

Canonical Biblical Interpretation
Independent study research paper

For Dr Douglas Moo

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“THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL”

In two stages - according to Luke-Acts

During the writing of this paper, on Wednesday April 18, 2007, in the Turkish south-eastern city of Malatya, three of my dear brothers were brutally murdered, their throats cut, for the sake of the Lamb.

*I dedicate this brief study to His faithful witnesses:
NECATİ AYDIN, UĞUR YÜKSEL and TILMAN EKKEHART GESKE*

*“I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God...
They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years...
This is the first resurrection... Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!
Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ,
and they will reign with him for a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4-6)*

*“İsa'ya tanıklık ve Tanrı'nın sözü uğruna başı kesilenlerin canlarını da gördüm...
Hepsi dirilip Mesih'le birlikte bin yıl egemenlik sürdüler...
İlk diriliş budur... İlk dirilişe dahil olanlar mutlu ve kutsaldır.
İkinci ölümün bunların üzerinde yetkisi yoktur. Onlar Tanrı'nın ve Mesih'in kâhinleri olacak,
O'nunla birlikte bin yıl egemenlik sürecekler.” (Vahiy 20:4-6)*

Why do the ancient ecumenical creeds typically jump straight from creation to Incarnation, with no reference to Israel or her history? Despite acceptance of Israel's sacred writings as Christian Scripture God is not confessed as "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," but only as the creator of heaven and earth. This tendency is still evident today: in a recent "Call to an Ancient Evangelical Future" the whole "divinely authorized canonical story of the Triune God" has been summarized as "Creation, Incarnation, and Re-creation" (Webber and Kenyon 2006). Yet it can be demonstrated that "failure to reflect seriously on Israel, in the light of all the relevant Biblical data, has serious consequences for the entire enterprise of Christian theology... The widespread repudiation of *replacement theology*, following the *Shoah*, confirms that more attention should have been given to the biblical data concerning the institutional uniqueness of Israel during the early Christian centuries" (Diprose 2000, 176-77).

How is God fulfilling the longings of his faithful people who eagerly hoped for the "consolation" and "restoration" of Israel and the "redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:25, 38; 24:21; Acts 1:6)? It is my contention that he is doing so in two stages or ages within history, each inaugurated by a coming of Jesus Christ (not one eschaton bounded by two comings). I will try to support this understanding through a study of some relevant passages in Luke-Acts, taking note of how the OT is used where possible.

The beginning and end of the messianic "last days"

The prophets of Israel spoke of that great "day" when the Lord himself would "come," following his chosen forerunner (Isa 40:1-11; Mal 3:1). But now, as those "upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor 10:13), we understand that this singular "coming" in the OT is in fact two comings or appearances; the Lord has come, and the Lord is coming again! "Once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself... so Christ also... will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him" (Heb 9:26, 28). The one great "eschaton" or messianic kingdom of God, is worked out in a two-stage or two-coming eschatology, the beginning and end of which can be identified with some certainty.

The gospels and Acts repeatedly refer to the start of Jesus' ministry in Galilee as "*the beginning*" (Mark 1:1; Luke 1:2; John 2:11; 15:27; Acts 1:1, 21-22; 10:37). It is to this era and especially to the resurrection that Jesus' eyewitnesses will testify (Bauckham 2006, 114-15). Jesus proclaimed the good news of God, that the time was fulfilled and the kingdom of God had drawn near (Mark 1:14-15). A related "beginning" is the ascension of Christ with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:15), arguably the

beginning of the messianic age (John 7:39; Hoekema 56). Gregory Beale demonstrates convincingly that according to the NT the messianic “last days” have already begun (Beale 1997, 13-18).

The other terminus of the (mediatorial, Davidic) reign of Christ can be identified with relative certainty from several passages. In 1 Cor 15:22-28 Paul says that Christ's reign must continue until “*the end*, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power,” after which “the Son himself will be made subject to” God the Father. Then God will be “all in all,” likely indicating the beginning of what is commonly called the “eternal state” in which there are no more enemies, and even death itself is done away. Christian theology has consistently held “the perfect reign of God in heaven *after* the Last Judgment” (Rev 20:11-15) to be a distinct element of the kingdom of God. The disagreement has concerned whether there are one or two ages *before* that perfect reign begins (Diprose 2000, 153). I suggest that between these two terminal points, Jesus’ first coming and the transition to the eternal state, two ages are in view: “this present evil age” (Gal 1:4), and “the age to come” (Heb 6:5; cf. 2:5). These distinct stages of Christ’s reign are characterized by “comings” with which they begin:

Jesus does now reign at God’s right hand, but this reign is hidden in heaven. It will become manifest. What is now hidden will be revealed: this is the exact meaning of apocalypse. Jesus who has come will come again.¹... The character of [the present age] is given to it by the character of the earthly ministry of Jesus. It is marked by suffering and by the presence of the signs of the kingdom. (Newbigin 1989, 106)

Since the reign of Jesus the Messiah, in whom all the promises of God are “yes” (2 Cor 1:20), is clearly comprised of two stages, there is inherent probability to a two-stage understanding of the fulfillment of these promises. My interest in studying this subject stems from a certain frustration over ‘either/or’ approaches that seek to locate this fulfillment in either the events related to the first coming of Jesus or the events expected with his second coming. My initial Christian training took place under classical dispensational teaching, which postponed almost all fulfillment of the prophetic program into the future, at the second coming (specifically beginning at the supposed pre-tribulational rapture of the Church). This seems to me clearly untenable in light of the NT usage of OT prophetic scriptures. On the other hand, current biblical scholarship focuses increasingly on themes like the Isaianic New Exodus and Israel’s restoration from Exile as the way of understanding the NT events of Jesus’ life, death, resurrection and the Spirit’s coming. An emphasis on inaugurated eschatology often seems to leave little room for any future for Israel other than as redefined or reconstituted in Jesus and his church (the new Israel). This too leaves major issues unresolved, as Richard Hays points out regarding N.T. Wright’s account of the Jesus’ continuity with Israel:

¹ Newbigin however saw this as the “end of history” (p. 108), requiring him to find “the goal of history” beyond history in the Holy City of Revelation 21-22 (p. 115). I will comment on a philosophy of history at the conclusion.

What justification, if any, does Wright's account leave for the existence of the Jewish people after the death and resurrection of Jesus? By emphasizing so strongly that Jesus took the destiny of Israel upon himself, enacting both their punishment and their restoration, Wright leaves the empirical people of Israel with no role to play—or so it appears. It is the church, the followers of Jesus, who are left to implement the victory that he achieved. But what then of the Jews as a continuing people who have endured in history long after the destruction of the temple, living in (literal) exile from their land for almost 1,900 years and now (literally) returning from exile to a secular state of Israel that bears strikingly little resemblance to the ancient prophetic vision of justice and peace in Mount Zion? This theological problem is hardly unique to Wright's program; it has long vexed Christian theology, beginning with Paul's letter to the Romans. Still, anyone who wants to go forward with the construction of normative Christian ethics by building on the christological foundation that Wright has laid will have to confront this issue of the relation between the people of Israel and the movement that Jesus founded, which very quickly became overwhelmingly Gentile in composition. Does Wright's account give us any safeguards against the idea, articulated by Christian apologists from the second century onwards, that the destruction of the temple in 70 CE was God's final judgment of Israel, God's rejection of the Jewish people? (Hays 1999, 151-52)

An approach that includes a future for Israel as Israel may fit well with the two-stage approach we are examining here. Before pursuing this connection in Luke-Acts some further background work will help prepare the ground.

Pointers to the plausibility of two-stage restoration/redemption proposal

There is an inherent plausibility of a two-stage program, given two 'appearings' of Christ and the fact that many things are clearly not yet fulfilled. Yet a true two-stage fulfillment hermeneutic has by no means been widespread. While there is growing rejection of a simplistic "replacement theology, the theory that the church so fulfills the promises to Israel that the promises to ethnic Israel are rendered obsolete," recent studies focus on a "christocentric replacement of Israel, rather than an 'ecclesial' replacement... Fulfillment in Jesus Christ leads to a rereading of the OT as a witness to the redemption that is found in Jesus Christ" (McKnight 2005, 345). But while it is axiomatic to Christian theology that Jesus is the epitome or glory of God's people Israel (Luke 2:32), His true "firstborn" or beloved "Son" (Exod 4:22) and "Servant" (Isa 49:6), Jesus is still Israel's Messiah, exalted as Lord and Christ, the Christ appointed for them (Acts 2:36; 3:20), the "servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers" (Rom 15:8). He does not replace Israel. In the end, such oversimplification leads back to the conclusion that, "in Christian theology 'Israel' refers to the ethnic nation that becomes the spiritual body of Christ [i.e. the church]" (McKnight 2005, 344).

Frequently today the word "consummation" is substituted for the parousia, thus the new term "*preconsummationist* and its cognates have been proposed as substitutes for the traditional but misleading term *amillennialist* and its cognates" (White 1999, 53). The approach presumes Jesus' return in glory as the consummation. But we do not speak of the Lord's "coming (from an OT perspective) as the "consummation," but as the fulfillment or arrival of the new age. The parousia may better be seen as the

arrival or beginning of the age to come, even the time when the kingdom “comes” (Luke 22:18). Part of the “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” arises from the fact that the eschaton did not arrive in one climactic event ushering in the messianic age as expected, but a previously unforeseen age of mixed results intervenes before the righteous inherit the kingdom (Mat 13:37-43).

Complexity of his “appearing”

The presence of verses which refer to the whole complex of events comprising Jesus first “appearing” — birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation— as a single event (e.g. Heb. 1:3; 9:26; Rev 12:5), warn against too readily narrowing the second coming to a simple one-part event. This “appearing” could likewise refer to a whole complex of events unfolding over a long age.

Chiliasm in the early church and beyond

The ancient church had a strong strain of chiliast teaching. Irenaeus for example, refers extensively to this earthly reign of Christ. Yet during succeeding ages his view fell into disrepute:

Against Heresies, the monumental work of Irenaeus against the Gnostics, ends, to many tastes, with a dull thud, in the chiliastic portrayal of earthly rewards for the faithful. Recent scholarship, echoing the sentiment which led to the suppression of these final chapters (they were only rediscovered in the late sixteenth century), has either conveniently ignored this aspect of Irenaeus theology, or sought to excuse it as a gratuitous anomaly or pardonable excess. (Smith, 313)

Premillennial exegetical arguments

In his massive three-volume defense of historic premillennialism, Peters argued that there can be no messianic kingdom which is separated from Abraham’s physical line:

This election of the Jewish nation was an absolute, unconditional (i.e. relating to the purpose of God) election so far as its national descent from Abraham is affected, i.e. the kingdom is solely promised to the descendants of Abraham in their national aspect (which is verified, as we shall see hereafter, by the covenants, confirmed by oath); and hence arises the necessity of Gentiles (as we shall show), who shall participate in this Kingdom, being grafted in, becoming members of, the commonwealth of Israel. (Peters 1957, 109)

LaRondelle rightly identifies problems set up by the classical dispensational approach which sees little or no continuity between Israel and the church: “Dispensationalism labors under a reduced use of messianic typology in which the christological applications of Old Testament types are accepted by the ecclesiological application of Israel’s mission and mandate are denied and rejected” (LaRondelle 1983, 51). Yet many recent theologians, while not dispensational in their approach, argue persuasively for a future for Israel that cannot simply be reduced to the future of the church. For example, Raven says:

One reason for the different critical solutions to the problem of the time of Israel’s restoration is that Luke has, in effect, a two-stage eschatology. There is the time of the church, the new age of the Spirit prophesied by Joel (Acts 2.17-21), in which Israel is in the process of being restored. There is also the time when the Messiah comes and finally restores the kingdom to Israel. Yet restoration does not mean that Luke regarded the church as the new Israel. (Ravens, 1995, p. 95)

Premillennial arguments from OT prophecy identify numerous aspects of the coming restoration of the kingdom to Israel that are neither compatible with the present age nor with a perfected new heavens and new earth (Kantzer 1997). Discussing **Isaiah 2** Sailhamer concludes:

“The use of figurative language does not permit us to give a figurative explanation to the vision and apply it to the church in this age... [at the same time] there is a ‘this-worldliness’ to this vision that persistently resists our association of it with the final eternal state of the new heavens and the new earth” (Sailhamer 1997, 98-99).

Kaiser argues similarly from **Jeremiah 3:14-18; 16:14-18; 23:3-8; 29:10-14; 31:35-40; and 33:7-21**:

There is no way that one can separate the spiritual aspects of that immutable covenant (e.g., the One Seed, the gospel) from the physical or material references to the land of Canaan. Neither can some of the fulfillment of these predictions be reserved solely for the eternal state, for in that case one must face the fact that evil still rears its ugly head occasionally before the final conquest of Satan and his forces in many of these passages (Kaiser 1997, 116)

Peters reaches a similar conclusion from **Deuteronomy 32:1-43**,

In which the elect condition of the nation is delineated, then a deep and long-continued apostasy is represented as pertaining to this favored nation, followed by prolonged punishment; but this does not vitiate the nation’s election, for God’s Purpose in reference to it still stands good, and the promise of the Eternal, Unchangeable is recorded that the same elect nation, chastened and scourged, scattered and dispersed, shall be recalled and exalted in glory. (Peters 1957, 109)

David’s royal career (1 Sam 16 – 2 Sam 23) forms an interesting two-stage pattern, which while not truly indicative, may be suggestive when taken with the rest of the evidence presented below: (1) anointed as Israel’s king (1 Sam 16) followed by a significant period of rejection and distance from Israel under king Saul’s enraged opposition. (2) After a tumultuous war with those loyal to the now-deceased Saul (2 Sam 2-4), David is received as king and beginning to reign in justice and blessing over all Israel (2 Sam 5ff). During the intervening period large numbers of disgruntled Israelites and even Gentiles joined David, and with him were pursued by Saul. This group comprised David’s administration when he came to power. One interim scene in particular is striking:

These are the ones who came to David at Ziklag, while he was still restricted because of Saul the son of Kish ... The Spirit came upon Amasai, who was the chief of the thirty, and he said, “We are yours, O David, and with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to him who helps you; indeed, your God helps you!” Then David received them and made them captains of the band. (1 Chr 12:1, 18)

In Acts we see many joining Jesus, the son of David, risen from the dead as God’s anointed and ascended King.² The Spirit fills them, enabling them to declare, “Jesus is Lord!” despite paranoid opposition from the rulers. Their hearts cry “We are yours, O Jesus Christ! And with You as our King!” When he comes again as King of kings, these loyal “overcomers,” his long-suffering “partners in the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus,” will then reign with him on the earth as his honored joint heirs (Rev 1:9; 2:26;

² One can see Jesus’ baptism as the anointing and his resurrection-exaltation as the beginning of his reign, but this collapses the picture and minimizes the exilic, suffering character of this age.

5:10; Luke 22:30; Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:8-12; 4:1). This is the Psalm 2 perspective, while the kings of the earth still rage against God's anointed, and are still being warned to kiss the Son before he comes.

Ultimately the issue must be resolved by study of both Testaments together. It seems to me that interpreters starting from the OT and moving to the NT tend toward either premillennial (or postmillennial) positions, while those starting from a NT hermeneutic and looking at the OT through that lens tend toward an amillennial position of some kind, because of usage of OT restoration-of-Israel passages in the history of Christ and the church. Clearly the apostles came to understand the OT in a new way through the Spirit-polished "lens" of the Christ-event (John 2:22; 7:39; 13:7; 14:25-29; 16:12-15). I maintain that an adequate emphasis on the other "lens" of the parousia-event gives a more nuanced understanding of the use of these OT passages including a second stage of Israel's restoration beyond the present participation of the Jewish remnant in the church. Of course that lens is still cloudy, and dogmatism is unwise (1 Cor 13:12).

Romans 9-11 J. Ross Wagner's detailed investigation of Romans 9-11, building on Richard Hays' "echo" approach to the use of OT in the NT, leads him to a conclusion similar to the two-stage fulfillment thesis I propose in this paper (as I discovered to my encouragement when nearing the conclusion of my study):

In a bold and sweepingly revisionary rereading of scripture, Paul argues in Romans 9-11 that God has designed the redemption of Israel to take place in *two stages* in order to allow room for the Gentiles to enter the community of God's people. As Paul narrates it, through their acceptance of the gospel, *already* "a remnant" and "seed" of Israel have received the deliverance and restoration promised by God long ago; moreover, this is but an earnest of a fuller redemption yet to come. In the present time, however, the rest of Israel remain suspended in the earlier acts of the drama, still suffering under the burden of foreign oppression, still estranged from God. (Wagner 2003, 357-58)

Wagner argues that Paul finds in Deut 32 and Isaiah the profound concept that explains his present situation: the present remnant is actually the "seed" of the future ingathering of Israel.

So profound is Israel's blindness to the truth of the gospel that Paul can only conclude that *God himself* has rendered them insensible. Yet this must be a temporary situation, for scripture insists that "God has not forsaken his people, whom he foreknew." It is a text from the Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32:21, that provides Paul the key to understanding the divine blinding of "the rest" of Israel. Interpreting this text in terms of his contemporary situation, Paul finds that Israel's present stumbling does not signify God's rejection of Israel, but rather represents God's determination to use the temporary hardening of a portion of Israel to open a window of opportunity for his salvation to be extended to the Gentiles. This temporal scheme allows Paul in Romans 9-11 to integrate his "remnant theology" with his ultimate insistence on the salvation of "all Israel." It is not that Paul suddenly abandons in mid-argument the remnant motif in favor of a more inclusive conception of Israel's election. Rather, for Paul, the future salvation of all Israel is implicit in—and, indeed, guaranteed by—the present survival of a remnant. Significantly, in this revisionary retelling of the story of Israel's deliverance as a two-stage process it is Paul's mission to the Gentiles that will ultimately lead to the redemption of the "rest" of Israel. When the "fullness of the Gentiles" has come in, the Lord himself will go forth to redeem and purify his people and restore them to himself in righteousness. In this way, "all Israel will be saved," just as in the original version of the stories told by Isaiah and Moses. (Wagner 2003, 358-59)

In Romans 11:27-28 Paul refers to presently hardened Israel as the "covenant" partners of Isaiah 59:, "from the standpoint of the gospel *they* are enemies for your sake..." The nearest referent for this pronoun is

the nation referred in the preceding verse. Thus Isaiah texts are not simply transposed to refer to the multinational church as the new Israel. The connection to the end of the age, after the period of partial hardening of Israel has reached its end, is expressed as “until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (11:25). After developing Paul’s quotation from Isaiah 59:21 as referring to the Christ “the Redeemer” returning from “Zion,”³ Douglas Moo comments on Romans 11:28:

Paul’s assertion of Israel’s dual status in v.28 succinctly summarizes the dilemma that drives the whole argument of these chapters: the Israel now at enmity with God because of the gospel is nevertheless the Israel to whom God has made irrevocable promises of blessing. (Moo 1996, 729-30)

Presently hardened Israel’s hope is clearly based on their utterly undeserved “election” by God:

The fact that Paul attributes the status of elect nation to Israelites who are “enemies of the Gospel” (Ro 11:28) shows that the continuing elect status of Israel does not depend on her faithfulness, any more than it did in the times of the Hebrew prophets (see Jer 31:35-37). (Diprose 2000, 71)

1 Cor 15:23-28 summarizes the whole era from Christ’s resurrection to the “end,” at which time Christ “hands over the kingdom to the God and Father.” Two stages in the resurrection program may be indicated in the “order” or ranks being described by the repetition of “*then... then...*” (Hiebert 1997, 227-29): “Christ the firstfruits, *then*, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. *Then* the end...” (after he reigns and puts all his enemies under his feet). A comparison of the use of the same two passages (Ps 110:1 and Ps 8:6) in Heb 1:13 and 2:8 sheds light on this time-sequence. Psalm 110 is clearly being fulfilled now as Christ is “waiting from that time onward until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet” (Heb 1:13; 10:13), but Heb 2:5-9 indicates that the time of all things being subjected to him is future: “He did not subject to angels *the world to come*, concerning which we are speaking... but now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.”

While this seems clear in Hebrews, Psalm 8:6 is also alluded to in Ephesians 1:22, in realized eschatology. At Christ’s exaltation to God’s right hand everything was subjected to him. Still, the old world of darkness is not done away, and warfare with hostile spiritual powers continues unabated in spite of, or because of, Christ’s victory (Eph 6:10-20). We will notice this in Acts 4 as well.

³ Moo says: “on the whole it is best to think that Paul is assuming the tradition that surfaces in Heb. 12:22, according to which ‘Zion’ is associated with the heavenly Jerusalem, the scene of Christ’s high-priestly ministry. If so, he probably changes the text in order to make clear that the final deliverance of Israel is accomplished by Christ at his parousia... It is when Christ comes ‘out of’ heaven that he will ‘turn away ungodliness from Jacob’ and thus fulfill the covenant with Israel” (Moo 1996, 728). Moo noted however in his 2007 comments on my paper that he has since changed his view and thinks Paul is alluding to Isaiah’s “Zion theology.” LaRondelle, in his persuasive (and simplistic) critique of dispensationalism, argues that “Paul modifies this phrase of Isaiah... because Christ had now come from Israel” (LaRondelle 1983, 132). But other OT passages speak of “the salvation of Israel” as coming “*out of Zion*” at the time “when the LORD restores His captive people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad” (Psa 14:7). This too may inform Paul’s quotation.

Ephesians 2-3. Paul describes Gentiles as once “excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (2:12), but now “fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone” (2:19-20). This “mystery,” not revealed in the OT era, is that “the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (Eph 3:5-6). The idea is not of Israel being replaced, but of Gentiles being included in Israel, perhaps joined with the “saints” as Israel’s remnant: “we who were first to hope in Christ...[joined now by] you also” (1:12-13) become “one new man” or “one body” (2:15-16). This is not two-stage fulfillment per se, but may help explain the character of the first stage of Israel’s restoration.

Revelation 20 records the apostle’s vision of a “thousand year” reign of Christ beginning with the resurrection of his saints from the dead, and ending with the final judgment of the “rest of the dead” and the final destruction of death itself. The placement of this section between the vision of Christ’s victorious return to destroy the beast and his armies (19:11-21) and the perfected new heavens and new earth (21:1-8) appears to some to point to an intermediate stage following the parousia and before the final judgment.⁴ Others understand Revelation 20:1-15 as a recapitulation of the present age, making it parallel to earlier sections which also end with the great battle and the final judgment; G. K. Beale sums up the passage this way:

The Millennium is inaugurated during the Church Age as God limits Satan’s deceptive powers and as deceased Christians are vindicated by reigning in Heaven; the Millennium is concluded by a resurgence of Satan’s deceptive assault against the church and the final judgment. (Beale 1999, xv)

There are difficulties⁵ with this interpretation, e.g. taking “*the rest of the dead*” (part of one group, all “dead” in same way) as being raised from physical death while taking the first resurrection as deceased saints’ presence with Christ before resurrection. Also Satan’s deceptive activity is largely unchanged before and after the cross and resurrection (cf. Luke 4:13; 22:3,31 and Acts 5:3; 26:18), though large numbers are being rescued from him from all nations. The NT epistles speak of his ongoing deceptive activity.⁶

⁴ “The formula καὶ εἶδον recurs in Ap 19:11, 17; 20:1, 4, 11, 21:1. The fact that the final judgment of the beast and the false prophet is assumed in 20:10, and the binding and loosing of Satan are taught in 20:1-3, 7, strongly suggests that the events referred to here are sequential” (Diprose 2000, 149).

⁵ At a four-viewpoint debate on the millennial question held at the January 2007 EFCA Midwinter Ministerial, D. Bock and D. Moo responded to Beale’s presentation of this recapitulation view, pointing to difficulties in reconciling Satan’s imprisonment in the abyss (kept from deceiving the nations for 1000 years) with earlier references in Revelation to Satan and his minions coming up out of the abyss to attack the saints, and deceiving the nations. Moo also pointed to those who came to life and reigned with Christ as those martyred by the beast, referred to repeatedly in earlier sections. Thus this resurrection reign seems like the reward of their faithfulness. (From talkcast recordings on Talkshoe website. <http://www.talkshoe.com/talkshoe/web/talkCast.jsp?masterId=13569>)

⁶ Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor 4:4; 11:14; 12:7; Eph 6:10-12; 1 Tim 4:1-4; 2 Thes 2:9-10; 1 Pet 5:8; 1 Jo 4:1-6.

Other pointers to two-stage restoration

“Ruling” or “reigning” is an important concept in thinking about the kingdom and the extent to which it may be considered to be inaugurated. Are believers presently judging or ruling over the nations? Is this to be construed as meaning the same thing as seated with Christ in heavenly places? Or are we to think of it as future—suffer with him now, reign with him in the age to come? The evidence of 1 Cor 4:8-9—“would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!— among other passages, points to the future age: “do you not know that the saints will judge the world? (1 Cor 6:2-3). The physical resurrection of “those who belong to Christ, at his coming” is seen as a prerequisite for inheriting the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:23, 50).

Does the situation in this age genuinely point to fulfillment of most of the OT prophecies of Israel’s restoration? An interesting example is found in Jonathan Edwards, as he observed the mixed character of even mighty spiritual revivals, gives his expectation from OT passages:

It appears plainly to have been in the visible church of God, in times of great reviving of religion, from time to time, as it is with the fruit trees in the spring; there are a multitude of blossoms, all of which appear fair and beautiful, and there is a promising appearance of young fruits; but many of them are but of short continuance; they soon fall off, and never come to maturity. Not that it is to be supposed that it will always be so; for though there never will, in this world, be an entire purity, either in particular saints, in a perfect freedom from mixtures of corruption; or in the church of God, without any mixture of hypocrites with saints, and counterfeit religion, and false appearances of grace with true religion, and real holiness: yet it is evident, that there will come a time of much greater purity in the church of God, than has been in ages past; it is plain by these texts of Scripture, Isa. 52:1. Ezek. 44:6, 7, Joel 3:17. Zech. 14:21. Psa. 69:32, 35, 36. Isa 35:8, 10, chap. 4:3, 4. Ezek. 20:38. Psa. 37:9, 10, 21, 29. And one great reason of it will be that at that time God will give much greater light to his people, to distinguish between true religion and its counterfeits [cites Mal. 3:3]. (Edwards 1821, 2)

Edwards (post-millennial in his hermeneutic) clearly sees this a time in the future history of the church of God, seemingly in his mind to come before the end of the age, when this deeper fulfillment of OT texts that show no false or uncircumcised one entering the house of God, etc. Edwards interprets these OT texts, as would many, as applying to the visible church of Christ on earth, during the Messianic days, “in this world,” and great blessing is foretold. The question is, are we really to expect such fullness in this age, in connection with the first coming of Christ and the age which he thus inaugurates, or in connection with his (second) coming in judgment? The Malachi text which he adduces points to the judging work of the Lord, which seems to me linked with the second coming. The wheat and tares grow together until the end of this age.

A major interpretive question for this paper is to determine as far as possible the extent of “realization” or “inauguration” linked with the events which flow from the key events of Jesus’ first coming. Responding to some of N.T. Wright’s far-reaching claims of fulfillment, Hays asks:

Did Jesus teach a realized eschatology? Wright’s reinterpretation of eschatology and of Jewish apocalyptic language tends to focus on the claim that Jesus fulfilled everything through his death and resurrection; consequently, it leads to

the virtual evaporation of any element of future hope in Christian proclamation. Consider, for example, the following passage: "...this regrouping is no longer a preliminary preparation for the return from exile, the coming of the kingdom; it is the return, the redemption, the resurrection from the dead." Wright has done a great deal of very provocative exegetical work to support his case, but statements such as the one just cited fail to account for the pervasive future-oriented eschatological expectation in early Christianity, including the expectation of a future resurrection of the dead, which also nearly disappears from Wright's reconstruction of Jesus and his teaching. The historical issue is how to account for the apparent disconnection between Wright's account of Jesus' message and the early church's subsequent insistence, even after the resurrection of Jesus, that we hope for what we do not see (Rom 8:25), a final redemption of the created order from its bondage to decay. (Hays 1999, 148)

Prophetic messianic texts such as Isaiah 2:2-5; 11:1-11; Mic 4:2-8; and Zech 14 speak of an era that sees an end to war, satanic deception, and systemic evil. Judgment of the nations, and removal of idolatrous kingdoms is prophesied (Dan 2:44). There will be a separation of wicked from righteous (Mal 3-4). Yet in the present age evil continues and human institutions are to be submitted to (Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-18). Paul's respectful acceptance of Roman law and rule, even while announcing "another king, Jesus" (Acts 17:7) shows the "not yet" character of this age. Believers presently suffer persecution and even martyrdom (as my friends experience last week in Malatya, Turkey), and those martyrs who ask "how long" until the righteous judgment are told to "rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been" (Rev 6:10-11).

Certain important OT texts are used in relation to both comings in a way that points to a first-coming fulfillment in the believing remnant and a future fulfillment for the whole nation or the whole world. Zechariah 12:10 has a reference in John 10:37 to John's seeing him as the pierced one, as a witness of his piercing, as well as a parousia reference when "every eye will see him" (Rev 1:7). See below on Luke 13:35 and 19:38 for a similar usage of Psalm 118:26.

Other themes could be multiplied, but it is time to move to an investigation of the evidence in Luke-Acts.

LUKE-ACTS

A number of characteristic Lucan themes bear on the issue of two-stage restoration.

1) The **timing** of the kingdom of God is a significant theme in Luke-Acts. For example, *when* should the fruitless fig tree (Israel?) be cut down (Luke 13:6-9)? The Pharisees question Him as to *when* the kingdom of God is coming, and he tells them that the kingdom is among them (referring very likely to his own presence there, soon to be rejected by them), and tells his own disciples that they will long for the glorious days of the Son of Man, but that "*first* He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation" and that the kingdom will not come immediately as they hope" (17:20-37; 19:11-12). "Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles *until* the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (21:24). Only when his disciples see the cosmic signs of "that day" of the Son of Man's glorious coming, which "will come upon all those who

dwell on the face of all the earth” (not easily made to be A.D. 70), they to “recognize that the kingdom of God is near” (21:25-36). At the last Passover meal which Jesus longed to eat with them he made it clear that he would “never again eat it *until* it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God,” nor “drink of the fruit of the vine from now on *until* the kingdom of God comes” (22:15-17). Following his resurrection the question of timing remained on the table: “Lord, is it *at this time* You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6), to which he replies, “It is not for you to know *times or epochs* which the Father has fixed by His own authority” and clarifies their work until he returns (Acts 1:8-11).

This usage of “until” in Luke-Acts can be set out in a table emphasizing the framework:

standing here will not taste death	until	they see the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:27)
you will not see me	until	you say, 'Blessed is he who comes!' (Luke 13:35; Psa 118:26)
eating and drinking and marrying...	until	the day when... the flood came (Son of Man's coming) (Luke 17:27)
Engage in business	until	I come. (Luke 19:13)
Sit at my right hand	until	I make your enemies your footstool. (Luke 20:42-43; Psa 110:1)
Jerusalem... trampled underfoot...	until	the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)
this generation will not pass away	until	all has taken place. (Luke 21:32)
I will not eat it	until	it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (Luk 22:16)
I will not drink of the fruit...	until	the kingdom of God comes. (Luk 22:16-18)
Sit at my right hand	until	I make your enemies your footstool. (Acts 2:35; Psa 110:1)
whom heaven must receive	until	the time for restoring all the things (Acts 3:21)

The “purpose of God” (Luke 7:30; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 13:36; 20:27) are sure and will take place in God's time, but from this table it seems clear that significant aspects of this purpose wait for fulfillment “until” he comes.

Journey narratives **visits, meals and hospitality** scenes are numerous in Luke. A great number of verses deal with eating, reclining at table, feasts and food.⁷ Others deal with hospitality and treatment of guests.⁸ The main point seems to be that in Christ God is *visiting* His people as the “*Sunrise from on high*” (1:78). Crowds rejoice that “*God has visited His people!*” (7:16). The vital question is how he is received! His judgment on Jerusalem is this: “*you did not recognize the time of your visitation*” (19:44). The Lord insists on being welcomed and asked to stay, at one point even making as though He would continue on to test this

⁷ Luke 1:53; 4:2; 5:29-30, 33-34; 6:20-25; 7:32-34, 36-50; 8:55; 9:12-14; 10:7; 11:5-8, 37-41; 12:13-21, 22-30, 36-37; 13:26, 29; 14:1, 7-11, 12-15, 16-24; 15:1-2, 16-17, 20-24, 25-32; 16:19-31; 17:7-9, 27-28; 18:12; 22:1, 7-21, 28-30; 24:30-31, 35.

⁸ Luke 1:68-79; 2:25-38; 4:16-37; 7:36-49; 8:1-3; 9:51-56; 10:8-16, 34-35, 38-42; 11:5-8; 14:1; 15:20-24, 28-32; 16:3-4, 9; 19:1-10, 28-40; 19:41-44; 20:9-18; 22:7-13; 23:51; 24:30-31.

welcome (24:28-29).⁹ During these table scenes much is said about entering or not entering, about being included in or left out of the great feast of the Kingdom of God. Together with this theme are the frequently repeated issues of receiving or accepting God's invitation and inviting others. The OT background for this splendid hope is found in a number of passages (e.g. Isa 55:1-3; Zech 8:19), but nowhere more memorably than in Isa 25:6-8.

The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; a banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, and refined, aged wine. And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations. He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth

The theme of *savior and salvation* is seen often in Luke-Acts.¹⁰ Another word reinforces this theme *redemption* (Luke 1:68; 2:38; 21:28; 24:21). Arguably the central blessing of salvation is *forgiveness of sins*.¹¹ "The idea of salvation supplies the key to the theology of Luke... The central theme... is that Jesus offers salvation to men" (Marshall 1970, 92, 116). *Repentance* is another related theme, both as proclamation of the good news of repentance for forgiveness of sins and as rejoicing over those who do repent.¹² This characterizes the first stage of the fulfillment: "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that *repentance for forgiveness of sins* would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

The **Holy Spirit** and His work is an important theme in both of Luke's books (Luke and Acts). The Holy Spirit's work is particularly seen during the early stages of the gospel in connection with the ministry of Christ, the One anointed by the Holy Spirit.¹³ The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and the gift of the Spirit given to all who believe is a central theme of the book of Acts.¹⁴ The witness to Christ's resurrection will be accomplished by disciples "filled with the Holy Spirit" (1:8; 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9, 52; 17:16). The messianic age of the Spirit has come (Joel 2:28-32; cf. Isa 32:15; 44:3; Eze 39:29).

⁹ Gen 18:1-8 provides background from Abraham's life. Yahweh appears to Abraham as one of three "men" who visit him at his tent and share his hospitality. I have investigated this theme in my 7/2005 BITH 695 Independent study paper for Dr. R. Schultz "The God of Abraham: A biblical study of the One who appeared to Abraham."

¹⁰ Luke 1:47, 69, 71, 77; 2:11, 30; 3:6; 6:9; 7:50; 8:12, 36, 48, 50; 9:24, 56; 13:23; 17:19, 33; 18:26, 42; 19:9-10; 23:35, 37, 39; Acts 2:21, 40, 47; 4:12; 5:31; 11:14; 13:23; 15:1, 11; 16:30, 31

¹¹ Luke 1:77; 3:3; 5:20, 21, 23-24; 7:42, 47-49; 11:4; 12:10; 17:3-4; 23:34; 24:47 Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18.

¹² Luke 3:3, 8; 5:32; 10:13; 11:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7; 16:30; 17:3-4; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20.

¹³ Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25-27; 3:16, 22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; 11:13; 12:10, 12

¹⁴ Acts 1:1, 5, 8, 15; 2:4, 33, 38; 4:8, 25, 31; 5:3, 32; 6:5; 7:51, 55; 8:15, 17, 18; 9:17, 31; 10:37, 44, 45, 46; 11:15, 16, 23; 13:2, 4, 9, 52; 15:8, 28; 16:6; 19:1, 6; 20:23, 28; 28:25.

Texts from Luke-Acts

It is important to deal with the use of the OT in Luke-Acts as it relates to the present and future framework of fulfillment of God's purpose. I have selected for discussion texts from Luke-Acts especially from among those containing OT quotations and allusions in my Greek NT (Aland, et al. 1998, pp. 887-91), along with others which have eschatological significance. I have limited myself primarily to OT prophets. The scope of this paper permits only a limited interaction with a few of these.

Luke 1:5-2:52 Luke's prologue is full of the hope of Israel's prophets, drawn from the promises of God to the patriarchs. Israel's God is announcing through the prophetic words of angels and humans that the great story is advancing a giant step! Believing or unbelieving response to divine announcements regarding the impending work of God is given special attention in the early chapters of Luke. Zechariah does not believe the angel's word (1:18-20), Mary, though uncertain how it will be performed, in faith offers herself to the Lord's will (1:38, 45), Elizabeth and the unborn infant in her womb rejoice greatly at the coming of "the mother of my Lord" (1:39-45), Mary exalts the Lord as she and Elizabeth celebrate the angel's announcement of the Coming One (1:46-56), Zechariah exults over the birth of his son John who will be the forerunner of the "*Sunrise from on high*" (1:67-79), the shepherds eagerly seek out the newborn Child about whose birth the angel told them (2:8-20) and an elderly prophet and prophetess rejoice and celebrate the birth (2:25-32, 36-38).

Just as the story of the early mission-church (Acts) is inscribed into the story of Jesus (Luke), so the story of Jesus is written into the story of Israel's Scriptures, and especially the story of Abraham. In Luke's birth narrative (1:5-2:52), strong and extensive echoes of the Abraham tradition can be heard, leading to the conclusion that Luke's narrative is a self-conscious continuation of the redemption story, in which divine promises to Abraham, long latent, are shown not to have escaped God's memory but indeed to be in the process of actualization in the present... For Luke, the beginning, middle, and end are, respectively, the Abraham-story and especially God's promise to Abraham that he would be the progenitor of many nations; the salvific coming of Jesus of Nazareth; and the prospective restoration of all things. (Green 2005, 63, 66)

Gabriel's words in 1:17-19, which make clear allusions to Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6 in one statement, link the mission of this child with the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. This child is the "Elijah" figure who will turn back the hearts of the fathers to the children, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord", who will come "before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord." Mal 3 and 4 are parallel oracles in that both refer to a forerunner, preceding the Lord's own coming, who will separate the dross from the precious metal and the wheat from the chaff. I take it that the fiery separation work remains for "the end of the age," at his second coming (Mat 13:37-43). Zachariah's incredulity about the possibility of a birth recalls Sarah's (Gen 18:11). The birth narratives make strong allusions to the miraculous births of both Isaac and Samuel, linking God's latest intervention with the story which begins with Abraham and ties in with

David. Gabriel is the great herald of prophetic promise to Israel, Daniel's people (Dan 8:16; 9:21). This hints strongly that the events beginning with John's birth (the gospel of Jesus Christ) fall within the scope of the prophetic visions of Daniel or are related to them, in particular Dan 2:44 and 7:13-14.

In 1:31-33 Gabriel announces to Mary the birth of the heir of David's throne, who will "reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." The kingdom of Jesus is clearly to be in continuity with Israel's narrative. Various eschatological streams from the OT prophets (which have their sources in God's earlier promises to Abraham and David) run throughout these two chapters, including those identified by N.T. Wright: "three themes form the metanarrative implicit in the language of the kingdom": Israel would 'really' return from exile, YHWH would finally return to Zion, and Israel's enemies would be defeated. (Wright 1996, 206). The question of course is whether much of this will take place in a second stage. Wagner points to three themes from Isaiah used by Paul (found abundantly in Luke 1-2): deliverance from oppressors with inclusion of Gentiles, a loyal remnant, and an idolatrous majority, demonstrating that Paul draws from these selectively depending on whether he is addressing issues of the messianic mission, the elect remnant or the hardened majority of Israel.

In terms of Isaiah's larger three-act "plot line" of rebellion, punishment, and restoration, Paul locates himself and his fellow believers (Jew and Gentile) in the final act of the story, where heralds go forth with the good news that God has redeemed his people. Surprisingly, however, most of Israel remains mired in acts one and two, still rebellious and estranged from God [**], still blinded to the reality of the redemption God has wrought for Israel and for the world in Christ. (Wagner 354)

The prophetic words of Mary, Zechariah and Simeon (Luke 1:46-55, 67-79; 2:25-38) are saturated with OT themes of promised restoration: the ingathering of the exiles, the role of the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom and the Davidic King, Israel's "redemption," the defeat of Israel's enemies, the "visitation" of Yahweh, forgiveness of sins. Taken together they announce that the long awaited age has come! Yet it will become clear during Jesus' ministry that much of this will not all take place immediately, or as soon as they hoped (19:11; 24:21; Acts 1:6-7).

Luke 3:4-6 notes that Isaiah's word of consolation is being fulfilled, the great redemption of God's people has begun. Luke has "all flesh will see the salvation of God" instead of "the glory of the LORD" (Isa 40:5); but God's glory and his salvation (Jesus) go together (Luke 2:9-14, 30-32). God's words at Jesus baptism further allude to the messianic era being inaugurated (3:22; Psalms 2:7; cf. Isa 42:1-2).

Luke 4:18-19 may be considered foundational for the whole of Jesus' work, including all that he "began to do and teach" in the third Gospel, and all that he continued to do and teach after his resurrection and through Spirit in the apostles (Acts 1:1ff.). Jesus' whole inaugural sermon hints at a surprising (and to

his synagogue audience, unthinkable— hence their rage) inclusion of Gentiles in God’s purposes. Wolter claims that “the programmatic citation of Isa 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18f. is stripped of its original orientation toward the juxtaposition of Israel and the Gentiles by omissions and the addition of Isa 58:6” (Wolter 1999, 310). It might be more accurate to say that Jesus closes the reading with what is to characterize this first stage of the program: “proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (cf. Acts 13:46-48; 2 Cor 5:19-6:2).

Two central “messianic designations” from the two main sections of the book of Isaiah—“king” and “servant” — are also central to the development of Jesus’ identity in Luke-Acts. Richard Schultz shows that “these two messianic figures legitimately can be identified” in terms particularly meaningful in Luke-Acts:

Both possess the Spirit (11:2; 42:1) and are linked to the Davidic covenantal promises (9:7; 11:1; cf. 55:3, with the servant serving as a covenant for the people: 42:6; 49:8). And both are royal figures who establish justice (11:5; 42:3-4), the latter being honored by kings (49:7; 53:12). In fact, Isa. 61:1-3 may be taken as a final “servant” text, especially in light of its use in Luke 4:16-22. (Schultz 2005, 343)

Each of these unifying characteristics are alluded to in Luke-Acts, often at key points.¹⁵ Notice however that the aspect of judging, establishing justice and ending all war among the nations as promised in the prophetic writings seems in Luke-Acts related to the second stage of fulfillment related to Christ’s second coming (Luke 21:10; Acts 17:31; cf. Isa 2:4; 11:4-9).

Luke 7:18-35 records the imprisoned John’s confused question to Jesus: “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” (7:19). By rights, when the one whose way he was sent to prepare arrived, it would become clear that it pays to serve the Lord, and “all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff” (Mal 3:13-4:3). How can he be in Herod’s prison if Jesus is the “one who is to come”? Jesus’ response in action and explanation makes two points: (1) He is the one, just as John is the forerunner of Mal 3:1 (7:27). And the healing reign of God is present, as witnessed by his mighty works (7:21-22; cf. Isa 33:5; 61:1), but (2) Jesus’ followers will be tempted to “offended” by the fact that he has not begun burning up the chaff yet! (7:23). This suggests again that much of the program (the “day of the Lord” Mal 4:1-3) awaits a later stage.

Luke 9:18-35 Just before ascending the Mount of Transfiguration, where the narrative focus shifts clearly to his “departure (*exoduj*), which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (9:31), Jesus the acknowledged “Christ of God” announces two new steps in his program: (1) His *death and resurrection*: “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be

¹⁵ Isa 9.7 (Luke 1.32-33); Isa 11.1 (Acts 13.23); Isa 40.1 (Luke 2.25); Isa 42.6 (Luke 2.32; Acts 26.23); Isa 49.6 (Luke 2.32; Acts 13.47; 26.2); Isa 53.5-6 (Acts 10.43); Isa 53.7-8 (Acts 8.32-33); Isa 53.12 (Luke 22.37; 23.33-34); Isa 55.3 (Acts 13.34); Isa 61.1-3 (Luke 4.18-19; 6.21; 7.22; Acts 4.27; 10.38; 26.18).

killed, and on the third day be raised.” (9:22), and (2) His *parousia*: “the Son of Man... when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels” (9:26). The Transfiguration which follows gives “some” (three) of the twelve disciples an unforgettable, ‘proleptic’ view of the kingdom of God (Green 1997, 376), as they witness the majesty of the Son of Man” (cf. 2 Pet 1:16-18). The presence of *Moses* (leader of the first exodus) and *Elijah* (forerunner of the day of the Lord, Mal 4), both of whom met the Lord on Horeb, and the voice from the cloud, signal a new Exodus about to begin—the Lord is again “visiting” his people. The “wilderness” leg of this exodus will extend from his Passover death and resurrection to his coming in glory.

Luke 11:20 The present reality of the kingdom of God is clear both in Jesus’ earthly ministry and in the dynamic life of the early church under his rule or lordship through the Spirit (here described with the Exodus-recalling phrase “the finger of God” (Exo 8:19).

Jesus taught that the rule of God, which would manifest itself to all men at the end of the age, was also manifesting itself in his person, mission, and message, to those who would hear and respond...God, who would act at the end of history to transform history, had invaded history in the person and mission of Jesus to bring his reign and rule to men. Such a conclusion best explains many gospel sayings. (Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20)]. (Ladd 1962, 237)

Luke 12:35-40 and other passages in Luke point to a significant period of “waiting” for the master to return, which will be at an unexpected or delayed time (12:41-48). The important thing on that day will be alertness (Luke 21:36; see notes on Acts 2:1-41 regarding “the times and seasons”). The kingdom of God will have a period of slow growth from seemingly insignificant beginnings before that time (Luke 13:18-20)

Luke 13:22-17:10 In this section of the great journey narrative many of the scenes take place around tables. The Lord is the “master of the house” who will determine who will enter the great banquet (13:25); he has invited people to *his banquet* to be held in *his house* (14:23-24). The Pharisees oppose his choice to admit sinners and eat with them (15:2). The elder son pictures this refusal to enter and jealousy at sinners being so freely forgiven and admitted to the inheritance (15:25-30). I suspect that 14:14-15 provide an important clue to the timing of the messianic banquet to which Israel is being invited will in fact be enacted: “the resurrection of the just.” Notice the sorrow of Jesus over the failure of Jerusalem to recognize the opportunity to receive and welcome the divine “Lord of the Banquet” who is visiting village by village, assessing hearts by the way they receive him and his emissaries¹⁶ (13:35; see comments at 19:28-44).

Luke 19:11-27 points clearly to a stage in Jesus’ unfolding agenda when he will be absent for some time, at the end of which he will return as judge, having received the kingdom. If Matthew and Luke are not

¹⁶ E.g. Simon (7:36-49); healed women (8:1-3); Samaritans (9:51-56; 10: 34-35), Mary and Martha (38-42); a needy neighbour (11:5-8); a ruler of the Pharisees (14:1).

seen as contradictory, or simply presenting different eschatological schemes in different segments or stages of the early church, then the clear future orientation of Mat 19:28 and 25:14-30 point strongly a similar trajectory for the parallel passages in Luke 22:27-30 and 19:12-27. In this case Luke 19:11 points to a delay of some significant time, corresponding to the “long time” in Mat 25:19. Johnson challenges the traditional interpretation; he argues that this parable is not intended to dispel the wrong idea of some who suppose that the kingdom of God would appear immediately, but to confirm and clarify some things about the nature of that kingdom which indeed began to appear immediately as Jesus entered Jerusalem (Johnson 1982, 158). Thus for him it does not speak of the parousia.

Yet most interpreters see this parable, along with several others (Luke 12:41-48; Mat 25:1-13), clearly teaching “a period of time when Jesus will be absent from the disciples, during which the gospel will be preached throughout the world” (Hoekema 1979, 120).

Luke 19:28-44. Luke’s journey narrative culminates in Jesus’ tears of grief as he approaches Jerusalem, because “you did not recognize the time of your visitation” (19:44). It is notable that “the whole crowd of the disciples” are the ones welcoming him with the words of Psalm 118:26, while Jerusalem’s eyes are blind. This shows that Jesus’ pronouncement in 13:35 (par Mat 23:38), to the effect that Jerusalem would not see him again until she recognizes Him as king, is in effect. The remnant sees, but Israel is hardened (thus the disciples may be distinguished from Jerusalem and its future). Related to this Jesus and the apostles focus on Psa 118:22 as being fulfilled in the events of his rejection, bringing his death and resurrection (Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11). The emphasis is on the rejected stone now made the cornerstone (of the new temple). (Deut 32:29) 62, 141, 225, 225 Kinman describes this small reception of a king as a great insult, pointing out that “Luke confines the crowd that welcomes Jesus to the band of disciples (τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν)” (Kinman 1999, 291).

Paul’s “great sorrow and unceasing grief” only continues his Master’s tears for Jerusalem’s impending destruction and Israel’s exile (Rom 9:1; Luke 19:41-44). Only if Israel’s exile is real can we explain his hope in sorrow (Rom 11:28).

Luke 20:34-38. Jesus’ answer to the Sadducees the resurrection of the righteous as the time of fulfillment of the patriarchal promises, in “the age to come.” In order for Yahweh to say “I am [not “was” the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” long after their deaths, and for his promises to be fulfilled to them, the dead must surely rise! (20:37-38). In contrast to “the sons of this age,” the true descendants of Abraham who

rise to share in that “that age” are “sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” As will be noted below, this same “hope of Israel” was the reason for Paul’s trials in Acts 19-28.

Luke 21:5-36 Luke’s account of the Olivet discourse emphasizes certain features that point to a two stage fulfillment. For example the warning not to be misled by those claiming that “the time is at hand” likely alludes to OT passages like Dan 7:22, where the “the appointed time arrived, and the saints possessed the kingdom.” The context in Daniel is the judgment of the great boasting ruler, in my judgment to be linked with the lawless one of 2 Thes 2 (and Rev 13), who will be destroyed by Jesus’ parousia.

In 21:20 Jerusalem’s desolation in A.D. 70 is predicted, followed by captivity (exile) for Israel, or “wrath for this people.” It seems to me that Wright overstates the end of Israel’s exile; what occurs is rather a greater exile “into all the nations,” out of which Jesus’ followers are saved as a remnant. Here an end point to this exile is given in the phrase “until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled,” implying that Jerusalem will see some form of restoration at that point.

The debated phrase “this generation” alludes to Deut 32:5, which speaks of eschatological Israel as “a crooked and twisted generation.” Peter urges his listeners, “save yourselves from this crooked generation” (Acts 2:40). Jesus uses “their own generation” to refer to their own people or “kind” (Luke 16:8).¹⁷

In the Third Gospel, “this generation” (and related phrases) has regularly signified a category of people who are resistant to the purpose of God (see 7:31; 9:41; 11:29-32, 50-51). Verse 32... actually has less to say about the eschatological timetable and more to say about the motif of conflict related to the presence and expected culmination of the kingdom of God. ‘This generation’ refers in Luke’s narrative not to a set number of decades or to people living at such-and-such a time, but to people who stubbornly turn their backs on the divine purpose. Jesus’ followers can expect hostility and calamity until the very End, Jesus teaches, for the old world, ‘this generation,’ does not easily give way to the new. (Green, 1997, 742)

Luke 22:15-20. Luke’s account of the so-called Last Supper contains more detail than the other gospels. Expressing his eagerness to eat the Passover with them one last time, Jesus tells his disciples that he will “never again eat it [the Passover] until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” Then with nearly the same words he gives them the Passover cup: “I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes” (22:15-18). Only after this announcement does he give them the bread and the cup in turn, instituting with interpretive words the remembrance feast generally called the Eucharist or the Lord’s Supper (22:19-20).¹⁸ The words following “until” are indexed with the kingdom of God here, and are

¹⁷ Luke 10:13-14 with 11:29-32 speak of the judgment of “this generation” (11:29-32, 60; 21:22). It may be that this resistant “generation” which “seeks a sign” has been interpreted by Paul in 1 Cor 1:22 as the Jews: “Jews demand signs”, where they are also distinguished from the Gentiles just as in Luke 11:31-32.

¹⁸ Luke 22:19b-20 are not found in some manuscripts (one Greek and some translations), and arguments for its omission are not insignificant. Nevertheless, “the traditional explanation remains the most satisfactory: the longer text

comparable to “until He comes” in 1 Cor 11:26: “as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.” Marshall says “we can be fairly certain that the phrase just cited from Paul is evidence that he knew the tradition contained in the Gospels; he has alluded to it but has brought it into relation with the Christian hope of the parousia of Jesus by referring to the coming of Jesus rather than of the kingdom” (Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper* 1980, 54). But Jesus here identifies the kingdom with his parousia and institutes the Eucharist for the interim, in part to keep that hope of glory and fulfillment fresh.¹⁹

Even if the kingdom of God has in the Lukan narrative a predominantly present referent, identifying the presence of the kingdom in the mission of Jesus, this saying joins a minority of others in the Third Gospel in referring to the kingdom in its future consummation... Certainly, Acts never equates the eschatological kingdom with the church (cf. Acts 1:3, 6-8; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). (Green, 1997, 760)

At the end of this period, referenced by “until,” the messianic banquet will commence, and Jesus will eat and drink with his disciples in the kingdom of God. The Lord's Supper is clearly an interim institution, established “until he comes.” Even if inauguration has occurred (as all agree), this points to significant degree of future expectation.

Luke 22:28-30 66, 95, 156, 183, 184, 185 In the Matthean parallel the words “in the regeneration (*palingenesia*)” (Mat 19:28) reinforces this impression that the Lord is here looking forward to a glorious future period, following the disciples' suffering, when they will “eat and drink at My table in My kingdom” and rule with him. “What is promised is a share in the heavenly banquet, a thought which fits in with and develops the thought of eating and drinking in the coming kingdom in the core of the Supper narrative” (Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper* 1980, 105). Pao, like others (e.g. L. T. Johnson 1982, 143-44), dismisses the future orientation which would come from maintaining the natural parallel with Mat 19:28, arguing rather that Luke is focusing on the reconstitution of Israel in the role of the Twelve in Acts, beginning with the election of Matthias in Acts 1:12-26 (Pao 2002, 124-25). But such casual de-harmonizing of passages that can fit together quite well is suspect from the viewpoint of canonical biblical interpretation, even if serving a unifying hermeneutic such as the “new Exodus” motif. Additionally there are elements here which point to a future judgment, glory and reign following the era of suffering with Christ (Acts 5:41; 14:22; cf. Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:12).

has been shortened by a scribe who found the mention of two cups difficult” (Moo 1983, 129-30; cf. Marshall 1980, 36-38; Bauckham 2006, 267). The admittedly more complex two-part structure makes good sense, as explained above.

¹⁹ Marshall later seems to reach that conclusion: “Jesus looked forward to a new Passover in the heavenly kingdom of God, but at the same time he commanded his disciples to celebrate a meal that would be an anticipation of the that heavenly feast” (Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper* 1980, 80).

The WCC Council on faith and order applies this text to the ordained ministry, or at least to the apostles' role in the church, with this interpretation:

Jesus called the Twelve to be representatives of the renewed Israel. At that moment they represent the whole people of God and at the same time exercise a special role in the midst of that community. After the resurrection they are among the leaders of the community. (WCC 1982, 18)

Luke 22:37. Jesus' word make it explicit that Isaiah 53 refers to him²⁰: "I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'and he was numbered with transgressors'; for that which refers to Me has *its* fulfillment." After detailed analysis of the use of the Isaianic Servant Songs in the Gospel Passion texts, Moo concludes:

Jesus and the evangelists appealed to Is. 53 in order to give OT evidence that he must suffer, but it seems very likely that there was another deeper reason in addition: Isaiah 53, like no other OT text, portrays vicarious, redemptive suffering, and portrays it as the very will of God... The only explicit indication as to the general hermeneutical framework is given in Lk. 22:37, where a quotation of Is. 53:12 is introduced with (among others) the word *tele/w*... these words point to the coming to completion of an oracle. Since the Servant Songs are imbedded in a prophecy, it is natural that they should be understood this way. (Moo 1983, 171-72)

Luke 22:69. Luke's account of Jesus' words before the Council contain only the allusion to Psa 110:1, with no reference to his "coming on the clouds of heaven" as in Mark 14:62. Luke only alludes to Dan 7:13 in Luke 21:27 in relation to the parousia of the Son of Man (Mark has this reference also). Thus Luke emphasizes that Christ is now at the right hand of God, but will "come with the clouds" in the future.

What sealed this blasphemy was the additional reference to Dan. 7.13, as it is contained in Matthew and Mark. For in that parousia reference was the guarantee that Jesus was not using this language in a figurative but in a literal sense. Thus the order of heavenly session and return from heaven is essential and significant. (Bock 1987, 141)

Luke 24, which records Jesus' resurrection from the dead and appearances to his disciples, focuses again on a journey. As the traveler on the road to Emmaus he is still the "Lord of the Banquet" (Moessner 1989), who reveals himself to his disciples in "the breaking of bread." This is how they will maintain fellowship with him in the interim age. The focus is kept on the redemption of Israel (24:21), though it becomes clear that "all nations" are now in view (24:47). Jesus insisted that all the scriptures "concerning himself" were to be fulfilled (24:25-27, 44-47; cf. 18:31; 22:37), but particularly emphasizes that the ones which have been fulfilled are the ones relating to his suffering and resurrection and the blessing that will result: "repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations." Their role is not ruling now, but witnessing, sharing in his sufferings (e.g. Stephen).

²⁰ Litwak says strangely that there is "no hint of a crucified messiah in Isaiah 53" (Litwak 2005, 125), pursuing his thesis of Luke's use of Israel's scriptures as "hermeneutical"—showing a general pattern of righteous sufferers—rather than "prophetic" of Jesus' unique, vicarious sufferings for the many (Litwak 2005, 133).

Acts

Though concerned throughout to demonstrate the continuity of the “things accomplished among us” with the narrative of Israel, Luke focuses in this second volume particularly on crises between Judaism and the apostles. As the book develops in six major sections,

Luke is not so much reporting the spread of the gospel as describing for us what that gospel was, and how it came to be defined. He concentrates out attention on the points at which Christianity diverged from Judaism, not because he was narrow-mindedly sectarian but because he had a historian’s fine sense of what was truly significant. The issues over which Christianity diverged were not peripheral matters. They constituted the very heart of the gospel. (Gooding 1995, 18-19)

Acts 1:1-11 Luke, overlapping the end of his first volume with the beginning the second by repeating the key elements of Luke 24 in the first 11 verses of Acts, draws attention to the hinge of the new age. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead and his subsequent teaching about “the things concerning the kingdom of God” during his appearances (1:3) re-awakens his apostles’ expectance for the long-awaited redemption of Israel (Luke 1:68; 2:38; 24:21). They connected his teaching with well-known promises like Micah 4:8, “To you it will come— even the former dominion will come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.” His promise of the soon-coming baptism of the Spirit (1:4-5) further piques their curiosity about the timing of this hope: “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” Despite the assertion that the disciples were “amiss in this question” (e.g. Matthew Henry), Jesus does not say that their expectation was wrong, but simply answers their question about the *timing* of the restoration. “The Lord’s reply sets up echoes. In His famous prophetic discourse He had used similar language about the timing of the second coming: ‘But of that day and hour no one knows...’ (Gooding 1995, 44).

The fact of the restoration, however, is not denied; and the disciples were not rebuked for their question. An understanding that suggests that the disciples totally misunderstood the nature of the kingdom must be rejected in light of Acts 1:3... it is not the hope of this that is rejected, but only the attempt to calculate when it will happen. Acts 1:8 therefore becomes the second part of the response to the question in that it confirms the beginning of the process of the restoration of Israel. This process of restoration is portrayed through the model of the Isaianic New Exodus in which the salvation of the Gentiles becomes part of the program of the reconstitution of Israel. While it must not be denied that the futuristic aspect is present in the Lukan conception of the restoration of Israel, the beginning of the process in Acts has to be acknowledged. (Pao 2002, 195-96)

Ravens points out that “ἀποκαθίστημι is used in a number of occasions in the LXX in the context of Israel’s restoration, for example, ‘Thus says the Lord: “If you return (ἐπιστρέψῃς) I will restore you (ἀποκαταστήσω, Jer. 15.19) and, in Jer. 16.15 and 27[50].19, restoration involves both the northern and southern kingdoms. In Mal.3.22-23 the verb is used for the results of Elijah’s return” (Ravens 1995, 93). Ravens cites Wainwright approvingly in connecting this question with Acts 3:19-21:

[he] suggests that the answer to the apostles’ question is given in the prophecy of the two men who appear after the ascension: ‘This Jesus will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven’ (1:11). Although the time of his coming is unknown it has been fixed by the Father’s authority. [note] the future character of Acts 3:19-21... in view

of the use of a) ἀποκαθιστάνεις in 1.6, it makes better sense to translate a) ἀποκαταστάσεως in 3.21 as ‘restoration’... For Luke, as for Jeremiah, restoration depends upon (re)turning to God, and by combining the restoration with the coming of Christ, he reinforces the view of Acts 1.11. (Ravens 1995, 93-95)

Acts 2:1-41 Again timing is significant in the narrative. Pentecost was the second of a pair of spring agricultural festivals in Israel. The first followed Passover, as a sheaf of grain was cut and offered as firstfruits to God (Lev 23:9-11). Fifty days later, on Pentecost, baked loaves were offered as firstfruits (Lev 23:15-17). Apparently then, firstfruits is to the harvest as Israel’s remnant will be to the Israel’s “fullness” (Rom 11:11-16).

Israel had been celebrating these agricultural festivals for centuries. But the year that Jesus rose from the grave there were bigger things to celebrate. His resurrection was the first break in a more terrible winter, His glorified body the firstfruits of a mightier harvest (1 Cor. 15:23). Fifty days later, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came as the firstfruits of a greater inheritance, a foretaste and guarantee of creation’s final restoration (Rom. 8:18-23; 2 Cor. 5:1-15; Eph. 1:13-14). The freshness and joy of it pervade Luke’s history still. (Gooding 1995, 39)

The significance of the Spirit-filled speech in foreign languages clearly corresponds to the all-nations mission of testimony to the risen Christ (1:8), a prophetic proclamation of the mighty works of God” in his Son in Gentile national tongues (2:11). Implied also was a warning of impending judgment to the nation Deut 28:49; Isa 28:11-12; Jer 5:15; cf. 1 Cor 14:21). The people of God are equipped with prophetic speech, Acts 1-2 thus recalling the Luke 1-2 where prophetic speech announced Messiah’s birth as God’s almighty act. Now his resurrection, ascension and exaltation as David’s royal heir is declared.

Peter, beginning with his quotation²¹ of Joel 2:28-32, explains to the people of Judea and Jerusalem that this amazing outpouring of the Holy Spirit is evidence of the crucified Jesus’ true messiahship: “this Jesus whom you crucified” according to God’s plan (2:23), God has raised, exalted to his right hand, and made or declared with power to be Lord and Christ. He is at the right hand of God now, “*before* the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day” of cosmic judgment and wrath (2:20; cf. Isa 13:6-13; Joel 1:15; Zeph 1:7). This age of the Spirit and opportunity for all flesh to call on the name of the Lord. A two-stage program emerges:

- 1) “Before the day of the Lord comes”
 - The outpouring of the Spirit, including the whole age where the Spirit reveals the glorified Christ, until he comes and is seen by all.
 - Opportunity to “call on the name of the Lord” for “survivors of Israel” and all mankind (Joel 2:32)
- 2) “The day of the Lord”
 - The day that “will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth” (Luke 21:34-36; cf. 17:26-30)
 - The restoration of the kingdom to Israel (1:6-7). The phrase “times and seasons” seems to be linked with the timing of the “day of the Lord” (cf. 1 Thes 5:1-11), which in 2 Thes 2:2ff Paul links with the appearing of the

²¹ In Peter’s quotation μετὰ ταῦτα (Joel 3:1 LXX) is replaced with ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, likely from the LXX of Isa 2:2. “Peter appears to interpret the Spirit’s coming at Pentecost... in fulfillment of Joel also to be the beginning fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy...”

man of sin. Note also the “sons of light” link with Luke 16:8 in 1 Thes 5:5, who are not to be taken by surprise, but seeing the cosmic portents will raise their heads, knowing that “redemption”, that is “the kingdom of God” is near (in its second, manifested, stage).

If this understanding is correct, “*until* [not *while*] I make your enemies your footstool” of Psalm 110 (Luke 20:42; 22:69; Acts 2:34-35) indicates that Jesus, the anointed King, will remain at God’s right hand until the day of the Lord. Perhaps a case be made for a primarily *intercessory* role for Christ in the present (Psa 110:4), with his *ruling* role primarily in the future after the “until” period is complete. This would accord with Hebrews, where we do not yet see all things subjected to him as man (ruling the world), but we see Jesus as high priest interceding (cf. Luke 22:31-32; Rom 8:34). Notice the close link between the first and second coming in the picture used in Hebrews 9:28, where the Lord’s entering into heaven itself “with his own blood” (his resurrection and ascension) is compared with Israel’s high priest’s annual entry into the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle.

The high priest’s returning from his service in the Holiest Place--which Israelites watched for with eager expectation--could be considered as a figure of the resurrection (some have suggested the thought in He. 9:28 for the parousia; the resurrection is the parousia anticipated). (Blocher 1999, 35)

The Lord’s high priestly service in the holy place is surely continuing throughout this age; the high priest exiting from the holy place and “appearing” again is not Jesus’ resurrection but his parousia.

We could think of the early churches “breaking bread” as small “banquet communities” (Moessner 1989, 320) spreading from Jerusalem throughout the Roman world (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7). Their eucharist-centered worship oriented them backward in remembrance of Christ in his death and forward toward His coming and the promised messianic banquet in the next age (Luke 22:16-20; Isa 25:6-8).

Acts 3:15-21 This is one of the most intriguing of Luke’s eschatologically oriented passages. Peter rehearses Israel’s leaders’ guilt in putting to death “the prince of life” and tells them the stunning news that through the horrific events of the crucifixion the “things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled” (3:18). He then calls them to repent.

In the Cross the sufferings of the Servant have been fulfilled, and forgiveness and refreshment (by the Spirit apparently) is available from the risen Lord Jesus. Yet there remains a future period of fulfillment of the OT prophetic word, *until* which time Jesus must remain in heaven. “Clearly, a Christian perspective of two comings, one fulfilled and one anticipated, is expressed here as taught by the prophets... Only the broad OT conceptual framework of ultimate eschatological renewal for the nation is found in this section” (Bock, Proclamation from prophecy and pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology (Journal for the study of the New Testament supplement series, 12) 1987, 190). In an earlier work Bock argues that the “refreshing of

Acts 3:19 is an allusion to the present era” while “the period of restoration of all things” refers to the second of “the two parts of the eschaton, the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’” (Bock, *Evidence from Acts* 1997, 188).

The eschatological outlook of Luke-Acts comes onto the stage at a number of points, but nowhere more pointedly than in Acts 3:20, with the juxtaposition of ‘seasons of refreshment,’ the sending of Messiah Jesus, and ‘times of restoration.’ The Christology developed thus far reveals that the salvific blessings of Yahweh are available through the agency of the exalted Jesus. Even if he is presently detained in heaven, the Messiah is not for this reason any less involved in his messianic work. In conjunction with the promised sending of the Messiah (3:20), then, ‘seasons of refreshment’ points to times of blessing prior to the end time. Nevertheless, Jesus is presently detained in heaven, where he will remain until the parousia (cf. 1:9-11). (Green 2005, 63-64)

Peter’s warning (based on Deut 32:15-19 and Gen 12:3) in 3:22-26 urges repentance upon Israel because of who they still are (even at this point after Pentecost): “It is you who are the sons... of the covenant which God made with your fathers.” This continues to be Israel’s status in the apostles’ mind, and the cause for deep grief, even after it becomes clear that the great majority of Israel refuses the opportunity to repent:

my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom *belongs* [note the present tense] the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers (Rom 9:3-4)

Acts 4:23-31 (Ps 2) 9, 112, 118 The opposition of “the kings of the earth” and “the rulers,” united against “the Lord and against his Christ,” seen at the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, continues unabated despite the resurrection, ascension and exaltation as Lord and Christ—the same rulers oppress Jesus’ followers (Acts 4:23-29; Ps 2). Rather there is still time to give solemn testimony of Jesus’ exaltation to God’s right hand and warn these rulers of judgment to come (Psa 2:10-12; Acts 4:5-20; 6:12-7:60; 13:7-12; 22:1-23:11; 24:1-25; 26:1-32).

Acts 7:1-53 Stephen’s Spirit-enabled testimony traces the history of Israel from Abraham to Jesus, and in the process focuses on one theme: The sons of Jacob have consistently rejected the ones chosen by God as their saviors. Joseph and Moses are the patterns: both were rejected, spent a period of time away from their kinspeople, lived and took brides from among the Gentiles, and were in the end recognized by Israel as their deliverer (two stages?). Now Stephen testifies to Jesus as the Son of Man— the divine-human judge— standing at the right hand of God, hidden from the world, not yet coming in glory (7:55-56)

Acts 8:27-39 The Ethiopian eunuch, firstfruit of the huge harvest to come from among the nations, is reading Isa 53:7-8, which Philip applies directly to Jesus doubtless to his suffering as the lamb. Again the Servant of the Lord of Isaiah is identified with Jesus the Messiah. The line is drawn from the synagogue in Nazareth to Jerusalem to the Gaza desert.

Acts 9 Saul, a bit like the king whose name he bore, was raving against God’s anointed. His conversion is accomplished by the Lord himself, bearing witness to the fact that the suffering of the Son of Man is

continuing in the persecution of his people: “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting” (9:5). This expresses as much about the character of the age as it does about the union of Christ and his church. Saul has been chosen to suffer for his name’s sake (not reigning yet), representing the true King before Gentiles, kings, and “the sons of Israel” (Act 9:15-16), all of whom presumably have ongoing status through the age.

Acts 10 Peter announces the gospel of peace that God “sent to Israel (10:36). The testimony of “all the prophets” is focused on the primary need for all *sinners* (in Luke-Acts reaching awareness of being in this category is crucial: Luk 5:8; 7:34-49; 13:2; 15:1, 2, 7, 10; 18:13; 19:7; Acts 2:37-38; 3:19, 26; 13:38-39): “through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins” (20:43). The giving of the Spirit to the Gentiles who have now “received the word of God” (note the crucial turning points at 8:14 and 11:1 where the apostles in Jerusalem and Judea hear this news and must respond by affirming the inclusive purpose of God).

Acts 13:16-47 In this message Paul summarizes again the whole plan of God, worked out through Israel’s history. In Acts 13:22-23 he speaks of David as “the son of Jesse,” alluding to another magnificent restoration passage, Isa 11. Clements points to the ways the Isaianic vision of the new world order in Isa 11:6-9 corresponds with the biblical theology of history beginning with a blessed creation, fallen and cursed, yet destined for restoration, and notes that “It belongs closely alongside the more overtly political assurance of Isa. 2:4... It is the ending of violence in all its forms which establishes the primary focus of the future promise” (Clements 1999, 85). Again we see both present fulfillment—“through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you” (13:38)—and allusion to future second-stage blessing that will come with Jesus’ second coming.

In the Lukan perspective, the Jewish hope in resurrection is tied to the Jewish hope for a messianic kingdom. Resurrection life is an aspect of the Messiah’s kingdom, which has consistently been presented as central to Jewish hope. Already in the first chapter of Luke, the angel Gabriel said that the Messiah Jesus would “reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:33). The Messiah’s kingdom is eternal because the resurrected Jesus does not die. This point is emphasized by Paul in Acts 13:34-35. The speech of which these verses are a part proclaims that the promise of the Davidic Messiah for Israel has been fulfilled through the resurrection of Jesus (13:32-33). (Tannehill 1999, 339)

Thus Paul cites the second phrase from the messianic Servant oracle—“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth” (Isa 49:6)—to explain his apostolic mission to the Gentiles, as the bond-servant of the Servant (Acts 13:47). Although this stage of the restoration is characterized by great many tribulations (Acts 14:22) and by “afflictions, hardships,

calamities” for Christ’s apostles (2 Cor 6:4), it is nonetheless true that “now,” paradoxically, this present evil age, “is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2; cf. Isa 49:8).

Acts 15:13-19. James’ loose quotation²² of Amos 9:11-12 confirms that the God’s prophetic program involves the incorporation of Gentiles as part of one “people for his name.” The first stage of the Israel’s restoration combines the Jewish remnant with Gentiles, by giving both groups the Holy Spirit, having cleansed their hearts by faith (15:8-9).

Acts 17:24-32. That God has fixed a future “day” in which he will judge the world in righteousness points to the future unfolding of the events of the Day of the Lord. Putting together this passage with others reveals the following rough framework:

- 1) The times of ignorance, before the resurrection
- 2) The present era of world-wide witness, in the context of suffering, war, tribulation
- 3) The judging of the world at Christ’s coming from heaven
- 4) The restoration of all things, including all that the prophets promised (universal peace under Christ)

Acts 19:21-26:32 Luke’s narrative of Paul’s journeys has significant parallels with those of Jesus in the gospel. 1) Paul makes three journeys preaching the gospel to Jews first and also to the Gentiles. 2) From 19:21 (like Jesus from Luke 9:51 onward), Paul, constrained by the Spirit, journeys toward Jerusalem where he will suffer for the name of the Lord Jesus (19:21; 20:22-24; 21:10-14).²³

Scenes of Paul’s defenses before the Jewish Sanhedrin and Gentile rulers dominate the large remainder of the book. Acts to the angry mob in the temple courtyard (22:1-21), before the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:10), before governor Felix (24:10-22), before Festus and Agrippa (26:1-29), and finally before the Jewish leaders in Rome (28:23-29). Throughout Israel as a nation is very much in evidence. Paul speaks as a Jew to the kings, referring to the “God of our fathers” (20:16; 24:11, 17-18; 26:21), and speaks of the hope of the promise given “by God to our fathers, to which our twelve tribes hope to attain” (26:6-7; Moessner 309). Throughout these speeches runs the theme of the “hope of Israel,” which is “the resurrection of the dead.” The apostles preached Jesus’ resurrection, but they also preached the resurrection of the saints (3:15; 4:2). In these defense scenes Paul repeatedly describes his own cause as the messianic resurrection kingdom (23:6; 24:14-15; 25:19; 26:22-23), insisting that he is “wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel” (28:20).

²² The majority of interpreters see a following of the LXX with other passages such as Isaiah 45:20-21 mixed in. The phrase “I will return” is not in Amos and likely comes from other OT prophetic passages like Zech 1:16 and 8:3 where the Lord promises “I will return” to Jerusalem for rebuilding and restoration.

²³ A side note is found in Acts 20:18-35. Regarding the alleged absence of atonement theology in Luke-Acts, suffice it to say that the speeches of Acts are uniformly directed to *unbelievers*, to whom not the divine *how* of forgiveness but its *condition*—repentance—is proclaimed! But in the one recorded message to *believers*, the Ephesian church elders, Paul speaks of “the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood” (20:28).

This is not simply rhetoric. It is of a piece with his expectation in Romans 11:15, “if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will *their* acceptance be but *life from the dead*?”

The promise of the messianic Kingdom to which Paul refers in this, his first major speech, includes the promise of resurrection life to which he refers in his last major speech. A peculiar phraseology provides evidence for this connection. In 13:32 Paul refers to “the promise made to the fathers” (τὴν πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ἐπαγγελίαν γενομένην); in 26:6 the phrase is repeated, including the word order... The promise of a messianic kingdom and the promise of resurrection life flow together in Lukan thought, for the Messiah is “first of the resurrection of the dead” (26:23). He is the first of many. More than his own resurrection is at stake, for through him comes resurrection life for others (cf. Acts 3:15; 4:2). Thus Paul in the trial scenes is able to move from hope in a general resurrection to hope in a messianic kingdom for Israel established by a resurrected Messiah. (Tannehill 1999, 339)

Thus in this picture Jesus’ resurrection from the dead inaugurates the first stage of the restoration, and “the resurrection of the dead” at his coming inaugurates the second stage. In this age the remnant of Israel and the Gentiles who have turned to Christ are one new unified people of God, the “church” (Acts 5:11; 8:1, 3; 9:31; 11:22, 26; 12:1, 5; 13:1; 14:23, 27; 15:3, 4, 22, 41; 16:5; 18:22; 20:17, 28). They will receive the “inheritance” together with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Acts 7:5; 20:32; 26:18).

Paul’s final warning to the quarreling Jewish leaders in Rome ends with his quotation of Isa 6:9-10, the famous passage on judicial blinding of Israel, and the announcement, “Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen” (like 13:46). Jesus had quoted this passage as well as the nation rejected him (Luke 8:10; allusion in 19:42). Yet the scene in Isaiah 6 ends with hope: the prophet asks, “Lord, how long?” The Lord response that exile and desolation will come, Israel will be like a felled tree, adding finally, “but as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land” (Isa 6:13 NIV²⁴). So even as the majority of Israel is hardened, a remnant remains. Through this rejection of the majority great riches will come (initially through the tiny remnant = Jesus’ followers) to the Gentiles (Rom 11:12), and hope remains for a sprouting again of the tree.²⁵ In the day of resurrection, when the LORD comes “out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity... Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout, and they will fill the whole world with fruit” (Isa 26:19-27:6).

Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!... For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? (Rom 11:12, 15)

²⁴ There are challenges to this translation, leaving only a terebinth-wood monument to repeated destruction (Watts 1985, 70, 76). But this misses the flow of the argument, in my judgment. “It is the question ‘how long?’ which is a mark of hope... a remnant which is holy will be preserved” (Young 1965, 264-65).

²⁵ Job muses about death and resurrection with similar imagery, arguing that “there is hope for a tree, when it is cut down, that it will sprout again,” even if the stump lies under the soil for a long time (Job 14:7-9).

Summary of conclusions

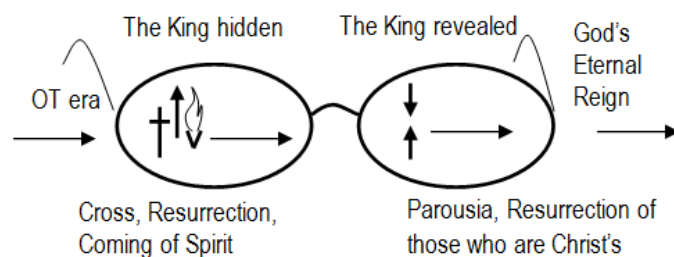
The evident “complexity” of the relationship between the old covenant and the new one introduced by Jesus’ first coming, which resists over-simplification or homogenization (Blocher 2006), suggests that some complexity might well accompany the age(s) introduced by his second coming. Efforts to exhaustively explain the present age as the restoration of Israel or to merge the future reign of Israel’s messianic King into the eternal state when God is all in all are also unlikely to be adequate. If his first coming brought such rich transitional complexity, how much more might his coming again?

The temptation is to set aside these two very difficult texts (Luke 22:29f.; Acts 1:6-8) and to press on with the task of integrating the rest of Luke’s teaching, but this could be dangerous. The presence of such texts warns against oversimplification of the evidence. (Marshall 1999 357)

Romans 11 seems conclusive that there is a future for Israel, because of God’s irrevocable promises (“gifts and calling”) to them. Into this framework, of a remnant of the olive tree of Israel into which a large mass of Gentiles are being joined as the church, and a greater future yet to come for the rest of Israel and the whole world, Luke’s evidence for a two-stage restoration of Israel fits quite well. To review the picture we can think of two “lenses” of two comings.

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow... fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1Pe 1:10-11, 13)

God’s purpose was not unknown to Israel’s prophets, but much of the hiddenness of God’s intention for Israel is related to the reality of the long-awaited “coming” and kingdom of the Lord being in two stages, grace brought by his sufferings and future grace brought by his glorious revelation. For the apostles these two comings were the great lenses through which the unfolding of the prophetic purposes were seen. These two comings color the eras which follow them and make up two stages of Christ’s kingdom. We could think of them as two lenses of faith, one to behold the His unseen glory now and the other to the future grace which will be unveiled at his appearing.



Knowing that there are two comings of Christ and seeing Jesus as Lord in Old Testament texts that referred to Yahweh are two examples of the effect of this factor. These show an interaction between the life of Christ and the Old Testament in which the revelation of the Person helped make clear the revelation of the Book, by showing how the promise came to fruition... Patterns were completed and promises were fulfilled in ways that reflected a connection to Old Testament persons or events, or in ways that heightened them. (Bock 1985, 316)

Some Implications

Why a two-stage program? Interestingly, the early church father Irenaeus in *Against Heresies* 5.32-36 explained the purpose of the age between the resurrection and the eternal state to be for final perfecting of risen saints, readying them for the full glory of eternity. His version of chiliasm has features which derive from concepts about man's creation in the image of God with the undeveloped *potential* to grow into the likeness of God (Bettenson 1956:67-69). The intermediate period following Christ's return and the resurrection of saint is essentially for the purpose of allowing renewed humanity to be prepared for receiving immortality, sort of a preparation period for glory (Smith 1994, 318-19)

Progressive dispensationalists also subdivide the future dispensation into "millennial" and "eternal" stages (Blaising and Bock 1993, 51). Most however see a premillennial "philosophy of history" as providing a fitting ending to this world's troubled history, including the notion of the martyrs and other righteous people being vindicated and rewarded in the world in which they suffered (McClain 1968, 527-31) (Kaiser 1997, 104).

A valid philosophy of history must account for Israel, both past and present. "It is in the service of the application of divine salvation to the structure of society that the nation of Israel was destined to play as central role, according to the prophets" (Saucy 1988, 257). As one Jewish writer sees it, suprasessionism, "refers to the Christian belief that, with the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, Israel's Covenant with God was superseded and replaced by God's presence in the church as the Body of Christ: in other words, that God's love for the church replaced His love for the people Israel" (Ochs 2005, 645). The "Shoah" and the persistent problem of Palestine on the international agenda testifies anew to this reality.²⁶

The paradox of Jesus' "finished" work in the face of the pervasive presence of evil and pain in the world must be dealt with for a satisfactory account of "fulfillment" of the OT promises. These promises clearly tie the restoration of universal peace and the knowledge of God with the coming of the Messiah.

"The real problem ... is this: Jesus interpreted his coming death, and the vindication he expected after that death, as the defeat of evil; but, on the first Easter Monday evil still stalked the earth from Jerusalem to Gibraltar and beyond, and stalks it still" (JVG 659)...[If] we accept Wright's portrayal of Jesus as believing that redemption and resurrection were already achieved in his regrouping of Israel around himself and if we accept his controversial exegesis of passages traditionally thought to refer to Jesus' second coming as references to Jesus' accomplishment of Yahweh's return to Zion in his own actions, we will find it correspondingly more difficult to give coherent answers to this question—unless, of course, we simply say "Jesus was wrong," which is clearly not what Wright wants to say. To put the point more concisely, the realized eschatology of Wright's account enhances the internal tension of the theodicy question virtually to the breaking point. (Hays 1999, 155)

²⁶ A recent comprehensive consideration of many of these issues is Tatai, Istvan, *The Church and Israel: In Search of a New Model in Post-Holocaust Theology*. Printed by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.

What should be the Christian attitude toward the Jewish people and the modern state of Israel? Hays devotes a major chapter to this issue in his *Moral Vision of the New Testament* (Hays 1996, 407-43). Yet the benefits of focusing again on the people of Israel are sometimes largely confined to avoiding anti-Semitism and its Holocaust-like results, as well as the general benefits of dialogue with other faiths. Obviously we can't simply accept Judaism as it is and make sense of Paul's anguish for them in Rom 9:1. Yet even some who see Luke's two-stage perspective clearly wonder if it can still be ours today:

In my view, concern for the Jewish people would have led the author of Luke-Acts to continue mission to the Jews. Today, however, Christians must consider whether almost two millennia of history lead to a different conclusion: that God has a continuing purpose for Jews as a separate people. This conclusion permits respectful dialogue that need not lead to conversion. (Tannehill, 1999, 338)

This cannot be squared with the passion of the apostle who both longed and worked for the conversion of Israel's people to their Messiah (Rom 9:1-2), and also taught that God has a continuing purpose for Israel as a separate people (Rom 11:28-29). At the same time it must be stated clearly that this future restoration in which Israel is to have a part (Acts 1:6) is not to be confused with the Zionist State of Israel, as it is today.²⁷ Only by repentance and turning to Jesus, "the Christ appointed for you," will their sins be wiped away and "times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:21). Israel's identity has always been defined by their relationship with Yahweh, who elected and redeemed them. He alone is Israel's glory. Now that the Lord has come as Jesus the Messiah, Israel is more clearly and only defined by their relationship to Him, as his glory has now been revealed as "God Crucified."²⁸ There is no future for Israel without Jesus Christ. He is "a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel" (Luke 2:32).

²⁷ Comments such as those of popular Jewish Christian writer Joel Rosenberg display this confusion. In a section titled "Israel, the modern miracle" he speaks of "the rebirth and repopulation of Israel described in Ezekiel 36 and 37" coming true in his lifetime. "I reread the book of Ezekiel. What struck me first was that much of Ezekiel 36-37 had already come true" (Rosenberg 2006, 26-29). But in so doing he utterly neglects the central feature of the restoration described there—a new heart and new spirit, and cleansing from defilement, under "one shepherd," the Davidic messiah (Ezek 36:23-38; 37:23-28).

²⁸ For this term and the understanding of Jesus as included in the divine identity see Bauckham, Richard, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

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