the reader hears this phrase on the lips of Jesus and through the mouth of the narrator, it is through the lens of Luke’s first use, which is to commend a woman’s faith after she is forgiven of her sins. The second observation is that Luke’s use of the word *save* [σωζω] must, at some level, be varied throughout these different contexts.

The phrase, however, begins with the word *faith* [πίστις]. This word carries Jewish overtones important to note. Beginning with Abraham, *faith* is a very important concept in speaking of Israel’s relation to Yahweh. The most explicit story where Abraham has faith is after Yahweh promises to make his offspring as numerous as the stars: “He believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). Again, when Yahweh sends Moses and Aaron to speak to the elders of Israel, to tell them that he will deliver them, “The people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped” (Ex. 4:31).²⁹ The people trusted what Moses said and the signs that he showed them, and they trusted that he was right and that Yahweh would fulfill his

²⁹ D. C. T. Sheriffs, “Faith,” in T. D. Alexander and D. W. Baker, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 281-282.

promises. While the text does not literally say that David has faith, when he responds to Yahweh's promise to continue his line (2 Sam. 7:1-17), David's response expresses faith: "And now, O Lord GOD, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant For you, O Lord GOD, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever" (7:28-29).³⁰ These are only a few examples, but it is clear that faith—trusting that Yahweh would do what he promises—is deeply imbedded in the Old Testament. Now, Luke uses this term to show how those needing physical healing relate to Jesus—trusting that he is able to heal them.

The word in the second part of the phrase, *save* [σῶζω], is rich with the idea of deliverance from enemies or other types of peril.³¹ Yahweh is the God who saves Israel from all of its problems (1 Sam. 10:19).³² One of the most pronounced ways Yahweh promises to save his people is from exile (Isaiah 59:1; 45:17; 49:8; Ezek. 34:22; 37:23; Zech. 8:13).³³ The Greco-Roman context is similar. Isis and Meter were both gods known to have saved people from sickness and captivity.³⁴ Even Caesar, "by his patronage

³⁰ P. Enns, "Faith," in B. T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 299-300.

³¹ I. H. Marshall, "Salvation," in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 721.

³² E. A. Seibert, "Salvation and Deliverance," in B. T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 852.

³³ W. Foerster, "σῶζω, σωτηρία, σωτήρ, σωτήριος," in G. Friedrich (ed.) and F. W. Bromiley (trans.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 977-78.

distributing grain, money, land, work, and because of his military exploits is seen as a saviour.”³⁵ There is also, as Witherington describes, “its mundane sense of health, well-being, safety.”³⁶ Luke begins by using the word mostly along these lines.

In Luke 1:47, Mary refers to God as her “savior [σωτήρ],” and in Luke 2:11, the angels, in speaking to the shepherds of Jesus’s birth, refer to him as “a savior [σωτήρ].” In between these two occurrences, Zechariah uses the word three times in his prophecy, which speaks of salvation as deliverance from enemies (1:69-75) and forgiveness of sins (1:76-79). Then in Luke 3:30, when Simeon sees baby Jesus in the temple, he says, “My eyes have seen your salvation.” John the Baptist then preaches “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” and quotes Isaiah 52:10, “All flesh will see the salvation of God” (Luke 3:3-6). Thus, this salvation for Luke is the salvation that God brings through Jesus to save his people from their enemies, to bring them out of exile, to forgive them of their sins, and to allow them to live as God’s people.

There is, nevertheless, another aspect of salvation for Luke, which exists on a more personal sense. For example, the first instance of the phrase, “Your faith has saved you” is in response to a woman whose sins Jesus has just forgiven (Luke 7:36-50). Therefore, the forgiveness of sins prophesied by Zechariah is not exclusively understood by the reader as collective. Rather, it may also exist on a more personal level. The reader also remembers the paralyzed man, whose sins Jesus forgives and whom Jesus then heals

³⁴ Witherington, “Salvation,” 148.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

(5:17-26). In order for Israel to repent and be forgiven collectively, individuals themselves must repent and be forgiven personally.

After the Holy Spirit falls on the apostles and three thousand people come to faith at Pentecost, Peter and John heal a crippled man at the Temple (Acts 3:1-7). They tell the crowd that it is “by faith in his [Jesus’s] name” that the man has been healed (3:16). Then “the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees” arrest them for “teaching the people and proclaiming, in Jesus, a resurrection from the dead” (4:1-2). In defending themselves, Peter says that “the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” is “the means [by which] he [the crippled man] was saved” (4:9-10). Certainly, Luke is, once again, using *save* [σῶζω] in the sense of physical healing, but the wider meaning of forgiveness of sins in terms of returning from exile and back into membership in God’s people is still in the back of the reader’s mind. Luke, however, does not leave it to the reader’s devices to understand this connection on his own. At the climax of his speech, Peter says, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (4:12). This “salvation” of which Peter speaks is from the destruction reserved for those who do not listen to Jesus (3:23), and it includes forgiveness or wiping away of sins for those who repent (2:38; 3:19). This destruction is “from the people” (3:23); therefore, Luke describes this salvation in terms of being a member of God’s people. If one does not listen to “that prophet” (3:23), he will no longer be a member of God’s people. Those who have sinned may repent and find salvation and thus membership in God’s people by having faith in Jesus (4:12). Luke has used *save* [σῶζω] twice within four verses: the first to refer to a physical healing (4:9-10) and the second to refer to salvation from being “destroyed from the people” (4:12). Thus, Luke

uses the physical healing of this crippled man to allude to the salvation and membership in God's people that he subsequently describes.

Luke recounts many physical healings performed at the hands of both Jesus and the apostles. In these physical healings, the reader sees the breaking of the kingdom of God on the earth through Jesus. A new era has begun, in which God is restoring his creation and bringing his people back to himself. The reader also witnesses, through the physical healings in Luke-Acts, God's inclusion of those normally excluded by society. Whether by disease, social status, or ethnicity, the kingdom of God includes people from every sphere of society. Finally, by seeing these physical healings, the reader is constantly reminded of salvation in forgiveness of sins and membership in God's people received through Jesus by repentance and faith after his resurrection. Physical healings are frequent in Luke-Acts, and they are, indeed, integral to the storyline of Jesus and the early church.

CHAPTER 3

PRELIMINARY STORIES

I. The Man Filled with Leprosy (Luke 5:12-16)

¹²And when he was in one of the cities, look, there was a man filled with leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, saying, “Lord, if you want to, you are able to cleanse me.” ¹³And stretching out his hand, Jesus touched him, saying, “I want to. Be cleansed.” And immediately the leprosy left him. ¹⁴And he commanded him to tell no one, but “go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing as Moses commanded, for proof to them.”

¹⁵But the word about Jesus spread abroad more, and great crowds gathered together to hear and be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

Toward the beginning of Luke’s description of Jesus’s Galilean ministry, this story of “the man covered in leprosy” appears. He is the third person whose healing Luke describes in detail, the first being “the man who had the spirit of an unclean demon” (4:31-37) and the second “Simon’s mother-in-law” (4:38-39). The story comes right after Jesus calls the first disciples: Simon, James, and John (5:1-11). In the story, the reader finds a man who trusts that Jesus is able to heal him yet acknowledges that Jesus must want to.

The story begins with Luke imploring the reader to “look” at this character³⁷: the man “filled with leprosy.”³⁸ The root of the word translated “filled” is πληρόω, and up to this point, it has occurred six times in the sense of someone being “filled” with something (1:15; 1:41; 1:67; 2:40; 4:1; 4:28). Four of these six occurrences refer to John, Elizabeth, Zechariah, and Jesus being filled with “the Holy Spirit,” one to Jesus being filled with “wisdom,” and one to the people in the synagogue being filled with “wrath.” Through this common construction, Luke is setting up a contrast between those filled with “the Holy Spirit” and “wisdom,” and those filled with “wrath” and disease (e.g., “leprosy”).

The man sees Jesus and then, falling [πεσὼν] on his face, begs him. Right before this story, Simon “fell down [προσέπεσεν] at Jesus’s knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord’” (5:8). Both of these fallings share the same root, πίπτω, and Simon’s humble acceptance of Jesus’s authority prepares the reader for the response of this new character. The man says to Jesus, “Lord, if you want to, you are able to cleanse me” (5:12). C. Kavin Rowe understands three parallels between the two stories with the leper and Simon: “Both Peter and the leper are said to ‘see’ (ἰδών); both fall down before Jesus (προσέπεσεν τοῖς γόνασιν / πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον); both then address Jesus as κύριε.”³⁹ Through this parallel, Luke is slowly pulling his character, Jesus, closer to Israel’s god, Yahweh. This title for Jesus—“Lord”—not only refers to a master or lord or

³⁷ This word, “look [ἰδοὺ],” is representative of the idea that P. Borgman, *The Way according to Luke: Hearing the Whole Story of Luke-Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 4, expresses in his introduction: one aspect of Luke-Acts that modern readers often miss is its oral nature. Thus, in this passage, Luke is calling special attention through this interjection to this little story about “a man filled with leprosy.”

³⁸ For a discussion of leprosy and its implications, see pgs. 11-13.

³⁹ C. K. Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 90.

some type of high authority. It is quite commonly used by Luke as the Greek translation of the different titles of Yahweh (e.g., 1:6, 9, 11, 15, 25). This does not, however, mean that the leprous man understands Jesus to be Yahweh himself. Rowe notes, “What the leper theoretically knew or did not know about Jesus does not affect the way we should interpret κύριε in the Lukan narrative.”⁴⁰ Thus, Luke, from the beginning, infuses in his reader an understanding of Jesus’s divinity, and in this instance, the reader should pick up on this leprous man’s understanding of Jesus’s authority, albeit not necessarily that of divine authority.

The leprous man’s full plea is key to understanding his disposition toward Jesus. The first part is the conditional phrase, “Lord, if you want to [ἐὰν θέλῃς],” which expresses the man’s submission to Jesus’s wisdom and authority (5:12). The fact that the man uses this word, *θέλω*, which means to want or desire something,⁴¹ shows that he knows he will only be healed if Jesus wants to heal him. This does not mean, nonetheless, that the man in any way doubts Jesus’s ability to heal him; rather, he goes on to say, “You are able [δύνασάι] to cleanse me” (5:12). Luke has used this word *δύναμαι* three times already. The first two describe Zechariah’s inability to speak because of his disbelieving God’s promise for a son. The second is a more fitting help to understanding this occurrence. In 3:8, John the Baptist says to “the crowds,” “God is able [δύναται] from these stones to raise up children of Abraham.” While the contexts of these two stories may not be immediately related, the idea of God being fully able to do something and Jesus, by his divine authority, being able to do the same, is clear. The man with

⁴⁰ Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 91.

⁴¹ J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988) 289.

leprosy understands that Jesus has the power to heal him, and he knows that all he can do is beg and hope that Jesus wants to do so.⁴²

Indeed, the man's words hearken back to Mary's faith in God to give her a son. While Luke has not yet used the word "faith," this idea is present from the beginning of his book. When confronted with the angel's promise from God, Mary asks, "How will this be, since I do not know a husband?" (1:34). This response is set in contrast to Zechariah's when he is presented earlier with God's promise to him for a son: "How will I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years" (1:18). Paul Borgman comments on Mary's response, "She does not ask for certifiable data in order to reassure herself, as does the priest. Mary asks about process, not proof... Zechariah's 'how-can-I-know' is an anxious clutching; Mary's 'how-will-it-happen' is faithful risk."⁴³ Mary's faith is commended while Zechariah's disbelief is disciplined when the angel makes him mute until his son is born (1:20). The man with leprosy echoes the faith of Mary and trusts that Jesus is fully able to cleanse him and that he will if he wants to do so.

At this point, Luke brings the reader to the climax of this little story, waiting to hear whether or not Jesus wants to heal this man with leprosy. The reader should understand, through the man's statement, that he both trusts in Jesus's power to heal him and knows that it is only out of Jesus's desire to heal him that he has any chance of being healed. Luke describes Jesus's response: "And stretching out his hand, Jesus touched

⁴² Furthermore, Luke's use of "cleanse [καθαρίζω]" instead of "heal [θεραπεύω]" is important. As Nolland, *Luke*, 229, notes, "To speak of cleansing rather than healing focuses attention not so much on the disease itself as on the sense of defilement that attached to the condition."

⁴³ Borgman, *The Way according to Luke*, 22-23.

him, saying, “I want to. Be cleansed” (5:13). Jesus’s first response is to touch the man, which was certainly unnecessary to his healing, but this touch displays, in a physical way, his willingness and desire to heal the man.

The leprosy leaves the man “immediately [εὐθέως]” (5:13). Jesus’s healing is fully effective, yet Jesus does not want the man to tell anyone about his healing.⁴⁴ He tells him to “make an offering” for his cleansing “as Moses commanded, as proof to them” (5:14). According to Lev. 14:1-32, the man must go to the priest, who, upon seeing that the man is healed, will sprinkle him with the blood of a bird. The man will then be allowed inside the town but not inside his tent for seven days. The man must then shave himself and bathe, and on the eighth, the priest will offer sin, burnt, and grain offerings for the man. At that point, he will be clean and allowed to function normally within the community. Despite Jesus’s telling the man not to tell anyone about his healing, “the word about Jesus spread abroad more, and great crowds gathered together to hear and be healed of their sicknesses” (5:15). Jesus’s healing ministry is not one that can be ignored, and his fame will only continue to increase throughout The Gospel of Luke. Nevertheless, he does not forsake the importance of his own fervent devotion to God alone. Thus, even amidst the craze of his growing fame, “he would withdraw to desolate places and pray” (5:16).

⁴⁴ It is outside of the scope of this thesis to discuss the merits of every explanation for the infamous “messianic secret.” Bock, *Luke*, 476, is correct in understanding Jesus’s telling the man not to tell anyone as an attempt to “prevent undue popular excitement over Jesus’ miraculous work.”

II. The Paralyzed Man (Luke 5:17-26)

¹⁷And on one of those days, while he [Jesus] was teaching and the Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem, were sitting there, the power of the Lord was in him to heal. ¹⁸And look, men were carrying a paralyzed man on a cot, and they were trying to bring him in and place him in front of him [Jesus]. ¹⁹And not finding any way to bring him inside, because of the crowd, they went up onto the roof and let him down through the tiles on his cot into the middle in front of Jesus. ²⁰And seeing their faith, he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." ²¹And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this one who speaks blasphemy? Who has the power to forgive sins except God?" ²²But Jesus, knowing their questions, answered and said to them, "Why do you question in your hearts? ²³Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? ²⁴But that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins," he said to the paralyzed man, "I say to you, rise, and pick up your cot, and go to your home." ²⁵And immediately, he rose in front of them, picked up his cot, and went to his home, glorifying God. ²⁶And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen amazing things today."

This story begins with Jesus, still somewhere in Galilee, teaching a group of people, which includes "the Pharisees and teachers of the law." This is the first point Luke introduces the reader to these groups of characters. The Pharisees were a sect of Judaim in the Second Temple period, which, according to S. Westerholm, kept "non-biblical prescriptions as binding law."⁴⁵ They were not priests, but, as Bock describes, their goal was "to keep the nation faithful to Mosaic faith."⁴⁶ Thus, they held to traditions handed down "from the fathers," who applied the law to all kinds of different situations that scripture did not directly speak to.⁴⁷ The Pharisees are joined by "teachers of the law" and later in the story, "the scribes." These two groups are actually the same

⁴⁵ S. Westerholm, "Pharisees" in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 611.

⁴⁶ Bock, *Luke*, 478-479.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 479; Westerholm, "Pharisees," 609.

people described by different names, as the reader may understand because in v. 17, Luke describes “the Pharisees and teachers of the law” sitting there and in v. 21, it is “the scribes and the Pharisees” questioning Jesus. Nolland describes the scribes as “the antecedents to the later Jewish rabbis,” functioning “both as scholars of the law and teachers.”⁴⁸ The presence of these high-ranking members of Jesus’s crowd and the fact that they have come from “every village of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem” show that Jesus is gaining in fame, or perhaps, infamy.

The narrator then gives what on the surface seems to be a random interjection: “The power of the Lord was in him [Jesus] to heal” (5:17). The narrator, however, does not intend it to be an interjection; rather, it is a sort of banner over the entire story and will prove important later on. This use of “Lord [κυρίου]” is ambiguous enough: is Luke referring to Jesus as the Lord, or is he saying that the power of God is in Jesus? The phrase is further muddled by Luke’s use of the accusative αὐτόν, which is most commonly translated as the subject of the infinitive “to heal [ἰᾶσθαι].”

It would be possible to translate αὐτόν as the object of the infinitive, rendering the phrase something like, “The power of the Lord was [there] to heal him.” This translation is sparsely used, however, (e.g. KJV, NKJV, NIV11) and for good reason, although not for the reasons normally given. Rowe explains that many commentators have argued for αὐτόν as the subject of the infinitive rather than the object because anarthrous κύριος always refers to Yahweh.⁴⁹ This reasoning is faulty, however, because anarthrous κύριος refers to Jesus both in the angel’s pronouncement of Jesus’s birth in

⁴⁸ Nolland, *Luke*, 234-235.

⁴⁹ Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 95-96.

Luke 2:11 and in Peter’s speech in Acts 2.⁵⁰ Rather, the reason *αὐτόν* must refer to Jesus as the subject of the infinitive is that the “him” it would otherwise reference has not yet been introduced as a character in the story. It would be quite strange for Luke to refer to a character by a pronoun before he has introduced him in v. 18. The ambiguity of “κυρίου” still persists, however, especially after both Simon and the leprous man have recently referred to Jesus by this title. As Rowe understands,

The ambiguity encountered in the initial reading of the sentence recalls earlier occurrences of *κύριος* (e.g., 2:11; 3:4, etc.), thereby simultaneously creating a resonance in which a Christological interpretation of *κύριος* becomes, if only for the moment, necessary to entertain. Luke 5:17 thus fastens the activity of Jesus to the identity of God precisely as *κύριος*. This is the basic Lukan judgment that makes possible the scene of the forgiveness of sins here in 5:17-26.⁵¹

Thus, Luke describes Jesus in such a way that the reader will increasingly identify him with God.

Having set the backdrop for the scene, Luke then describes the action, wherein a group of men are trying to carry their paralyzed friend on a cot so that he might be healed by this Jesus whom they have heard about. But, alas, when they get to the house, it is too crowded. Nevertheless, they are confident that if they can only get their friend in front of Jesus, he will be healed. They climb on top of the roof,⁵² somehow dig a hole through the ceiling, and “let him down through the tiles on his cot into the middle in front of Jesus.”⁵³

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁵² Bock, *Luke*, 480, describes this roof as serving as a second story easily accessible by an outdoor set of stairs.

⁵³ The debate described by Bock, *Luke*, 480-481—whether “the tiles [τῶν κεράμων]” refer to tile roofs being used in Jesus’s original context, clay roofs being used in Jesus’s context, or the tile roofs that Luke’s audience would have been most familiar

Luke has spent three entire verses building the suspense: first, explaining the importance of Jesus's audience, and second, describing the lengths to which these men would go to get their friend to Jesus. In light of the previous story, the reader might expect Jesus to give a similar exhortation: "Be cleansed" or, "Be healed" or even, "Get up and walk."

Instead, Luke gives the reader just a bit more commentary before he clues him into Jesus's response: "And seeing their faith [καὶ ἰδὼν τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν]" (5:20). While this is the first time Luke has used this word in its noun form, *faith* [ἡ πίστις],⁵⁴ he has used the verb form, *have faith* [πιστεύω], twice already (1:20; 1:45). The first time carries a negative connotation when the angel responds to Zechariah's laughter at the idea of his wife bearing a son. The angel says, "And look, you will be silent and unable to speak until these things happen, for you did not have faith in my words, which will be fulfilled in their time" (1:20). The second time carries a positive connotation, expressly contrasted with the first, when Elizabeth, Zechariah's wife, is "filled with the Holy Spirit" upon greeting the pregnant young Mary. She says, "And blessed is she who has faith that there will be fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (1:45). Thus, in these two characters, the reader sees faith and lack of faith.⁵⁵ The reader has even seen this faith in the leprous man in the previous story, who says, "Lord, if you want to, you are able to cleanse me" (5:12). Now, the reader sees the faith of these men that Jesus is able to heal their friend if only they can get him in front of Jesus.

with (in other words, an attempt to contextualize the story so that the Greeks, who had tile roofs, would understand)—is outside the scope of this thesis and bears absolutely no weight on the meaning of the story.

⁵⁴ For a discussion on faith, see pgs. 21-22.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of the contrast between Mary and Zechariah, see pg. 28.

At this point, the reader has come to the climax of the story, and Jesus, upon seeing their faith,⁵⁶ says to the paralyzed man, “Your sins are forgiven you” (5:20). This paralyzed man has come to Jesus seeking physical healing and has gone to great lengths to receive this healing, yet Jesus does not heal him. Instead, he gives the man something he does not seem to be looking for. The “scribes and the Pharisees” do not like Jesus’s declaration and begin to question among themselves about him: “Who is this one who speaks blasphemy? Who has the power to forgive sins except God?” (5:21). Jesus’s declaration is, indeed, as Nolland describes, a “theological [or divine] passive,” implying that God is the one who forgives sins.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, as Nolland writes, “That does little to reduce the scandal of Jesus’s words.”⁵⁸

Jesus then responds to his opponents and explains why he has responded so strangely. He says, “Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (5:22-24). He then turns to the man and heals him. Essentially, Jesus is acknowledging that it is easier for him to say that he forgives the man’s sins because it is a claim that cannot be verified visually. It would be much harder for Jesus to say the man is healed and then not actually heal him than it would be

⁵⁶ While there is some disagreement on whether “their [αὐτῶν]” includes only the paralyzed man’s friends or his friends and himself—Bock, *Luke*, 481, suggests that it refers only to the man’s friends, and Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 582; and Green, *Luke*, 240, understand it to refer to all of them—this point does not bear much weight on the story. Using this passage to prove that one can have enough faith in Jesus to save another person, or contrarily, arguing against that idea by saying the Greek must include all of them, is arbitrary and certainly outside of Luke’s intention for the story.

⁵⁷ Nolland, *Luke*, 235.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 235.

for him to say the man's sins are forgiven and then them actually not be forgiven.⁵⁹ In this one piece of dialogue, the reader receives crucial commentary on the relationship between the forgiveness of sins and physical healings. Bock observes,

In this way, Jesus links the healing tightly with the spiritual message he bears in his person. One will reveal the truth of the other, as he is about to show. Such a challenge shows that the miraculous character of Jesus's ministry was not a peripheral matter that could be easily discarded from the early church's portrait of Jesus. These works had a crucial function against the objector in substantiating Jesus's claims.⁶⁰

Jesus then heals the man in order to show, as he says, "that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins." This title—"the son of man"—is a self-designation that Luke uses twenty-five times throughout his gospel. The title comes from Dan. 7:13-14, where God, "The Ancient of Days," has just taken reign:

And behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Though "one like a son of man" is not a title in Dan. 7 but a description of one who is "like a son of man," it is clear that Jesus uses it as a title for himself.⁶¹ The idea presented in Dan. 7—one with sovereign authority and reign, which is normally reserved for God alone—has messianic overtones, similar to those connected to "The Elect One" in 1

⁵⁹ Bock, *Luke*, 485.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 485.

⁶¹ I. H. Marshall, "Son of Man" in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 781.

Enoch 39:6.⁶² Thus, Jesus refers to himself as one with sovereign authority, who is coming to reign over God's kingdom, a title fitting for one who has just forgiven a man of his sin. The paralyzed man then does exactly as Jesus says, getting up and going home, proving that Jesus has both forgiven him of his sins and healed him of his disease. The crowd is amazed and goes away "filled with fear" and "glorifying God" (5:26).

The significance of this passage must not be understated in how the reader should understand Luke's portrayal of faith and physical healings. Right after the leprous man who shows faith and then is healed by Jesus, the reader sees this paralyzed man and his friends showing faith in Jesus, but then, at first, it seems that he does not receive physical healing but rather a spiritual healing. Even though Jesus does eventually heal the man, the shock is still apparent when the reader hears Jesus say, "Your sins are forgiven you," instead of, "Be cleansed." This shock is intentional, and Luke wants the reader to feel the close connection between Jesus's physical healings and spiritual healings, and by extension, faith in Jesus to heal and faith in Jesus to forgive.

III. Jesus at Levi's House (Luke 5:29-32)

²⁹And Levi made him a huge feast in his house, and there was a big crowd of tax collectors and others, who were reclining [at the table] with him. ³⁰And the Pharisees and their scribes were grumbling toward his disciples, saying, "Why do you all eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? ³¹And answering, Jesus said to them, "The healthy do not need a doctor, but the sick do. ³²I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

This short passage is fairly straightforward yet holds an important place in the context of the preceding few stories. First, Luke shows Jesus healing the leprous man

⁶² E. Isaac (trans.), "The Book of Enoch: Book I," in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1983), 31.

who showed faith in Jesus’s authority and submission to his will (5:12-16). Second, Luke portrays Jesus responding to the paralyzed man with the forgiveness of his sins, at first, rather than healing him (5:17-26). In this, he confuses the reader’s expectation of a healing by showing that this faith the men have and the healing they desire is of more significance than their present physical situation. Finally, at this feast, the Pharisees and scribes once again question Jesus—this time, with a fairly legitimate question. It seems appropriate for them to ask why such a pure, upstanding teacher such as Jesus would hang around with such distasteful company as tax collectors, albeit their “grumbling [ἐγόγγυζον]” gives away their less than innocent intentions.

Jesus responds with a parallel that presses a stamp over top of the preceding stories and helps the reader understand the relationship between his healing ministry and his ministry at large. He says, “The healthy do not need a doctor, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (5:31-32). In Greek, this sentence is an example of synonymous parallelism:

οὐ χρείαν ἔξουσιν οἱ ὑγιαίνοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλ’ οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες·
οὐκ ἐλίλυθα καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλ’ ἁμαρτωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν.

Therefore, Jesus is comparing “the healthy” with “the righteous” and “the sick” with “sinners.” He himself is the “physician.” His logic is simple enough that it warrants hardly any explanation. In an almost sarcastic tone, Jesus groups the Pharisees with the so-called “righteous” who have no need of a physician while the “tax collectors and

sinner,” whose sin Jesus does not try to justify, he refers to as those he has come for, to call them “to repentance.”⁶³

Luke shows the reader that, at the least, Jesus’s ministry of physical healing is representative of his larger ministry, in which he is calling Israel back to God through repentance.⁶⁴ Whereas Jesus brings the sick from disease back to health, he is calling Israel from rebellion back to God. Now, the reader remembers that first, the leprosy man shows faith and is healed physically, and second, the paralyzed man and his friends show faith, resulting in the man being forgiven of his sins and healed physically. The reader thus understands that Luke has been building to this climax, where Jesus is shown to be both the physician for the sick and the one who calls sinners—wayward Israel—to repentance and grants them forgiveness.

IV. The Centurion’s Servant (Luke 7:1-10)

¹After he [Jesus] finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he went into Capernaum. ²Now a certain servant of a centurion, to whom he [the servant] was precious, was sick to the point of death. ³But hearing about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴And those who came to Jesus pleaded with him earnestly, saying, “He is worthy for you to do this for him. ⁵For he loves our nation, and he built our synagogue.” ⁶And Jesus went with them. And now when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, “Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not deserving of you coming under my roof. ⁷Therefore, I did not count myself worthy to come to you, but say the word, and let my dear servant be healed. ⁸For I too am a man under authority, having appointed soldiers under me, and I say to one, ‘Go’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do

⁶³ Furthermore, Green, *Luke*, 248, notes that right before this passage when Jesus calls his newest disciple Levi, the reader has an example of this type of repentance. He is a “tax collector,” who upon Jesus saying to him, “Follow me,” leaves “everything” and “followed him” (5:27-28). He leaves everything he has in order to follow Jesus and be identified with him.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of the idea of repentance, see pgs. 4-5.

this' and he does it." ⁹*And hearing this, Jesus marveled at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I say to you all, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."* ¹⁰*And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.*

After an extended passage of Jesus teaching (6:20-49), Luke immediately confronts with another story of someone seeking Jesus's healing. Jesus enters Capernaum, a small town on the north side of the Sea of Galilee, and Luke immediately introduces two new characters: "a certain servant" and his master, "a centurion" (7:2). A centurion would have been a low-ranking military officer, who nevertheless was in charge of other men, under Herod Antipas. While not the highest-ranking, he would have been paid better than most.⁶⁵ At this point, it is unclear whether he is Jewish or not. His servant is sick "to the point of death," and for some reason unbeknownst to the reader, he is "precious [ἐντιμος]" to his master (7:2). This adjective expresses value and worth, so it is no wonder that the centurion, upon hearing about this prolific Jesus who can heal people, sends the "elders of the Jews," who beg Jesus "earnestly" to heal the servant (7:3). These elders were leaders in the civic community,⁶⁶ but their significance in this story is that they are close enough with the centurion to be sent by him to bring Jesus to heal his servant.

The elders base their request for Jesus to come with them on the centurion's merit: "He is worthy [ἄξιός] for you to do this for him" (7:4). Then they give Jesus two reasons why he is worthy: "For he loves our nation, and he built our synagogue" (7:5).

⁶⁵ Bock, *Luke*, 635. I. H. Marshall, "Military" in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 548.

⁶⁶ G. R. Osborne, "Elder," in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 201.

Now it is clear why these elders are in such an affable relationship with the centurion; he is a benefactor of the town's synagogue. Furthermore, this description of the centurion, that "he loves our nation," shows that he is removed in some sense from Israel, confirming in the mind of the reader that he is, indeed, a Gentile.⁶⁷ This commendation of the centurion is enough for Jesus to come with them, so they set off for the centurion's house.

Before they arrive, however, the centurion sends another group of messengers, this time some of his "friends [φίλους]," and they relay the centurion's message to Jesus as if it is him speaking. The centurion's request begins with his address of Jesus, "Lord [κύριε]," which is common enough, but in the context of the Lukan narrative, has overtones of Jesus's divinity.⁶⁸ He then begins to give a humble preface to his actual request. He says that he is "not deserving" of Jesus to come under his "roof," and in direct contradiction to the elders, who said that he is "worthy [ἄξιός]" of Jesus's help, he says, "I did not count myself worthy [ἡξιῶσα] to come to you" (7:6-7). Finally, he makes his request clear: "But say the word, and let my dear servant be healed" (7:7). Because he is "not deserving" of Jesus coming to his home and does not "count" himself "worthy" of coming to Jesus himself, he asks Jesus only to say the word, and that will be enough to heal his "dear servant [ὁ παῖς]" (7:6-7).⁶⁹

⁶⁷ For a discussion of Gentiles, see pgs. 15-16.

⁶⁸ For evidence on "Lord [κύριε]" as alluding to Jesus's divinity, see pgs. 26-27.

⁶⁹ Luke's word choice here, "dear servant [ὁ παῖς]," confirms that the servant is "precious [ἐντιμος]" to the centurion. It lies in contrast with the less affectionate word, "servant [δοῦλος]" used by the narrator at the beginning and end of this story (7:2, 7, 10).

The centurion then explains why he thinks that Jesus's word is all that is necessary: "For I too am a man under authority, having appointed soldiers under me, and I say to one, 'Go' and he goes, and to another, 'Come' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this' and he does it" (7:8) At first, it seems strange for the centurion to describe himself as "a man *under* authority," rather than "in" or "with" authority, especially when he goes on to describe three situations in which he is practicing authority.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it makes sense when the reader considers this phrase as Nolland does: "It is the centurion's position in a chain of command that gives his own word power.... The centurion is only a subordinate and yet his word has authority; how much more the one whose authority is not derivative."⁷¹ Thus, the centurion is saying that if he, a man relatively low in the pecking order, has authority over soldiers and servants to tell them what to do, how much more does Jesus, the man with authority over disease and demons, have authority to heal his servant simply by speaking.

Jesus "marveled [ἐθαύμασεν] at him" and says to the whole crowd, "I say to you all, not even in Israel have I found such great faith" (7:9). It is difficult to read Jesus's words here and deny that this is, at the least, a criticism of Israel's faith.⁷² The Jewish elders in this story presume that the centurion's status as a benefactor of the Jewish cause in Capernaum will be sufficient justification for Jesus's obligation to heal his servant while the centurion does not even presume to have Jesus come near himself or his house.

⁷⁰ Indeed, J. Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (London: SCM, 1958), 30, argues that this strange nuance in the verse comes from a variant manuscript.

⁷¹ Nolland, *Luke*, 317.

⁷² Nevertheless, Nolland, *Luke*, 318, denies this implicit criticism, opposed to Bock, *Luke*, 642; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 653; and Green, *Luke*, 288.

Instead, he humbly asks Jesus simply to say the word and heal his servant. It is this “great faith”—faith that understands one’s own inability and status yet trusts in Jesus’s ability—for which Jesus praises the centurion. Finally, almost as an afterthought, the reader learns that the servant is found “well” (7:10). This short commentary on the effectiveness of Jesus’s healing confirms that this story is not about the physical healing of the servant but the “great faith” of the centurion (7:9).

Nonetheless, there is a deeper level of meaning in this story, in that it is emblematic of the coming relationship between God and the Gentiles. The reader should recall Old Testament prophecy that speaks of the coming relationship between God and Gentiles (Isaiah 19:23; Zech. 8:21; Jer. 3:17). One Old Testament story that stands in direct parallel with this story of the centurion and his servant is the story of Naaman and Elisha in 2 Kings 5.⁷³ Naaman, an important Gentile army officer, is leprous and hears from a little Israelite captive girl about an Israelite prophet who can heal him. The King of Syria sends a message to the King of Israel requesting Naaman’s healing, and Elisha says that he can do it. Contrary to Naaman’s desire to be healed by Elisha in person, Elisha tells him to dip seven times in the Jordan, and Naaman is thus healed. In Luke 7, the centurion, a gentile army officer, has a sick servant and hears about this Jewish Jesus who can heal him. He sends first the Jewish elders, then his friends, to request his servant’s healing, but instead of presuming upon Jesus to come and help him in person, he has great humility and faith that Jesus can heal his servant by simply speaking the word. This lies in contrast to Naaman, who was angry and presumed that Elisha would “come out... and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand

⁷³ Green, *Luke*, 284-285.

over the place and cure the leper” (2 Kings 5:11). Naaman wanted his own worth and dignity to be upheld whereas the centurion simply wanted his servant healed and had faith that Jesus was able and willing.

Furthermore, this Gentile centurion, who shows “such great faith” in Luke 7, foreshadows Cornelius, the Gentile centurion in Acts 10, who becomes the first Gentile Christian and receives the Holy Spirit. Not only are the centurion of Luke 7 and Cornelius of Acts both Gentile centurions; faith is also an integral part of each of their stories. The centurion in Luke 7 has “great faith [πίστιν]” (7:9) while Cornelius becomes a believer after Peter preaches to him, “Everyone who has faith [πιστεύοντα] in him [Jesus] will receive forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43). Once again, Luke connects faith in Jesus with forgiveness of sins, just as he has done in the previous story about the paralyzed man (5:17-26). Whether the centurion in Luke 7 comes to follow Jesus in a more permanent way than this story informs is impossible to tell. Nevertheless, his faith in Jesus to heal his “dear servant” is a precursor of the faith of Cornelius the centurion in Acts 10, who has faith in Jesus to forgive sins.

CHAPTER 4

“YOUR FAITH HAS SAVED YOU”

I. Jairus’s Daughter and the Woman with the Flow of Blood (Luke 8:40-56)

⁴⁰Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were waiting for him. ⁴¹And look, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling before Jesus’s feet, he begged him to come to his house, ⁴²for his only daughter was about twelve years old, and she was dying.

Now when he [Jesus] went with him, the crowd pressed against him. ⁴³And there was a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years and had spent all her living on doctors and could not be healed by anyone. ⁴⁴She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately, her flow of blood stopped. ⁴⁵And Jesus said, “Who touched me?” But when all denied it, Peter said, “The crowds surround you and are constricting you.” ⁴⁶But Jesus said, “Someone touched me, for I know that power has gone out from me.” ⁴⁷But when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling and falling down before him and declared to all the people why she had touched him and how she had immediately been healed. ⁴⁸And he [Jesus] said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

⁴⁹While he was still speaking, someone from the synagogue ruler’s house came, saying, “Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the teacher any more.”

⁵⁰But hearing this, Jesus answered him, “Do not fear; only have faith, and she will be saved.” ⁵¹But when he came to the house, he did not let anyone enter with him except Peter, James, John, and the child’s father and mother. ⁵²And all were weeping and mourning her, but he [Jesus] said, “Do not weep, for she is not dead but asleep.” ⁵³And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴But taking her hand, he called, saying, “Child, rise.” ⁵⁵And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he commanded that something be given to her to eat. ⁵⁶And he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

This story is the penultimate of four stories that lead up to Peter's confession of Jesus as "The Christ of God" (9:18-20).⁷⁴ In this story, the reader actually finds two stories sandwiched together in a chiastic structure: first, a man who wants Jesus to save his dying twelve-year-old daughter, and second, interrupting the first story, a woman who has been sick for twelve years. Both the woman with the flow of blood and Jairus show faith that results in physical healing. As will be seen, Jesus' saving these women from physical disease and death alludes to salvation from exile and membership in God's people.

Jesus has just returned from the Gerasenes, an area on the east coast of the Sea of Galilee,⁷⁵ where he cast a demon out of a man (8:26-39), and when he returns, the crowd welcomes him (8:40), a stark contrast to "the people of the surrounding region of the Gerasenes," who had just "asked him to leave them, for they were seized with great fear" (8:37).⁷⁶ Upon his return, "a man named Jairus,"⁷⁷ who is "a synagogue ruler," which means that he is in charge of the order and service of worship in the synagogue,⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Nolland, *Luke*, 416. Jesus calms a storm on the Sea of Galilee (8:22-25), heals a man with a demon (8:26-39), heals the woman with the flow blood and raises Jairus's daughter back to life (8:40-56), and then feeds five thousand people with nothing but five loaves of bread and two fish (9:10-17). For a discussion on the title *Christ*, see pgs. 7-8.

⁷⁵ R. Riesner, "Archeology and Geography," in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 40.

⁷⁶ Green, *Luke*, 344.

⁷⁷ Bock, *Luke*, 792, notes that Jairus means "he will give light" or "may he enlighten." Similarly, Nolland, *Luke*, 419, comments that the Semitic form of the name, if the same as in 1 Chron. 20:5, could mean "he will awaken," which would fit in nicely with the ending of the story. However, as Bock notes, Luke himself does not emphasize the name's meaning.

approaches Jesus, falls on the ground, and begs him to heal his dying twelve-year-old daughter (8:41-42).

Jesus goes with Jairus, and this welcoming crowd presses against him as he goes. Luke then introduces the reader to a new character: “a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years and had spent all her living on doctors and could not be healed by anyone” (8:43). This flow of blood is most likely some type of menstrual discharge, which has obviously lasted much longer than it should have.⁷⁹ At this point, the reader should understand that two characters and their ailments are being set side by side: the twelve-year-old girl who is about to die and the woman who has had a flow of blood for twelve years. Both are desperate and in need of help. The girl is about to die, and the woman, who is excluded from normal society because of her uncleanness, has spent all of her money on doctors to no avail.

The woman then comes up behind Jesus and touches “the fringe of his garment” (8:44). Immediately, her flow of blood stops, but it does not go without Jesus’s noticing that it has done so. He says, “Who was it that touched me?” (8:44-45).⁸⁰ After everyone

⁷⁸ Bock, *Luke*, 791; Green, *Luke*, 345; Nolland, *Luke*, 419.

⁷⁹ Bock, *Luke*, 793; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 746; Green, *Luke*, 346; Nolland, *Luke*, 419. For a description of this woman’s situation in society in relationship to the Levitical law, see pgs. 14-15.

⁸⁰ While Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 746, holds that “queries about why Jesus should have asked such a question—since he should have known who touched him—are out of place; they are born of later Christological conceptions of him,” Bock, *Luke*, 795; and Green, *Luke*, 348, are correct in viewing this as a means of drawing the woman out of her isolation. In the story about the paralyzed man lowered through the roof, Jesus perceives even the thoughts of the scribes and Pharisees (5:22); thus, the reader should assume that Jesus is certainly capable of knowing information such as who has touched him without actually seeing who had done it. Therefore, the reader should understand that Jesus is

denies someone touching him, Peter, as the reader does, finds Jesus's question odd and says, "The crowds surround you and are constricting you" (8:45), effectively asking, "What do you mean, who touched you? Everyone is touching you!" However, Jesus is confident and responds, "Someone touched me, for I know that power has gone out from me" (8:46).⁸¹ The woman, upon hearing Jesus's knowledge that he was touched, realizes that she cannot hide any longer. Trembling, she falls before Jesus and tells everyone how she touched him and was immediately healed.⁸²

asking this question, as Bock and Green describe, "as a means of drawing the woman out of her isolation."

⁸¹ While it is unclear what this "power [δύναμιν]," which occurs twenty-five times in Luke-Acts, refers to in this passage, Green, *Luke*, 348, understands it to refer to the power of the Holy Spirit. In 1:34 and 4:14, the word is used in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. In 5:17, Luke narrates, "The power of the Lord was in him [Jesus] to heal," and in 6:9, "Power came out from him [Jesus]." At the end of the book, Jesus says, "And look, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you, but stay in the city until you are clothed with power [δύναμιν] from on high" (24:49). In this last passage, "power" obviously refers to the sending of the Holy Spirit down upon the apostles in Acts 2. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit himself entered Jesus at any given point or that he leaves Jesus in this passage. It simply means that the power of the Holy Spirit goes out of Jesus in the sense that this power flowed from Jesus to the woman and thus healed her.

⁸² Green, *Luke*, 348, understands the woman's declaration to be her response of faith. He notes a connection between this passage and part of the parable of the sower. *To choke* [συμπνιγω] is used twice in Luke-Acts. The first is in Jesus's explanation of the parable of the sower: "But as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go, they are choked [συμπνίγονται] by the cares and riches and pleasures of the world, and they do not reach maturity" (8:14). The second is here, when the crowd "presses against [συνέπνιγον]" Jesus as he walks toward Jairus's house. Green writes, "The crowds are pressing in, ready to choke faith as it sprouts (cf. vv 13-14); will she give in to her fear or respond in faith (cf. v 25)?" While the fact that *to choke* [συμπνιγω] only occurs twice in Luke-Acts and both occurrences are in the same chapter does seem compelling, the parallel does not work on all points. The woman here is "choked" not by "the cares and riches and pleasures of the world" but by the unruly crowd. One might argue that the woman's desire to remain unknown is analogous to "the cares and riches and pleasures of the world," but Luke certainly does not emphasize this idea. Nevertheless, the woman's declaration is certainly a stretch of her faith and possibly

Jesus then responds to the woman: “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”⁸³ Jesus’s address of the woman as “daughter [θυγάτηρ]” shows endearment and further links this woman to the little girl, Jairus’s “daughter [θυγάτηρ],” whose fate is still hung in suspense. Jesus speaks of the woman’s “faith [ἡ πίστις],”⁸⁴ which began with her believing that Jesus had the power to heal her and continued as she declared in front of the crowd what had happened to her. The context of Jesus’s response—that the woman is seeking physical healing and receives it because of her faith—leads the reader to understand the *salvation*⁸⁵ of which Jesus speaks to refer to her physical illness.

However, there is a deeper literary purpose for Luke using this word.

Luke has used the verb *σώζω* or the nouns *σωτηρία* or *σωτήρ* eleven times up to this point in his narrative. Most recently, the idea that salvation and forgiveness of sins are closely associated manifests itself quite clearly when Jesus forgives “a woman of the city, who was a sinner” (8:36-50). Jesus has dinner at Simon the Pharisee’s house, and this woman—who could possibly be a prostitute by implication of the preposition “of the city”⁸⁶—pours ointment on his feet, washing them with her hair. The Pharisees⁸⁷ are

even, as Jesus describes in the parable of the sower, a movement toward “maturity” (8:14).

⁸³ Most major Bible translations mistranslate Jesus’s response here, favoring a more contextual interpretation. The NRSV, ESV, and HCSB all translate his response, “Daughter, your faith has made you well.” The ASV translates, “Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.” The NIV11 translates, “Daughter, your faith has healed you.”

⁸⁴ For a discussion of faith, see pgs. 21-22.

⁸⁵ For a discussion of salvation, see pgs. 21-22.

⁸⁶ Bock *Luke*, 7:37; Green, *Luke*, 309; Nolland, *Luke*, 353; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 689.

⁸⁷ For a description of Pharisees, see pg. 32.

scandalized that Jesus would allow such inappropriate contact with a sinner, so Jesus tells them a story about two debtors who owe a moneylender different amounts. Jesus asks Simon, “When they could not pay, he cancelled both of their debts. Now which of them will love him more?” (7:42). Simon answers correctly—“The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt”—but Jesus then explains that the woman who washed his feet loves him more than the Pharisees do. Thus, Jesus says to the woman, like he did to the paralyzed man (5:17-26), “Your sins are forgiven” (7:49), and the Pharisees react in a similar manner, asking, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” (7:49).

Jesus then says to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace” (7:50). This is the exact phrase—word for word—that Jesus says to the woman with the flow of blood, and it is the first story in Luke where the phrase occurs. The difference between the two is that the first woman is forgiven of her sins and the second woman is healed of her illness, yet, at some level, both of them are saved by their faith. Either Luke is using *σώζω* the same way in both passages or he is using them differently. Because the contexts are so different, it seems clear that the word may well have a slightly different nuance in each story. From the story that Jesus tells in defense of the first woman’s washing of his feet, it seems clear that the progression of her faith is as follows: 1) she is forgiven a great debt, 2) she loves Jesus enough to wash his feet with ointment, her tears, and her hair, and 3) Jesus assures her of her forgiveness.

The key to understanding Luke’s use of *σώζω* in the story of the woman with the flow of blood is that this word, though here having a meaning more geared toward the healing of a physical ailment, forces the reader’s mind back to salvation from sin and exile and membership in the people of God. At the beginning of this chapter even, Jesus,

in the parable of the sower, says, “The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not have faith and be saved [ἵνα μὴ πιστεύσαντες σωθῶσιν]” (8:12). This passage is clearly speaking of those who have heard Jesus’s message to repent and turn back to God but are kept by the devil from having faith in Jesus’s message. Because of this lack of faith, they are not saved from sin. Thus, when Jesus heals the woman and tells her, “Your faith has saved you,” the reader should understand that he has literally healed her of her flow of blood and that he is also alluding to Israel’s salvation from exile and sin that is coming and has begun with these healings. Jesus’s next words, “Go in peace” only cement this understanding. The idea of *peace* [εἰρήνην] is closely associated with salvation throughout Luke (1:27; 2:14:7:50).

Now that Jesus has healed the woman of her flow of blood and commended her faith, Luke shifts back to the original story of Jairus and his daughter. While Jesus is still speaking, someone from Jairus’s house comes and says to him, “Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the teacher any more” (8:49). Jesus hears him, though, and says, “Do not fear; only have faith, and she will be saved” (8:50). Thus, the stakes are heightened as the girl is no longer just sick but now dead. It seems that Jesus’s taking the time to heal the woman with the flow of blood ends up delaying them so much that the little girl dies before he can arrive and heal her. Jesus, however, understands this doubt that will breed with the absoluteness of death and cuts them off, telling them not to fear. Then comes his exhortation, “Only have faith, and she will be saved” (8:50), which echoes his affirmation of the woman with the flow of blood, “Your faith has saved you” (8:48). Jesus’s exhortation this time is on the other side of the healing. Instead of saying that Jairus has

had faith and his daughter has been saved, he says that *if* Jairus has faith that Jesus has the authority to heal his daughter, she will be saved.

Presumably, Jairus does have this faith, so they continue to his house, where Jesus goes into the room with only Peter, James, and John, along with Jairus and his wife. They are met with “all...weeping and mourning for her,” but Jesus says to them, “Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping” (8:52). At this response, they laugh, mocking Jesus for what they perceive to be his misunderstanding of her condition. However, Jesus knows what he is saying, and despite the mourners’ lack of faith in Jesus’s authority over death,⁸⁸ he enters the room and calls to her, saying, “Child, rise” (8:54). Her spirit returns, and she gets up. Jesus commands them to give her something to eat to prove that she is alive,⁸⁹ and tells them “to tell no one what had happened” (8:56).⁹⁰

In these two stories sandwiched together, the reader has seen Jesus heal two women—a woman with a flow of blood that had riddled her for twelve years and a twelve-year-old girl who is fatally ill and then dies. In each of these situations, faith—believing in Jesus’s authority over the physical—is a key element to each of the women’s physical salvation. In the story of the woman with the flow of blood, she is commended for her faith, which manifests itself in her pushing through a stifling crowd and then admitting to touching and being healed by Jesus. In the story of the dead little girl, her father is exhorted to have faith, and though the text does not explicitly say that he has faith, his leading Jesus to the deathbed of his daughter despite already having been told of

⁸⁸ Green, *Luke*, 351.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 351.

⁹⁰ For a discussion of the “messianic secret,” see footnote 42 on pg. 29.

her death is certainly a sign of faith that Jesus is able even to raise the dead. Both women are saved physically, and both physical healings allude to salvation from judgment from exile and sin, which Luke has been showing throughout his book to be central to Jesus's earthly ministry.

II. The Leprous Man who Returns (Luke 17:11-19)

¹¹And while they were going to Jerusalem, he [Jesus] was passing through between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²And as he entered a certain village, ten leprous men, who were standing at a distance, came before him, ¹³and they lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, master, show us mercy." ¹⁴And seeing, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And while they were going to them, they were cleansed. ¹⁵But one of them, seeing that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, ¹⁶and fell on his face at his feet, giving him thanks. (Now he was a Samaritan.) ¹⁷But answering, Jesus said, "Were not ten cleansed? But the nine, where are they? ¹⁸Was no one found turning back to give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹And he [Jesus] said to him, "Rise and go. Your faith has saved you."

This story comes shortly after the disciples ask Jesus, "Increase our faith" (17:5).

The subsequent teaching and story serve to illustrate what the "faith" of Jesus's disciples should look like. Luke describes ten men who are diseased and come to Jesus for help.

After Jesus heals them, only one returns to praise God, and he is the only one whose faith is ultimately commended.

At the beginning of the story, the reader finds Jesus "passing through between Samaria and Galilee" while "going to Jerusalem" (17:11).⁹¹ Jesus enters "a certain

⁹¹ This journey seems impossible from a geographic perspective. If one were passing in between Samaria and Galilee, one would not be heading toward Jerusalem. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1153, understands Luke to have "an inaccurate knowledge of Palestinian geography" while Bock, *Luke*, 1401-1402; L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Sacra Pagina; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981), 260; and Nolland, *Luke*, 845-846, understand Jesus's journey here to be more "theological" than geographic. They argue that it is toward *his death in Jerusalem* that Jesus is journeying, not as if he is on a direct,

village,” and there “ten leprous men, who were standing at a distance, came before him” (17:12).⁹² They lift up their voices and say, “Jesus, master, show us mercy” (17:13). Luke has used this title, “master [ἐπιστάτα],” for Jesus five times up to this point, and each time, it has been from the lips of a disciple (5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49). Now, these leprous men have somehow heard of Jesus as someone important, possibly even with the power to heal them, and they are asking him to show them “mercy” (17:13).⁹³

Jesus sees them and says, “Go and show yourselves to the priests” (17:14). Jesus is following the Mosaic law (Lev. 14:1-32) in telling the men to show themselves to the priests. By doing so, they will complete the required sacrifices and cleansing rituals to be

straight-line path toward the city. Luke, however, certainly does not make this clear in the text, and neither time that Jesus has foretold his death thus far (9:21-22, 43-45) has he even mentioned Jerusalem. A much easier explanation is that Luke saying that he is “going to Jerusalem” does not necessarily mean that he was taking the quickest, most efficient route. He could certainly have locations to visit, which are not on the direct path on the way to Jerusalem. Green, *Luke*, 621; and Johnson, *Luke*, 260, also note that this ambiguity could serve to hint at the fact that some of these lepers the reader is about to meet may be Samaritans.

⁹² For a discussion on leprosy, see pgs. 11-13.

⁹³ This verb, *to show mercy* [ἐλεέω], Luke has used only once as Jesus recounts the words of the rich man sent to Hades: “Father Abraham, show me mercy, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish” (16:24). Luke will use the word again, in a similar way to the lepers, in the mouth of a blind man imploring Jesus (18:38-39). Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1154, notes, “It is an implicit request for help, but whether it would connote a request for alms or a miracle may be debated.” Luke’s first use makes it seem like the lepers could just be asking for mercy in the sense of alleviation of pain. However, in his later use, Jesus asks the blind man what he wants, and he says, “Lord, that I might see” (18:41). Thus, it is clear that in that context, the blind man asks to be shown mercy, in the sense of being healed. Therefore, in this passage, just one chapter before Luke uses the word clearly in the sense of asking to be shown mercy by being healed, the leprous men are also asking to be shown mercy by being healed.

welcomed back into the community.⁹⁴ The men follow Jesus's command even though he does not heal them before he tells them to go, but as they go, they are all "cleansed [ἐκαθαρίσθησαν]" (17:14). Presumably, nine of the men go on to see the priests, but one of them turns back, glorifies God, and falls at Jesus's feet in thanks (17:15). The man has turned back from going to the temple in Jerusalem to complete his cleansing ritual; instead, he has come to Jesus. As Green observes, "He recognizes that the restorative power of God is manifest in Jesus."⁹⁵ At this point, Luke reveals that this man is indeed a Samaritan (17:16).⁹⁶ This is the second time that Luke has presented a Samaritan in favorable light. The first is when Jesus tells the parable about the Samaritan who, unlike a priest and a Levite, shows mercy to a man who is beaten and left for dead (10:25-37). This Samaritan leper, like the first, is to be commended, but instead of it being for the mercy that he has shown to another, it is for his response to the mercy shown to him by Jesus.

Jesus then says to those with him, "Were not ten cleansed? But the nine, where are they? Was no one found turning back to give praise to God but this foreigner?" The reader's mind jumps back to the centurion, of whose faith Jesus says, "Not even in Israel have I found such great faith" (7:9). Both of these men are outsiders to the community of the Jews, yet Jesus has found in both of them, qualities that are superior to those shown by Jews—for the Gentile centurion, it is faith (7:9), and for the Samaritan leper, it is thankfulness through glorifying God (17:16, 18). Indeed, even in the Samaritan of Jesus's

⁹⁴ Bock, Luke, 1154-1155.

⁹⁵ Green, *Luke*, 621.

⁹⁶ For a discussion of Samaritans, see pg. 17.

earlier parable, Jesus finds mercy that is absent in both a priest and a Levite (10:36-37). This Samaritan is the only one of all ten lepers to return and give thanks; thus, qualities that Jesus commends may be emulated even by those who seem to be outside of God's people.

Jesus then turns to the man and says, "Rise and go. Your faith has saved you" (17:19). Once again, Jesus uses this phrase to commend someone's faith. The reader should remember the sinful woman, who fell before Jesus to wash his feet, seeking forgiveness (7:36-50); the woman with the flow of blood, who fought through the dense crowd to touch the fringe of Jesus's garment, was healed completely, and told the whole crowd what had happened to her (8:43-48); and Jairus, who continued to have faith that Jesus could heal his daughter even after he found out she was dead (8:40-42, 49-56). Just before this story, the disciples ask Jesus, "Increase our faith," and he responds, "If you have faith like a mustard seed, you could say to a mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you" (17:6). Indeed, this leprous man has faith that Jesus is able to heal him, and Jesus does.⁹⁷ Once again, Luke's use of *save* [σῴζω] echoes the forgiveness of sins granted to the woman who washes Jesus' feet (7:36-50) and alludes to

⁹⁷ It is interesting to note that all ten lepers were healed, yet Jesus only commends the faith of the one who returns. At first, the reader may assume that this must mean that the one man who returns is "saved" in a way that is different than the other nine. As Green, *Luke*, 627, observes, "The Samaritan was not only cleansed, but on account of faith gained something more—namely, insight into Jesus' role in the inbreaking kingdom. He is enabled to see and is thus enlightened, itself a metaphor for redemption." This, however, is overstated and reads more into the text than is actually there. Jesus's only choosing to commend one of the lepers' faith does not mean that they are all "saved" in different ways. It could, however, mean that this one who returns has a different type of faith—one that is thankful for the healing that the man has received. Indeed, Luke makes this clear when the man's returning, in contrast to the other nine's not returning, becomes the emphasis of Jesus's response, where he says, "Was no one found turning back to give praise to God but this foreigner?" (17:18).

a salvation greater than that which is simply from physical disease—return from exile and membership in God’s people. Furthermore, this faith of a Samaritan, like that of the Gentile centurion (7:1-10)—both outsiders of God’s people—foreshadows the spread of faith in Jesus from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth and thus the inclusion of both Gentiles and Samaritans in God’s people.

III. The Blind Man (Luke 18:35-43)

³⁵And while he was coming near to Jericho, a certain blind man was sitting by the road begging. ³⁶And hearing a crowd passing through, he asked what this meant. ³⁷And they told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” ³⁸And he cried out, saying, “Jesus, son of David, show me mercy.” ³⁹And those in front rebuked him that he might be silent, but he cried out even more, “Son of David, show me mercy.” ⁴⁰And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, ⁴¹“What do you want to happen?” He said, “Lord, that I might see.” ⁴²And Jesus said to him, “See. Your faith has saved you.” ⁴³And immediately, he saw and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, seeing, praised God.

Jesus has just foretold his death and resurrection for the third time (18:31-34), and now he is drawing near to Jericho (18:35), thereby placing him nearer to Jerusalem, where he will reach his death at the cross. On the way, he encounters a blind man whose faith in Jesus to give him his sight.

On Jesus’s way to Jericho, there is “a certain blind man” “sitting by the road begging” (18:35). He hears “a crowd passing through,” so he asks them what is going on (18:36). They tell him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by” (18:37). Presumably, the man has heard of Jesus and his ability to heal because he cries out, “Jesus, son of David, show me mercy” (18:38). Jesus’s ability to heal is not the only rumor that the man has heard, however, because he calls Jesus, “Son of David [υἱὲ Δαυίδ].” This is the first time that Luke uses this title for Jesus, although he does describe Jesus’s Davidic lineage (1:32-32;

2:4; 3:31). It is hard to tell whether Luke intends to emphasize this title of Jesus,⁹⁸ but it certainly seems, at the least, intentionally placed because the blind man calls Jesus “Son of David” twice in direct contrast to the crowd that tells the blind man that it is “Jesus of Nazareth” passing by (18:37-38).

The idea of a messianic son of David begins in 1 Sam. 7 when Yahweh makes a covenant with David:⁹⁹

The LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever. (1 Sam. 7:11-16)

During the Exile, this understanding that Yahweh would reestablish David’s throne became prominent, as in Psalm 89:

You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
‘I will establish your offspring forever,
and build your throne for all generations.’” (Psalm 89:1-4)

D. R. Bauer summarizes some of the prophets’ treatments of this idea:

Prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai and Zechariah spoke of the Davidic “righteous Branch” who would soon appear to reconcile the people to their God, re-establish Israel in the land, cleanse the land of foreign oppressors as well as unrighteous Israelites, and cause people from all over the earth to flock to Jerusalem where they would behold the glory of Yahweh (Jer 23:5-8; 30:21-22; Ezek 37:21-23; Zech 3:8-10; 6:12-15; Hag 2:21-22).¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1216, writes, “Luke uses the title here because it was in ‘Mk,’ but it has no special meaning or function in this Gospel, such as it has in the Matthean Gospel.”

⁹⁹ D. R. Bauer, “Son of David,” in J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 767.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 767.

While Jewish expectations were diverse, the expectation of some type of messiah from the line of David became clear in the Second Temple period. One example of such expectation is in *Psalms of Solomon*, which speaks directly of “the Son of David”: “See, Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David, to rule over your servant Israel in the time known to you, O God” (17:21).¹⁰¹ Even Luke agrees with this idea of a messiah coming from the line of David to reign over God’s people. When Gabriel appears to Mary and prophesies about Jesus’s birth, he says, “He will be great and will be called son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom” (1:32-33). Again, in his prophecy, Zechariah says, “Blessed be the Lord God Israel, for he . . . has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David” (1:69). Later in Luke, and then repeated by Peter in Acts, Jesus asks, “How can they say that the Christ is David’s son? For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’” David thus calls him Lord, so how is he his son?” (Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:34-36). Here, Jesus makes it clear that he is, in some sense, greater than David.

Thus, the reader hears this title on the lips of the blind man, and the thought of one who is returning rule to the Davidic line of God’s kingdom comes to mind. While the blind man himself may not have this breadth of understanding, he must have some knowledge of the idea for him to use the title twice even though the crowd does not. Furthermore, he understands that, though Jesus’s authority in being the Son of David

¹⁰¹ R. B. Wright (trans.), “Psalms of Solomon,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 667; Bauer, “Son of David,” 767.

involves him ruling God's kingdom, it also involves him helping those in need, such as healing those who cannot heal themselves.¹⁰²

“Those in front”¹⁰³ rebuke the man and try to silence him, but he is desperate for Jesus to heal him (18:39). He cries out even more, “Son of David, show me mercy” (18:39). In his persistence, the man emulates the faith that Jesus encourages at the beginning of this chapter when he speaks of the widow who bothers a judge persistently until he gives her justice over her adversary (18:1-8). At the end of the parable, Jesus asks, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (18:8).¹⁰⁴ Luke shows the reader that, in this man, Jesus has already found such faith.

At this, Jesus stops and commands people to bring the man to him (18:40). He asks the man, “What do you want to happen?”, and the man answers, “Lord, that I might see” (18:40-41). Here again the reader notices this common title used in speaking to Jesus, which is a simple term for authority but is also used to refer to God himself.¹⁰⁵ Jesus then says to him, “See. Your faith has saved you.” Once again, Luke depicts Jesus

¹⁰² Green, *Luke*, 663-664.

¹⁰³ Green, *Luke*, 664, notes that “those in front” could mean those “being first in status” rather than those literally in front of the crowd. In this understanding, there could be a deeper meaning, contrasting the blind man with those who lead the people. Luke does not make this clear, however, and regardless, Green observes correctly, “What is transparent is that ‘those in front’ regard this blind beggar as outside the perimeters of Jesus’s ministry, marginal to human society as normally configured, and so outside the boundaries of God’s grace.”

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion of the title *Son of Man*, see pgs. 37-38. It is clear that this verse is speaking of a time in the future when the Son of Man returns. Just before this parable, Jesus speaks about the coming of the kingdom: “The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation” (17:22, 25). Thus, Jesus speaks of his death as, at least, prerequisite to this time of return.

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion on Luke’s use of *Lord* [κύριος] see pgs. 26-27.

as using this phrase, just as he does—word for word—in speaking to the “woman of the city” whose sins he forgives (7:50), the woman with the flow of blood whom he heals (8:48), and the leper who returns to give thanks to God after Jesus heals him and the other nine lepers (17:19). As the word *save* [σώζω] has done before, again it brings to the reader’s mind the idea of forgiveness of sins and salvation from exile. As Jesus has brought this man from blindness to sight, so also he brings God’s people out of exile and back under his rule.

The man is immediately able to see, and then he follows Jesus, “glorifying God” (18:43). This is a similar reaction to the leper who returns to thank Jesus, “glorifying God” (17:15). This man, in contrast to the leper, whom Jesus tells to “go” his own way, follows [ἠκολούθει] Jesus (18:43). Just before this story, the reader encounters a rich ruler, who asks Jesus what he must do “to inherit eternal life” (18:18). He claims to have kept all the commandments since he was young, but when Jesus tells him to sell everything he has and give it to the poor, and then to come and follow [ἀκολουθεῖ] Jesus, the man becomes sad and does not follow him (18:20-23). Jesus then commends the disciples for having followed him, saying, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life” (18:29-30). “The age to come [τῷ αἰῶνι ἐρχομένῳ]” (18:30) is similar language to the time that Jesus gave at the beginning of this section, “The days are coming [ἐλευσόνται ἡμέραι]” (17:22). The “eternal life” seems to be connected to the “treasure in heaven” promised to those who sell all they have and give it to the poor (18:22). Luke never

describes this idea fully, yet it is clear that this “eternal life” is reserved for those who follow Jesus and is given “in the age to come,” when Jesus returns.

Now, this blind man, who has nothing but his newly received sight, follows Jesus. In doing so, he joins himself to God’s people through Jesus and receives eternal life, just as the disciples have done and just as the rich ruler could not do. The reader sees that Jesus is the one who is able to make the blind man see and also the son of David who has come to restore Israel as God’s people. He also hears echoes, through Luke’s use of *save* [σωζω], of the salvation Jesus brings to Israel in the form of forgiveness of sins and the membership in God’s people and eternal life in the age to come, which is given to those who follow him.

IV. The Crippled Man in Lystra (Acts 14:8-18)

⁸And in Lystra, a certain man without strength in his feet, who was crippled from birth and had never walked, sat. ⁹He heard Paul speaking, and Paul, staring at him and seeing that he had faith to be saved, ¹⁰said in a loud voice, “Rise up straight on your feet.” And he leapt up and walked around. ¹¹And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men.” ¹²And they called Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the main speaker. ¹³And the priest of Zeus, whose [temple] was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted, with the crowds, to offer sacrifice. ¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying and saying, ¹⁵“Men, why are you doing these things? We also, of the same nature as you, are men, bringing good news to you, that you should turn from the empty things toward a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them. ¹⁶In past generations, he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. ¹⁷Yet he did not leave himself without a witness—doing good by sending you rains from the heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and joy.” ¹⁸Even by saying these words, they barely restrained the crowds from sacrificing to them.

When Paul and Barnabas hear rumors of plots against them in Iconium, they flee to Lystra, a Roman colony in southern Galatia.¹⁰⁶ Here they heal a crippled man, similarly to Peter and John in the temple in Jerusalem (3:1-10). The man’s healing, however, while prompting Paul to preach to the people gathered there, does not produce as favorable results as did Peter and John’s experience.

Luke introduces the reader to a man “without strength in his feet, who was crippled from birth and had never walked” (14:8). This man hears Paul speaking, and Paul stares at the man (14:9), just as Peter and John stare at the crippled man in the temple (3:4). At this point, Paul sees that the man has “faith to be saved [πίστιν τοῦ σωθῆναι]” (14:9). The reader remembers the phrase from the lips of Jesus, “Your faith has saved you [ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε],” as he commends the woman of the city (Luke 7:50), the woman with the flow of blood (8: 48), the leprous man (17:19), and the blind man (18:42). As in the previous story of the crippled man healed by Peter and John, Luke makes it clear that this use of *σώζω* refers to the man’s physical healing. Paul sees that the man will have faith that Paul can heal him. As in the cases of the woman with the flow of blood (Luke 8:48), the leper who returns (17:19), and the blind man (18:42), this use of *σώζω* refers to the man’s physical healing yet alludes to the greater salvation of Israel from exile back under God’s rule.

Paul says to the man, “Rise up straight on your feet,” and the man leaps up and walks around (14:10). The crowd is amazed and takes Paul and Barnabas as gods—Paul as Hermes, since he is “the main speaker,” and Barnabas as Zeus (14:12). The priest of

¹⁰⁶ D. L. Bock, *Acts* (The Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 474.

Zeus even brings “oxen and garland” in order to try and offer sacrifice to them with the people (14:13). When Paul and Barnabas realize what is happening, they tear their garments—a sign of horror directed typically in response to blasphemy toward God¹⁰⁷—and rush toward the crowd to stop them (14:14). They cry out, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also, of the same nature as you, are men” (14:15). The last thing Paul and Barnabas want is for the crowd to think that they are responsible for the man’s healing, so they make it clear that they are men just like those in the crowd.

Paul and Barnabas go on to explain the “good news” they bring—that they “should turn from the empty things toward a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them” (14:15). Here, Luke shows the reader the same message preached by Peter earlier in Acts in slightly different language, but the essential message of turning back toward God is still central. This God is the God of nature, of whom everyone, even the Gentiles of Lystra can see glimpses in “the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them” (14:15). Paul explains further, “In past generations, he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without a witness—doing good by sending you rains from the heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and joy” (14:16-17). God, although he has allowed nations to do as they wish, has not left them without signs that bear witness to him: sending rain, giving fruitful harvests, and filling their hearts with food and joy (14:17). While the reader may be confused as to why Paul does not mention Jesus, it may

¹⁰⁷ Bock, *Acts*, 477; F.F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 276; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (The Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1964), 531-32; D. G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 409.

be helpful to consider that his context is quite a bit different than Peter's when he heals the crippled man in the temple. Peter is speaking to Jews, who already believe in the God of Israel, while Paul is speaking to pagans, who believe in multiple gods. The first basic idea he must get across is the existence of the one "living God" (14:15). Yet the Old Testament is clear that there is to be an eventual mass conversion of Gentiles, and this idea is portrayed by the picture of the nations flocking toward Zion (e.g., Isaiah 19:23; Zech. 8:21; Jer. 3:17).¹⁰⁸

The reader should also see that this healing story begins closely paralleling Peter's healing of the crippled man in the temple (3:1-10). Peterson observes:

In both contexts the miracle illustrates the signs and wonders the Lord enabled his servants to perform, first among Jews in Jerusalem, and then among the Gentiles (cf. 2:43; 14:3). Both miracles are followed by potential (3:12, 16) or real misunderstanding about the event (14:11-13), and provoke addresses which challenge those misunderstandings.¹⁰⁹

Instead of many believing as they did in response to Peter's speech, however, Paul and Barnabas are barely able to restrain the crowds from going through with their sacrifices to them (14:18). Nevertheless, the crippled man, who is healed physically, serves as an example of one who has "faith to be saved" (14:9), and in Paul and Barnabas saving this man from being crippled to being able to walk, the reader is reminded of the apostles' mission to proclaim the message that Jesus has come to bring God's people from out of exile and back under his rule.

¹⁰⁸ McKnight, "Gentiles," 259.

¹⁰⁹ Peterson, *Acts*, 406.

CHAPTER 5

PETER'S EARLY SPEECHES

I. The Crippled Man at the Temple (Acts 3:1-4:12)

3:1 Now Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man crippled from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple—the Beautiful Gate—to ask for alms from those entering the temple. 3 Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. 4 But Peter, with John, stared at him and said, “Look at us.” 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, “I do not have silver or gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk.” 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately, his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 And leaping up, he stood and walked and went with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and they recognized him as the one sitting at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms.

11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's, astounded. 12 And seeing, Peter answered the crowd, “Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as though by our own power or godliness we have made him walk? 13 The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob—the God of our fathers—glorified his servant Jesus, whom you, indeed, delivered over and denied before the face of Pilate, when he decided to release him. 14 But you denied the holy and righteous one and asked for a murderer to be given to you. 15 And you killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. 16 And by faith in his name, his name has made strong this man whom you see and know. And the faith that is through him gave him this perfect health in front of all of you.

17 And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, even as your rulers. 18 But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets—that the Christ would suffer—he fulfilled in this way. 19 Repent, therefore, and turn back for the wiping away of your sins, 20 so that refreshing times may come from the face of the Lord and that he may send the one appointed for, Christ Jesus, 21 whom heaven, indeed, must receive until the time of restoring all things, about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets for ages. 22 Moses, indeed, said, “The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You will listen to him in all that he tells you. 23 And it will be that every soul who does not listen to this

prophet will be destroyed from the people. ²⁴*And also, all the prophets, from Samuel and those after him, as many as have spoken, proclaimed these days.* ²⁵*You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, “And by your offspring, all the families of the earth will be blessed.”* ²⁶*First to you, God, who raised up his servant, sent him, blessing you by turning each of you from your evil ways.*

^{4:1}*But while they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ²provoked because they were teaching the people and proclaiming, in Jesus, a resurrection from the dead. ³And they seized them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴But many of those who heard the word had faith, and the number of men came to about five thousand.*

⁵*And on the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes came together in Jerusalem, ⁶with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander and as many as were in the high-priestly family. ⁷And when they placed them [Peter and John] in the middle, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are being examined today about a good deed done for a crippled man—by what means he was saved—let it be known to all of you and all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man stands before you well. ¹¹He is the stone—the one rejected by you, the builders, and the one who has become the cornerstone. ¹²And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*

After Jesus death (Luke 23:26-49), resurrection (24:1-12), and ascension (24:50-53; Acts 1:6-11), God sends the Holy Spirit down upon the apostles (2:1-4). Peter then preaches his first sermon at Pentecost, resulting in three thousand people being baptized (2:14-41). Now, Luke presents the reader with a physical healing performed by Peter and John in the name of Jesus upon a crippled man outside of the temple in Jerusalem. Peter gives a speech to the people in the temple and later to the leaders who arrest him, explaining that it is by Jesus and faith in his name that the man was saved. Luke uses this man’s faith as an example of the faith required, in conjunction with repentance and calling upon the name of the Lord, to be saved.

Peter and John are entering the temple when they come upon “a man crippled from birth,” who begs for alms every day at the “Beautiful Gate” (3:2).¹¹⁰ He asks them for alms, and they stop. Peter says, “Look at us” (3:3). The man expects them to give him alms, but instead, Peter says, “I do not have silver or gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk” (3:5-6). At this, the man leaps up and begins to walk and praise God (3:8). He goes with them into the temple, and the people there recognize him as the crippled man (3:9-10).

Now, the people, “filled with wonder and amazement,” run together to Solomon’s portico, a covered colonnade that runs along the eastern side of the outer temple,¹¹¹ to find out what happened. Peter uses this opportunity to preach to the people. He begins by making it clear that it was not of their own power that they healed this man (3:12). He then explains to them that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob “glorified his servant Jesus” (3:13). This glorification is an allusion to Isaiah 52:13 (LXX), where the prophet writes, “Behold, my servant will understand and be exalted and be glorified very much.”¹¹² Peter then goes on to explain how this glorification happened:

whom you, indeed, delivered over and denied before the face of Pilate, when he decided to release him. But you denied the holy and righteous one and asked for a

¹¹⁰ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 278; and Johnson, *Acts*, 65, observe that it is unclear which gate to the temple this “Beautiful Gate” is. Bock, *Acts*, 160; Bruce, *Acts*, 77; and Peterson, *Acts*, 168; note that this could be the Nicanor Gate, which was visually more beautiful than the others. Regardless, Luke’s purpose for including the gate is giving an exact location where the story occurs.

¹¹¹ While Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 279, is unsure of the location of Solomon’s portico, Bock, *Acts*, 167; Bruce, *Acts*, 80; and Peterson, *Acts*, 172, agree that it ran along the eastern side of the outer temple.

¹¹² All *Septuagint* translations are the author’s own from A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006). Bock, *Acts*, 169; Bruce, *Acts*, 81; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 284-85; Johnson, *Acts*, 67; and Peterson, *Acts*, 174, agree on this allusion.

murderer to be given to you. And you killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. (3:13-15)

Instead of allowing Pilate to release Jesus, they “denied the holy and righteous one” (3:14). These titles are rooted in the Old Testament. Aaron (Psalm 106:16) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:9) are referred to as “holy,” and Noah is referred to as “righteous” (Gen. 6:9).¹¹³ Also, “righteous one” and “holy and righteous ones” appear in *I Enoch* to speak of the messiah and his people (38:2; 48:1, 7; 51:2).¹¹⁴ Indeed, Luke has already used “the holy one” to refer to Jesus through the lips of a demon-possessed man (Luke 4:34). The reader should understand these titles in contrast to the “murderer,” for whom the people traded Jesus (3:14).

Jesus is also “the author of life” (3:15). David G. Peterson explains this title: “By virtue of his death and resurrection, Jesus is the originator of new life for others, as the argument in vv. 16-21 goes on to suggest. His life-giving power has just been powerfully illustrated in the restoration of life to the lame man’s limbs.”¹¹⁵ It is this Jesus whom the people, as Peter describes, “killed” (3:15). God, however, “raised [Jesus] from the dead,” and it is to this story that Peter identifies himself and John as “witnesses [μάρτυρες]” (3:15). Here, Peter finally comes to explain how the man was healed.

Peter says, “And by faith in his name, his name has made strong this man, whom you see and know. And the faith that is through him gave him this perfect health in front

¹¹³ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 286.

¹¹⁴ Bruce, *Acts*, 82.

¹¹⁵ Peterson, *Acts*, 176, goes on to note that “author [τὸν ἀρχηγόν]” could be translated “prince” or “ruler,” but he opts with “author” because Peter’s argument goes on to describe how Jesus’s death and resurrection provide life for the lame man (3:16) and may provide life for Peter’s audience (3:17-26).

of all of you” (3:16). It is “faith” that made this man able to walk. The reader should observe the ambiguity of whose faith this is. Is it the faith of the crippled man or that of Peter and John? Like the men who brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus (Luke 5:17-26), Peter is likely referring to the faith of both the crippled man and the apostles.¹¹⁶ Bock, however, notes, “Certainly the lame man is the key one who responds.”¹¹⁷ The crippled man accepts Peter’s charge to rise and walk and responds in faith. Though the extent of his knowledge of Jesus may only be that Peter tells him to get up and walk by Jesus’s name, the man trusts that Peter’s words are true. Thus, like the two leprous men (Luke 5:12-16; 17:11-19), the paralyzed man (5:17-26), the woman with the flow of blood (8: 43-48), and the blind man (18:35-43), it is this faith that the man has that allows him to come to “perfect health” (3:16). Furthermore, this reference to “his name” echoes Peter’s first sermon at Pentecost, where he quotes Joel 2:32, “And it will be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved [σωθήσεται]” (2:21). Just as Peter urges those at Pentecost to “call on the name of the Lord,” he now tells those in the temple that it is by “faith in his name” that this man has been healed (2:21; 3:16).¹¹⁸ It is at this point that Luke gives the reader insight into the connection between faith for physical healing and a broader faith in Jesus. As Peterson bridges the first section of Peter’s speech to the

¹¹⁶ While Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 286 is unsure whose faith this refers to, Bock, *Acts*, 172; and Peterson, *Acts*, 177, argue that it is the faith of both the crippled man and the apostles.

¹¹⁷ Bock, *Acts*, 172.

¹¹⁸ Once again, Luke blurs the line between Jesus and God by paralleling the LXX translation of Yahweh, “Lord,” with Jesus. For discussion, see pgs. 26-27.

second, “Such a miracle calls for faith in Jesus on the part of Peter’s audience.”¹¹⁹

Thus, Peter’s speech turns toward his audience. He acknowledges that they “acted in ignorance” when they killed Jesus and that “what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets—that the Christ would suffer—he fulfilled in this way” (3:17-18). After this, however, he calls them to repentance:

Repent, therefore, and turn back for the wiping away of your sins, so that refreshing times may come from the face of the Lord and that he may send the one appointed for, Christ Jesus, whom heaven, indeed, must receive until the time of restoring all things, about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets for ages. (3:19-21)

This call is similar to the one Peter gives after his speech at Pentecost: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (2:38). The reader understands that if Peter’s audience repents¹²⁰ and turns away from their rejection of Jesus, their sins will be wiped away, just as the crippled man, who has faith in the name of Jesus, is made to be able to walk.

The idea of “the wiping away of your sins [τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας]” finds its precedent in the Old Testament. The verb occurs several times in conjunction with sins, iniquities, or transgressions (Ps. 51:1, 9; 109:13; Jer. 18:23), but the most helpful occurrence is in Isaiah 43:25 (LXX), which reads, “I, I am he who blots out [ὁ ἐξαλείφω] your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.” Once again, this blotting or wiping away comes in the context of having sinned to

¹¹⁹ Peterson, *Acts*, 177.

¹²⁰ For a discussion on repentance, see pgs. 4-5.

the point that Yahweh sent Israel into exile. Thus, the wiping away of their sins results in a return from exile.

These “refreshing” times that come afterward refer to the refreshment brought to God’s people through the Holy Spirit. This is clear because of the parallel between what happens after forgiveness of sins in Peter’s first speech—“you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (2:38)—and what happens after the wiping away of sins in the second—“so that refreshing times may come from the face of the Lord” (3:20).¹²¹ Furthermore, Peter follows the thought line of Isaiah, who just verses after speaking of the wiping away of transgressions, writes, “For I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants” (Isaiah 44:3).

Peter then speaks of “the one appointed for, Christ Jesus,” who is in heaven now but will be sent by God for “the time of restoring all things” (3:21). He then goes on to explain what this restoration looks like:

Moses, indeed, said, “The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You will listen to him in all that he tells you. And it will be that every soul who does not listen to this prophet will be destroyed from the people. And also, all the prophets, from Samuel and those after him, as many as have spoken, proclaimed these days. (3:22-24)

He quotes Moses’ prophecy of Jesus (Deut. 18:15, 18, 19) and, in so doing, shows what happens to those who do not listen to him. Thus, this is why the people are to “repent and turn away”—because if they do not, Jesus, when he returns, will destroy “from the people” those who do not listen to him (3:17, 23). Peter then connects this idea back to the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 22:16-18), in which Yahweh promises Abraham

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 180-81.

offspring who will be God's people. It is this designation of God's people from which this destruction comes. Those who do not listen to Jesus and repent will be destroyed "from the people" (3:23). This phrase, "shall be destroyed from the people [ἐξολεθρευθήσεται ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ]" is used twice in the Old Testament (Ex. 30:33; Lev. 23:29 LXX), and both times refer to the removal of someone from among God's people who has broken one of God's laws. Thus, those who repent are members in God's covenant people; those who do not are removed. Peter then shows that the covenant with Abraham intended for "all the families of the earth [to] be blessed" (3:25). First, however, Jesus was sent to Israel, as Peter says, "blessing you by turning each of you from your evil ways" (3:26). Those who repent of their evil ways and return to God are members of God's people, but those who spurn Jesus and continue to sin against, are removed from God's people.

As Peter concludes his sermon, "the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees" come to them, upset because "they were teaching the people and proclaiming, in Jesus, a resurrection from the dead" (4:2). "The captain of the temple" is the second-in-command to the high priest and acted as a head of the temple guard.¹²² The Sadducees are a sect of Judaism that did not believe in the future general resurrection, as Luke has pointed out earlier (Luke 20:27). Thus, the reader understands that, for the Sadducees at least, the belief in a resurrection alone is wrong, but the addition of "in Jesus" warrants arrest. This group of leaders seizes Peter and John and places them in custody until the next day because it is already evening (4:3). Luke then informs the

¹²² Bock, *Acts*, 186; Bruce, *Acts*, 89; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 297; Peterson, *Acts*, 187.

reader of the outcome of Peter’s speech: “But many of those who heard the word had faith, and the number of men came to about five thousand” (4:4).

The next day, even more leaders come together—the rulers; elders; scribes; Annas, the high priest; Caiaphas; along with John and Alexander, two unknown members of the high priestly family (4:5-6)¹²³—and question Peter and John: “By what power or by what name did you do this?” (4:7). Peter, “filled with the Holy Spirit,” begins his explanation: “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today about a good deed done for a crippled man—by what means he was saved [σέσωται]” (4:8-9). Luke has used *save* [σώζω]¹²⁴ three times up to this point in Acts. First, it occurs in Peter’s quote of Joel 2:32, speaking of those to be “saved [σωθήσεται]” by calling on “the name of the Lord” (2:21). This quotation comes before exile but, nevertheless, calls the Jews to repentance. It prophesies of the day when Yahweh restores “the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem” (Joel 3:1). It is those who call on the name of the Lord who will be saved and restored. Second, *save* occurs in Peter’s exhortation to the people at Pentecost, “Be saved from this crooked generation [τῆς γενεᾶς τῆς σκολιᾶς ταύτης]” (2:40). This exhortation is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 32:5, where Moses says to Israel, “They have dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer his children because they are blemished; they are a crooked and twisted generation [γενεὰ σκολιὰ καὶ διεστραμμένη]” (Deut. 32:5 LXX). Thus, Peter speaks of being saved from among those of God’s people that have

¹²³ Though Caiaphas was actually reigning high priest, Bock, *Acts*, 189; Bruce, *Acts*, 91; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 299; and Peterson, *Acts*, 189, agree that Annas, though actually ex-high priest still held enough influence to be referred to by Luke as “high priest.” Furthermore, Peterson, *Acts*, 189, notes that Luke has referred to their office together in Luke 2:32: “During the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphus.”

¹²⁴ For a discussion on salvation, see pgs. 22-23.

rebelled against him, much like Peter speaks in Acts 3:23 of those who will be “destroyed from the people” for not listening to Jesus. Third, the word occurs in recounting that “the Lord added to them daily those who were being saved” (2:47), that is, those were being saved in the sense of repenting of their sins and becoming members of God’s people through Jesus.

Clearly, Luke has been using this word in a more elevated sense than simply being healed physically. It is clear from the context, nevertheless, that Peter is referring to the crippled man’s being made able to walk. As Johnson understands, however, “The use of *sōzō* (‘save’) here is deliberate, picking up the theme of ‘those calling on the name of the Lord being saved’ established by 2:21 and carried by 2:47.”¹²⁵ Peterson also notes, “The perfect passive of the verb *sōzō* is used to confirm the man’s restored condition and possibly to hint at the deeper significance of the event.”¹²⁶ Indeed, while Peter is certainly speaking of the crippled man’s restored physical condition, he is nudging the reader to understand the connection to salvation from sin and membership in God’s people—to which his speech turns shortly.

Peter’s speech uses a condensed version of what he says earlier to those gathered in the temple: “Let it be known to all of you and all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man stands before you well” (4:10). The reader remembers Peter’s earlier explanation when he says that it is “by faith in his name” that the man was healed (3:16). Peter then alludes to Jesus’s quotation of Psalm 118:22 at the end of his parable of the

¹²⁵ Johnson, *Acts*, 77.

¹²⁶ Peterson, *Acts*, 191.

wicked tenants in which the tenants kill the heir of the man who owns the vineyard they work. Peter says, “He is the stone—the one rejected by you, the builders, and the one who has become the cornerstone” (4:11). Though Jesus was killed by men, he is integral to God’s plan.

Finally, Peter comes to the climax of his speech: “And there is salvation [ἡ σωτηρία] in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved [σωθηῖναι]” (4:12). Peter offers hope to those who killed Jesus. Though Israel has rebelled against God, been punished through exile, and spurned Jesus, they may repent of their sins, be forgiven, and be God’s people. This salvation, as Luke has shown through Peter, is in the form of the forgiveness or wiping away of sins (2:38; 3:19), the receiving of the Holy Spirit (2:38), the experience of refreshment and restoration (3:20-21), and ultimately, the avoidance of destruction “from the people,” which comes to those who do not listen to Jesus (3:23). While this forgiveness of sins results in membership in God’s people, a refusal to repent and listen to Jesus results in being “destroyed from the people” (3:23). Luke has also shown that repentance (2:38; 3:19) and calling upon the name of Jesus in faith (2:21; 3:16) are what affect this salvation. Peterson observes, “As the lame man experienced healing when he was encouraged to trust in the name of Jesus Christ (3:7), so salvation in the sense of forgiveness, reception of the Holy Spirit, and enjoyment of life in the age to come is available for everyone who repents and is baptized ‘in the name of Jesus Christ’ (2:38-40).”¹²⁷ The faith that the crippled man has in the name of Jesus to make him walk serves as an example for Luke. He is someone who trusts that the name of Jesus is powerful

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 193.

enough to bring physical salvation, and because of this, Peter's audience, and thus the reader, should understand that Jesus is also the one who brings salvation in forgiveness of sins and return from exile into membership in God's people.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Physical healings are integral to Luke's story of Jesus' ministry. They portray the breaking of the kingdom of God into the world through Jesus, show God's inclusion of those excluded by society, and allude to the salvation in forgiveness of sins and membership in God's people received through Jesus by repentance and faith after his resurrection. Luke uses the healing of the leper (Luke 5:12-16), the healing and forgiveness of sins of the paralyzed man (5:17-26), Jesus's statement about his mission (5:29-32), and the healing of the centurion's servant (7:1-10) to show that physical healings allude to forgiveness of sins and that the faith exhibited by those healed physically foreshadows the faith required of members in God's people. Luke then uses variations of the phrase, "Your faith has saved" and specifically, the word *save* [σώζω], in the healing of Jairus's daughter and the woman with the flow of blood (8:40-56), the healing of the leper who then returns (17:11-19), the healing of the blind man (18:35-43), and the healing of the crippled man in Lystra (Acts 14:8-18) to allude to salvation from sin and membership in God's people. Finally, Luke pulls many of these themes together in the healing of the crippled man at the temple and Peter's subsequent speeches (Acts 3:1-4:12), in which faith in Jesus is shown both to heal the crippled man physically and, along with repentance, to save sinners by bringing them into the membership of God's people and thus keeping them from being destroyed "from the people" (3:23). All of

these stories, taken as a whole, show that Luke uses physical healings within his narrative in order to allude to the salvation in forgiveness of sins and membership in God's people received through Jesus by repentance and faith after his resurrection.

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