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Jesus's Subversive Reading of the Isaian Jubilee:

Luke 4:16–30 in Theological-Historiographical Perspective

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Luke 4:16–30 in Theological-Historiographical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

A growing number of scholars have proposed that Luke, or his sources, fabricated the story of Jesus reading a text in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:14–30) in order to appeal to the literate sensibilities of Luke's Greek audience. The thesis of this dissertation is that Luke's portrayal of Jesus as a capable public reader and expositor of the Scripture is historically credible and Christologically significant. Rather than implying that Jesus was a scribal-literate reader, Luke's synagogue narrative signals that Jesus was a capable and a welcomed lay-reader of the Prophets, and a capable yet unwelcomed expositor who appeared to have interpreted the Isaian Jubilee with divine authority. The historical issue of Jewish education and Luke's Christological aims require an explicitly theological-historiographical approach to the subject. The hypothesis of this dissertation is first supported by the existence of non-specialized education through first-century synagogues. This general education likely produced lay-readers who were less than scribal-literate but able to handle and read certain texts in public. The thesis is further supported by Luke's Christological focus of the unit and Jesus's exposition of Isaiah 61:1–2 and 58:6, whereby he unilaterally subverts a well-established Jewish liberation tradition that envisioned God's favor on Israel and vengeance for Gentiles (Luke 4:18–19). This Christological perspective and its implications for the Nazarenes best explains the furious response to Jesus in the Nazareth synagogue, resulting in his expulsion from their town and the escalating tensions between him and the scribal-literate class.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary.* Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
ANESSup	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplemental Series
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible Commentary Series
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BAIAS	*Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
Bib	*Biblica*
Bib hist.	Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. 3rd ed. Chicago, 1999
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.* Oxford, 1907
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
BHK	*Biblia Hebraica,* ed. R. Kittel Edited by R. Kittel. Stuttgart, 1905–1906, 1925^{2}, 1937^{3}, 1951^{4}, 1973^{16}
BJRE	*British Journal of Religious Education*
BPC	Biblical Performance Criticism Series
BS	*Bible and Spade*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DBAM	*Dictionary of the Bible and Ancient Media.* Ed. Tom Thatcher, Chris Keith, Raymond F. Person Jr., and Elsie R. Stern. Edinburgh; London; New York: T&T Clark, 2017
DNTB	*Dictionary of New Testament Background.* Ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
DTIB	*Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*
ECNT	*Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*
EGGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament
EJ	*Encyclopedia Judaica*
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.* Edited by Emil Kautzsch. Translated by Arther E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.* Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IJST	*International Journal of Systematic Theology*

JAEI	Journal of Egyptian Interconnections
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBMW	*Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*
JE	*The Jewish Encyclopedia.* Edited by Isidore Singer. 12 vols. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1925
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JNES	*Journal of New Eastern Studies*
JPFC	*The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions.* 2 vols. Ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern, with D. Flusser and W. C. van Unnik. Section 1 of *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum.* Vol. 1: Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974; Vol. 2: Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRA	Journal of Roman Archaeology
JSEM	*Journal for Semitics*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LBD	*The Lexham Bible Dictionary*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEB	*Lexham English Bible*
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LHJS	Library of Historical Jesus Studies
L&N	Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene A. Nida, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. 2nd ed. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, A Greek-English Lexicon. 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford, 1996
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTCS	New Testament Commentary Series
OTL	The Old Testament Library
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.* Edited by James H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. Garden City, New York, 1983
RNTS	Reading the New Testament Series

SBJT	*Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SPRS	Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies
SSEJC	*Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
TDBAM	*The Dictionary of the Bible and Ancient Media*
TNICOT	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der ãlteren Kirche*
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO LUKE'S READING JESUS

Since the late nineteenth century scholars have given growing attention to Jewish life in the time of Jesus of Nazareth during the Second Temple period.[1] Of particular interest has been the scribal culture of Roman Palestine and the sociopolitical context of Jesus as a teacher in antiquity.[2] In recent years Jesus's role as a local teacher has come into sharp focus, particularly with regards to his function as an individual oral tradent, as a reader, interpreter, and performer of the Jewish Scriptures.[3]

Much has been written regarding orality and literacy in the time of Jesus and to what extent texts aided in the "oral life" of illiterate Jews and Christians.[4] Nevertheless, it is safe to acknowledge the centrality of a sacred text among the two groups, and the existence of a privileged scribal class among the Jewish people.[5] Scribal literate leaders were the authority-brokers of their written traditions in Judea and Galilee, functioning as specialists and experts on matters of faith and praxis, and able to carry out a variety of civil transactions.[6] These

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1. Christine Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second Temple Period*, JSOTSup 291 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 15. Scham notes, "Scholars like Emil Schurer, Herman L. Strack, Paul Billerbeck, Joachim Jeremias, and Adolf Von Schlatter published works concerning Jewish history and society in Antiquity."

2. Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second Temple Period*, 15.

3. John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus Volume 5: Probing the Authenticity of the Parables* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 79. Meier identifies an oral-tradent as "One who is responsible for preserving and handing on the oral tradition, such as a teacher, a preacher, or missionary."

4. Pieter J.J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*, BPC 5 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 91.

5. Robin Lane Fox, "Literacy and Power in Early Christianity," in *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World,* ed. Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 130. Fox stresses that unlike their Jewish counterparts, early Christians had no undue reverence for scribes. cf. Schams, *Jewish Scribes,* 15. Scribes had a range of functions that were not all religious, but their authority was their adjacency to vital texts within the culture; Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth* (Leiden: Brill, 1964) 4–12, 37. A plurality of "elders" "teachers/scribes" and authorities predominate New Testament accounts.

6. Bowman and Woolf, *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, 13. See also *Schams*, *Jewish Scribes*, 327.

professionals clearly served as members of a community of authority—those groups designated as priests *kahanim* (כֹּהֲנִים, ἱερεῖς), scribes/legal experts *sopherim* (סֹפְרִים; γραμματεῖς), and the Pharisees *perushim* (פְּרוּשִׁים; Φαρισαίοι).[7] What is less clear is Jesus's scribal-literate status and to what extent he was able to read, transcribe, produce, and interpret Jewish texts.[8] If he had not received his training within the scribal-literate guilds and was not a recognized priest, scribe or Pharisee, then in what sense could Jesus have learned the Jewish Scriptures and taught them to the local residents with authority?

The Problem

The first problem centers around Luke's portrait of a Scripture reading and interpreting Jesus. He portrays Jesus as a customary reader in the synagogue (Luke 4:16–20) and describes him as the supremely authoritative teacher of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms for his disciples in a post-resurrection appearance (Luke 24:27, 44). The Synoptics and John similarly portray him as at least orally proficient with a variety of texts, routinely interacting over matters of interpretation in various contexts.[9] Researchers are deeply divided over the issue of Jesus's literacy, a subject having a direct bearing on what kind of public authority figure Jesus might have been.[10]

The second problem closely related to the first is a hermeneutical one. Scholars have too often addressed the issue of his reading ability either reductionistically—reducing Jesus to a

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7. Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth*, 4–12, 37.

8. Chris Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite: The Source of the Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 3.

9. See Matt 5:3–10, 17–20, 21–48; 7:24; 21:42; 22:29; Mark 7:6; 9:12; 12:10; 12:24; Luke 24:27.

10. See Chapter 2 of this dissertation for the broad parameters of that debate.

known social type and thus diminishing claims of his authority and uniqueness; or fundamentalistically—thereby missing vital social and historical cues in the text related to his social identity. The problem is that the matter of Jesus's public reading-exposition and its authority signaling function has been largely undertreated in historical Jesus studies especially with respect to his first sermon in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:16–30).[11] Those who would reduce Jesus to a known social category tend to bar theological and Christological reflection from historical inquiry while those who opt for a face-value reading of Jesus's synagogue sermon tend to privilege a canonical-theological, or a biblical-theological perspective, importing a fully realized New Testament Christology to the passage and others like it.[12] It seems that a third interpretive live option is advisable. There is space in the research for a merging of the two aforementioned horizons so that neither the historical issues nor the theological perspectives central to Luke's text suffer neglect. Luke provides a narrative where the two horizons can meet.

Proposed Solutions to the Problem

In Luke's account of Jesus's Nazareth sermon, the Nazarene congregation rejected and nearly killed Jesus. Scholarly solutions to their reaction to Jesus can be divided into three

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11. See Nina Henrichs-Tarasenkova, *Luke's Christology of Divine Identity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2016), 5. She states, "One can argue that although Luke does not tell his readers directly that Jesus is God/θεός, the possibility still exists that he shows this indirectly by means of his narrative." cf. Jonathan L. Austin, "Performative Utterances" in *Philosophical Papers,* ed. James O. Urmson and Geoffrey J. Warnock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 233–52.

12. For a canonical-theological method, see John C. Peckham, *Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura, and Theological Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 130–1. If the biblical canon is the "rule of faith," then an interpreter is theoretically justified to interpret every unit in light of the whole. This dissertation, however, will reflect the process outlined in G.K. Beale's magisterial volume, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), for method see 29–161. For his treatment of Luke 4:16–30 see pages 431, 573, 826. However, in all of these passages Beale does not address the relevant sociocultural background issues such as public reading and interpreting, the social signals of public prophecy etc. This dissertation also largely embraces the intertextuality criteria of Ched Spellman, *Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of the Bible: Exploring the History and Hermeneutics of the Canon* NTS 34 (Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 2014), 142–82.

categories: (1) Sociocultural: What cultural factors prompted the Nazarene congregation's furious response to Jesus's reading and message? Was the offense that he presumed to be a literate scribe when in fact he was not? Or did the Nazarenes' chafe at something altogether different? (2) Christological: What did Jesus intend to communicate about himself by his handling of Scripture in public to his local audience? Did he merely intend to communicate that he was reaching for scribal-literate authority? Likewise, what Christological insights did Luke expect his largely hellenized readers to discern from the incident and others like it?[13] (3) Biblical-theological: What bearing does Luke-Acts Christology have on the narrative of Luke 4:16–30?

The "Familiarity Breeds Contempt" Explanation

Most scholars assume Markan and Matthean priority in relation to the story. Given Luke's partial dependence on Mark and Matthew, some construe the congregation's offense directed at Jesus himself due to his ordinariness.[14] Perhaps the crowd was offended that their homegrown preacher claimed to be their eschatological Messiah or at the very least feigned scribal associations, which immediately sparked a response of incredulity (of course they knew better). Mark (Mark 6:1–5) and Matthew (Matt 13:53–58) portray Jesus as having been rejected right after the congregation notes his familial kinship.[15] As a member of the artisan class with

13. While Jesus and Luke's audiences were different (devout Palestinian Jews versus hellenized Jews or Christianized Greeks) the same Christological insight was intended. The devout Nazarenes only have access to Jesus's reputation both as a local craftsman and his preceding ministry in larger Galilee, along with this initial sermon in Luke. Luke's audience (Theophilus and by extension, presumably, Christian hellenists) have access to a limited canonical perspective whereby the story appears within a fully formed Christological tapestry.

14. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 60.

15. John Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, WBC 35A (Waco, TX: Word, 1989), 199.

familiar origins, the Nazarenes simply could not accept him as a pretentious scribal teacher. And so, the "familiarity breeds contempt" interpretive option seems initially to be an attractive and straightforward explanation.

On the other hand, that the long-awaited Messiah would not be born in and arise from opulence must have been a foregone conclusion. In fact, all the messianic figures indicated by Josephus were of modest backgrounds, their followers mostly from the peasant and artisan social classes.[16] When considering the illegitimacy of the Herodian family it is no wonder that would-be Messiahs in the first century were domestic hopefuls. For example, Judas of Galilee (6 CE) and his progeny, James and Simon, were likely viewed to be rebels following the Hasmonean tradition of revolution (167–160 BCE). Judas attracted enough local sympathy to raise not a small militia against Rome. Galileans believed the Hasmonean revolution to have been largely successful, despite the subsequent failings of Judas and his sympathizers (Acts 5:37).[17] So why the offense taken at Jesus who, like Judas, heralded a popular message of "liberty" (Josephus, *Ant.* 18:4–6), and who, unlike Judas, was rumored to wield Elijianic power (Matt 13:54; Luke 4:14)? If the Messiah was to emerge from within their ranks, and if one greater than Judas has come, then why not be open to Jesus as a messianic claimant? The theory that Jesus's hometown crowd would have had contempt for him due to mere familiarity, his vocation as a carpenter, or

16. Warren J. Jr. Heard and Craig A. Evans, "Jewish Revolutionary Movements," *DNTB* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 938. Josephus mentions several leaders of these rebel groups: Judas, the son of Hezekiah (Josephus *Ant.* 17.271–72; *J.W.* 2.4.1 §56). Herod's servant Simon (Josephus *Ant.* 17.10.6 §§273–76); and Athronges (Josephus *Ant.* 17.7 §§278–85). That these leaders were messianic aspirants seems clear from Josephus's descriptions (Josephus *J.W.* 2.4.1 §55; *Ant.* 17.10.8 §285).

17. The very names of Jesus's disciples are reminiscent of the Maccabean revolutionaries such as James, Simon, Matthew (cf. Mattathias), John and Judas. Additionally, the many names recovered from ossuary evidence suggest that parents in late antiquity tended to name their children after those leaders from this age of Jewish revolution. See Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the Ossuaries," *BBR* 13 (2003): 21-46. Josephus reflects a positive assessment of the Maccabean revolt and its martyrs. See Julia Wilker, "Noble Death and Dynasty: A Popular Tradition from the Hasmonean Period in Josephus," *JSJ* 48 (2017): 69–91.

his illiterate status may not hold up on scrutiny. Perhaps the contempt view is not the best explanation of the story after all.

The "Fictional-Literate" Explanation

Others have proposed that Luke fabricated the story about Jesus portraying him as a literate reader and a capable theologian when in fact he could have been nothing of the sort.[18] The presumption is that Luke or a later Lucan community invented the narrative details of Jesus's synagogue reading and the ensuing offense in an attempt to appeal to a Greek audience's "literate sensibility." Numerous problems surface for this approach. First, there are no extant textual witnesses to support the view. Thus, the historian has no record of a Jesus who was ever remembered to have been utterly text-incompetent. Second, why think that orality and literacy are separate competencies? Perhaps Jesus belongs somewhere in between on a spectrum of literacy? This dissertation affirms the research that an orality-literacy divide does not quite fit the data as it relates to Jesus and his Jewish milieu.

The "Competing Memories" Explanation

Yet another recent approach proposes that Jesus was an ambiguous scribal teacher, having been remembered and commemorated in two divergent traditions which are captured in the Gospel accounts.[19] On this view, Mark and Mathew represent a cultural memory in which Jesus was considered to have presumptuously read with the pretention of scribal authority in synagogue. Jesus is ousted from the synagogue because, as Chris Keith notes, "his hometown

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18. Werner Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*: *The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 14. See also John D. Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), ix.

19. Chris Keith, *Jesus' Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011), 9.

exposes him as an imposter to the position."[20] Luke avoids this tension altogether by simply reporting on a conflicting tradition where Jesus was remembered to have been a scribal-literate teacher.[21]

But two apparent problems surface for this perspective. First, numerous passages in all the Gospels describe Jesus in conflict with scribal Judaism. Far from appearing as a scribal aspirant, Jesus appears as an outsider to their guilds from the start.[22] Moreover, why conclude that Luke would need to portray Jesus as an actual elitist insider?[23] If Christ's Galilean audience perceived him to be a miraculous prophet sent from God, then the authority inherent to that inspired office would likely negate any supposed need for scribal associations. Indeed, Jesus's explicit claim to fulfill this ancestral office (that of the prophet) could have been the very "bur in the saddle" between himself and the scribal elite. Luke and the other Gospel authors seem far more interested in portraying Jesus as a prophet rather than as a pretentious scholar.

The second challenge for Keith's view is the absence of illiterate terminology. Matthew and Mark do not refer to Jesus as "uneducated" (ἀγράμματος). The crowds (Mark 6:2; Matt 13:54) are astonished at ἡ σοφία αὕτη καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις, "his wisdom and mighty works" not his ability to read a text.[24]

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20. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite*, 93.

21. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite*, 9.

22. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church: The Challenge of Luke-Acts to Contemporary Christians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 29.

23. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite,* 145. Keith asserts, "Luke agrees with Mark and Matthew that: Jesus occupied the position of a scribal-literate teacher." Keith does not believe that Jesus was a *grammateus* and cites this as the problem. If he was not a scribal-literate Pharisee, scribe, or Sadducee how has he come to have what Luke obviously describes as scribal literacy? The assumption that this was Luke's burden is challenged in Chapters 3–6 of this dissertation.

24. Michael W. Holmes, *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011–2013), Matt 13:54. All Greek citations in *SBL Edition* unless otherwise noted. True, the Jerusalem crowd in John's Gospel questions how Jesus obtained γράμματα οἶδεν μὴ μεμαθηκώς, translated "learning without having studied" (John

The "Gentile Inclusion" Explanation

Many commentators focus on the message conveyed by Jesus in the Nazarene synagogue. The response of the congregants (Luke 4:28–29) follows Jesus's exposition of Gentile inclusion through an analogy of the prophets (Luke 4:25–27).[25] Charles Talbert sums it up well, "Jesus says he must bear the good news of the kingdom beyond the confines of those to whom he is most closely related by geographical, cultural, and racial origin."[26] Likewise Robert C. Tannehill observes, "It is not so much that Jesus goes elsewhere because he is rejected as that he is rejected because he announces that it is God's will and his mission to go elsewhere."[27] David Garland likewise explains, "Jesus's prophetic application of the Scripture implies that recalcitrant, unrepentant Israel may be judged and passed over and that Gentiles might be the recipients of God's blessing instead."[28] This insight is surely correct as far as it goes. The only issue with this interpretation of the Nazarene's offense seems to be that it makes little or no attempt to account for how Jesus has come to be a welcomed reader/teacher in the synagogue in the first place. This "message-centered" view also lacks sufficient attention to Luke's Christological focus and is inadequately conscious of Luke's overall portrayal of Christ,

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7:15). But the Johannine context concerns Jesus's lack of temple education not his lack of learning or training altogether in the local synagogues. Jesus has not apprenticed with a recognized Jerusalem rabbi. He is an outsider who teaches with God's own authority, having been taught by God himself (John 7:16–17). This point is best articulated by Craig Evans in the next chapter.

25. Jeffrey S. Siker, "'First to the Gentiles:' A Literary Analysis of Luke 4:16–30," *JBL* 111 (1992): 73–90.

26. Talbert, *Reading Luke,* 60. Talbert sees this as a parallel to the Disciples' rejection in Acts.

27. Robert C. Tannehill, *The Shape of Luke's Story: Essays on Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 15–16.

28. David E. Garland, *Luke:* ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 205. cf. Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 128; Alan J. Thompson, *Luke*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 76. John Nolland sees this event as programmatic to Luke's two-volume work, "In the wider Lucan context, the blessed Gentiles adumbrate the universalism which is to be the basis of the Gentile mission." Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20,* 203.

especially as it relates to his prophet-son and prophet-king motif. Jesus's act of unilaterally declaring Gentile inclusion communicates something about his singular authority to announce such sweeping change, and he does so as a *reader-preacher* of texts. The "Gentile inclusion" message of Jesus is surely not the whole story.

Luke's portrayal of Jesus in the synagogue (Luke 4:16–30) focuses this research on two matters that should be held together in tension. First, the historical issue of Jesus as a technical reader in public needs to be addressed in the text.[29] What theory best accounts for the evidence of Jesus as an apparent literate reader of Scripture? Second, the issue of Jesus as a theological reader needs to be reintroduced and kept within the historian's interpretive horizons.[30] How did Jesus handle Scripture and what did that communicate about his own authority? Third, the issue of Luke's own Christological framing of Jesus cannot be far from any faithful interpretation of Luke 4:16–30. To embrace all three of these vectors is to embrace Luke's own emphases as both a historian and a theologian.

The Thesis

This dissertation contends that Luke's portrayal of Jesus as a capable public reader and expositor of Scripture (Luke 4:16–30) is historically credible, and Christologically significant in that it signaled Christ's divine authority. Jesus's exposition of Isaiah 61:1–2 and 58:6 unilaterally reverses a well-established Jewish liberation tradition (Luke 4:18–19). While Jesus intended his audience to understand him as a singular authority, and thus a controversial challenger to the

29. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 1:268. Meier asserts, "But in an oral culture, one could theoretically be an effective teacher, especially of ordinary peasants, without engaging in reading or writing."

30. I. Howard Marshall, *Luke, Historian & Theologian*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 29. Marshall has an excellent discussion on why barring theological inquiry leads to a distorted view of Jesus, namely because Jesus's person and mission transcend methodologically naturalist historiography. Even when these historical-critical authors do attempt to wear the "theologian hat," they tend to be hamstrung by metaphysical naturalist assumptions.

religious establishment (and their inherited traditions), Luke likewise intended his readers to discern certain implications with respect to his divine status. This Christological perspective best explains the furious response to Jesus in the Nazareth synagogue resulting in his expulsion from their town and the escalating tension between him and the scribal and Pharisaic elite.

In order to proceed with the analysis of Luke's synagogue sermon, it is first necessary to establish that Jesus was a plausible reader of Scripture in the synagogue. The vigorous debate among scholars is currently trending in the direction of Jesus's illiteracy. Yet, a reevaluation of the extant evidence and its direct bearing on Jesus's fitness to read and interpret the Bible seems needed. The study identifies a lacuna in the current literature with respect to the practice of ancient reading. Some have theorized that oraliteracy existed in Judaism, but few have applied this theory to Jesus in a Palestinian synagogue context. The existence of oral-textual performance, and oraliterate readers broadens the interpretive possibilities with respect to the literacy-illiteracy debate.

Second, this study directly addresses recent research contesting the existence of Jewish education in the first century. A fair examination of the extant attestations and artifacts supports a mediating view of pervasive, yet non-specialized Jewish education through local synagogues. The proverbial "other side of the coin" is that this evidence also reinforces the fact that there existed a general divide between artisan and scribal authority. This social gulf would indeed have been difficult for Jesus to traverse were it not for other intervening factors. It is argued that Luke indeed provides those intervening factors Christologically, and therefore (contrary to Kelber, Crossan, or Keith) had no need to invent, embellish, or report on a mistaken memory concerning Jesus as a scribal-literate teacher.

Third, this study examines Jesus's chosen text in its own context (Isaiah 61:1–11) and its

interpretive trajectories into Second Temple literature. Jesus chose a Scripture that anticipated a favorable future for Zion (Isa 61:2a), a promise that was inextricable from the message of God's vengeance on their Gentile rivals (61:2b). Lastly, the study explores Jesus's exposition of the popular and well-known Isaian Jubilee to understand how subverting the received interpretive tradition of the passage became so offensive to his hometown crowd. All of this together signaled to the synagogue congregation (and thus to Luke's readers) that Jesus's authority far exceeded that of their scribal-literate teachers.

Fourthly, to understand the nature of Jesus's offense, it is necessary to engage Luke's Christological data with respect to Jesus of Nazareth. To deny these vital insights to the exegesis of Luke 4 would leave the interpreter with too limited sociocultural options, resulting in a distorted historical Jesus who is either a fiction of Luke or his sources. When the Christological data is put back into the interpreter's horizons, the result is a "Palestinian Christ" that is historically plausible—a Jesus who could have indeed set into motion the traditions commemorating his miraculous ministry, prophetic form, and divine identity. This biblical-theological approach is limited to emergent themes from within the chosen pericope (Luke 4:14–30).

The Method

The method employed in this study is theological historiography. Combining the interests of both historical research and theological inquiry is what Roland Deines describes as "Theistically motivated historiography."[31] The research begins with the presumption that God

31. Roland Deines, *Acts of God in History*: *Studies Towards Recovering a Theological Historiography*, ed. Christoph Ochs and Peter Watts (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 7. Deines laments the fact that new currents in theological studies are "seeking to engage in theological interpretation without recourse to *historical* interpretation" and this should be viewed as an alarming trend.

has acted in history and stands sovereignly over it.[32] This approach is chosen for several reasons: (1) It is in keeping with the Gospel authors' own governing interests as historical biographers and theologians. (2) This method reflects the nature of Scripture as both an inspired word—and so is inherently theological; and an inscripturated word—thus suggesting an interaction with history.[33] My chosen method involves both a philosophy of history and historiographical methodology.

Philosophy of History

Before detailing matters of methodology, it is important to establish the philosophical bases on which the method rests. Philosophically I hold to two forms of realism with respect to historical inquiry: Critical Realism (CR) and Theological Realism (TR).

Critical Realism

Critical Realism (CR) was adopted by Jesuit scholar Bernard Lonergan and his student, Ben Meyer.[34] A number of scholars have noted that it was Meyer who first imported Lonergan's insights into New Testament studies.[35] Lonergan critiqued the epistemic positions of *empiricism*

32. Deines, *Acts of God,* 7, 21.

33. See Larry Hurtado's "Divine Agency in Ancient Jewish Monotheism," in *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2015), 17–39.

34. Roy Bhaskar's key contribution has been a critical realist approach which sets itself apart from the extreme ideological poles of pragmatic realism and naïve realism. Pragmatic realism was the legacy of the Leopold von Ranke school of historiography. Pragmatic realists held that events from the past could be colligated under a single historiographical rubric. cf. Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979); Andrew Collier, *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar 's Philosophy* (New York: Verso, 1994); Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Between Temple and Torah: Essays on Priests, Scribes, and Visionaries in the Second Temple Period and Beyond* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

35. Benjamin Meyer, *Critical Realism and the New Testament* (San Jose: Pickwick Publications, 1989); See also. B.F. Meyer, "Cognitional Structure," in *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, S.J. ed. F.E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988), 205–21; cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

and *idealism* suggesting a better path forward.[36] Meyer sums up the theory in a key methodological maxim, "The way to objectivity is through authentic subjectivity."[37] CR marshals a significant challenge to positivist "law-like" uniformity while also opposing relativistic views of history. Meyer summarizes the method further,

> All truth, whether it be the sense and truth of the text or the truth of interpretation (the successful recovery and mediation of the sense and truth of the text), hinges on objectivity. Objectivity, in turn, hinges on the subject's effort to perform his task well. Contrary to a stubborn illusion born of naïve realism, *objectivity is not achieved by the flight from subjectivity nor by any and every cultivation of subjectivity, but by an intense and persevering effort to exercise subjectivity attentively, intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly*.[38]

Jonathan Bernier agrees and explains that CR opts for a third way by affirming "with the empiricist that there is a real world that can be known, while also affirming with the idealist that every act of knowing is an act of mediation upon which we must pass judgment."[39] With respect to NT scholarship, Bernier further proposes that scholars typically view subjectivity as an obstacle to "doing history," supposing "that subjectivity and objectivity are mutually exclusive conditions."[40] By contrast, the proponent of CR arrives at an objective view of those sources through a responsible and rationally justifiable use of subjectivity in our reconstructions of the past.

James D.G. Dunn and N.T. Wright adopted Meyer's essential insights. Wright proposed a CR approach which "acknowledges the reality of the thing known, as something other than the

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36. Jonathan Bernier, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus after the Demise of Authenticity: Toward a Critical Realist Philosophy of History in Jesus Studies*, LNTS 540 (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 21.

37. Ben F. Meyer, *Reality and Illusion in New Testament Scholarship: A Primer in Critical Realist Hermeneutics* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1994), 4.

38. Meyer, *Reality and Illusion*, 4. Italics Meyer's.

39. Bernier, *The Quest*, 22.

40. Bernier, *The Quest*, 27.

knower (hence 'realism')."[41] It is rational to suggest that ancient sources could provide a reasonably accurate picture of historical realities.[42] The analytical task then, is an "*appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known* (hence 'critical')."[43] Sources in this critical realist theory, as Dunn affirms, "come with a context, or various contexts already predisposing interpretation."[44] In other words, meaning has been encoded in texts and they may well give the historian access to a real past. The biblical texts in their contexts already incline the interpreter toward certain insights about the reality of history.

Theological Realism

The second philosophical pillar in a theological-historiographical method is Theological Realism (TR), the underlying principles of which sustain the discipline that has come to be known as the "Theological Interpretation of Scripture" (TIS). Mark Gignilliat states,

> Theology and exegesis work dialectically as they mutually inform one another in the hopes that our theological formulations are continually reformulated in the light of the exegesis of Scripture. Our confession regarding the nature and role of Scripture within the divine economy as the living voice of God surely influences if not determines, the way one engages the material.[45]

As such, TIS is a single method approach whereby the "correct" interpretation engages the text in its own varied dimensions. Again, Gignilliat states, "The various layers are related to one

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41. N.T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 1: The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1992), 35. Italics Wright's. Bernier brings a considerable critique to Wright's approach in so far as he conforms it closer to Ben Meyer's view.

42. Bernier, *The Quest*, 24. This view presupposes a correspondence theory of knowledge affirmed by Thomas Aquinas—reality corresponds to how the intellect judges it to rationally exist.

43. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 35. Italics Wright's.

44. James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered,* vol. 1 of *Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 111.

45. Mark Gignilliat, "Theological Exegesis as 'Exegetical Showing: A Case of Isaiah's Figural Potentiality," *IJST* 12 (2010): 217–32, here 220.

another in an 'organic' fashion and the different dimensions and contexts for reading are all part of the one act of reading the texts faithfully."[46] Similarly, Kevin Vanhoozer and D.A. Carson affirm TIS, providing additional grounding or limiting principles. Carson observes that while TIS is a fragmented movement with many contrasting trajectories, it is generally dedicated to a reform in the practice of scientific and critical exegesis and hermeneutics.[47] As such it attempts to surpass and improve upon what he describes as, "the barren exegeses generated by historical-critical methods, and especially those readings of Scripture that are 'historical' in the sense that they are frankly anti-supernatural interpretations determined by post-Enlightenment assumptions about the nature of history."[48] TIS thus presupposes Theological Realism (TR)—the existence of God as a metaphysically necessary being.[49] This realist stance is identified by several features: (1) TR allows the student of Scripture to follow the Bible's own fixation—the study of God.[50] Vanhoozer states, "If exegesis without presuppositions is impossible, and if some of these presuppositions concern the nature and activity of God, then it would appear to go without saying that biblical interpretation is always/already theological."[51] The true meaning system of the text is discovered in its historical-situatedness*,* but that historical setting should not be

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46. Gignilliat, "Theological Exegesis as 'Exegetical Showing,'" 221.

47. D.A. Carson, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, But. . ." in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives*, ed. R. Michael Allen (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011), 187-207. TIS advocates can rightly be called "ecumenical." Carson's primary critique is what TIS advocates call, "Figuralism." In Carson's view, the two systems need to be pulled apart for one is "extratextual" (Allegorism) and the other is textual (Typology).

48. Carson, "Theological Interpretation," 188.

49. TR presupposes God's existence and independence as a metaphysically necessary being. As such, theological insight is made possible provided that God has supplied a sufficient revelation of himself. See James Porter Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press: 2017), 466. cf. Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press), 405.

50. Kevin Vanhoozer et al. eds., *DTIB* (Grand Rapids: MI, Baker Academic, 2005), 22.

51. Vanhoozer, *DTIB*, 21.

divorced from its inherent theological character and claims. (2) Critical methods and tools now have a "ministerial" rather than a "magisterial" relationship to the text of Scripture.[52] Theological historiography is not yet another critical method aimed at getting behind the text, or in front of the text, or perhaps establishing literary relationships within the text.[53] Instead, these methods and their scientific instruments are now reprioritized to serve the project of theological reflection about the text. (3) As such, TR enables the study of Scripture to engage in a profitable "historical" perspective that embraces various branches of theology—including systematic, biblical, historical, canonical, and philosophical theology.

This dissertation proceeds with a philosophical commitment to a critical realist view of the adequacy of sources to communicate an actual though partial past to the historian, and a theological realist view of God working in and sovereignly over history in the production of a sufficiently reliable biblical text with a theological message. These philosophical commitments are two pillars holding up the framework of a distinctly theological-historiographical method.

Hermeneutical Methodology

Biblical Theology

This study is an exercise in TIS with a focus on biblical-theological inquiry.[54] I will deliberately employ a biblical theological method characterized by two trajectories: the first is to observe and follow the inductive theological storyline through Scripture, specifically the Isaian Jubilee enacted by the anointed herald and royal son (Isa 61:1–11); the second is to embrace the

52. Vanhoozer, *DTIB*, 22.

53. Stanley E. Porter and Beth M. Stowell, eds., *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 13–7.

54. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 6–7. Other theological methods, such as canonical, systematic, philosophical, and historical theology will not be the focus of this project, though there may well be some overlap with those various theological disciplines.

biblical-Christological portrait of Jesus in Luke-Acts, bringing a fuller Lucan picture to bear on the interpretation of the synagogue incident.[55] The study will limit this Lucan biblical-theological reflection to emergent issues from within the chosen unit (Luke 4:14–30), namely Jesus as a reader, interpreter, royal son, and prophet.[56]

Descriptive-Comparative Historiography

Providing an adequate and rationally justifiable description is the first task of the interpreter, followed by explanatory judgments and lastly analysis of complimentary or competing explanations. Philosopher of history Behan McCullagh states, "My approach to the understanding of historical explanations is descriptive and analytic. I examine cases of historical explanation to see what structure they actually have."[57] Determining the structure including the semantics, syntactical relationships and the like will help to describe what texts say and do not say, what they infer and do not infer. Contextual hermeneutical principles will assist to provide interpretive parameters, while comparative analysis between historical witnesses and contemporary historians will help in assessing which explanations are more and less plausible.

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55. D.A. Carson, "Current Issues in Biblical Theology: A New Testament Perspective," *BBR* 5 (1995): 17–41; For various models of biblical theology see Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970); Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2005); James K. Mead, *Biblical Theology: Issues, Methods, and Themes* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); Paul Ricoeur, "Biblical Hermeneutics," *Semeia* 4 (1975): 129–46; Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007); James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1999).

56. Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 4. Klink and Lockett suggest that whereas systematic theology draws a "circle," biblical theology draws a "line." Both disciplines "abstract data from the text"—but one does so logically (systematically) while the other does so sequentially and inductively (biblically).

57. Behan C. McCullagh, *Justifying Historical Descriptions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 4. See also Behan C. McCullagh, "Bias in Historical Description, Interpretation, and Explanation," *History and Theory* 39 (2000): 39–66.

Likewise, Craig Keener suggests, "An exclusively historical epistemology is restricted to probabilities, genre is descriptive rather than prescriptive (suggesting but not controlling expectations), and analogies are always incomplete and imperfect. Historiography today can thus plot only degrees of probability."[58] The probability of descriptive accuracy increases given the fact that our primary sources (the Gospels) about Jesus of Nazareth were written within a few decades of Jesus's lifetime.[59]

Secondly, this study examines two categories of evidence: (1) Attestations: the literary residue of antiquity; and (2) Artifacts: the physical remains of the ancients. The variety of evidence in these two categories typically includes the Hebrew Bible (Tanak), various passages from Second Temple literature, the canonical Gospels, the rabbinic literature, and the archeological and epigraphic remains of synagogues, towns, writing implements, writing collections, fortresses and the like.[60]

Given the subject matter of Luke 4 and Jesus's engagement in the ancient synagogue as a public reader, it will be necessary to go beyond the mere descriptive and to engage in the comparative analysis of Jesus in his cultural world and cross-culturally to adjacent civilizations. When comparing cultures, similarities and differences must be part of the historian's deliberations. While proximity may establish shared values between cultures (Jewish and Greco-Roman), it may not be the best determining factor of cultural influence. Though the ancestral culture (Hebrew Bible) of Roman Palestine was temporally distant it may have had a more

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58. Craig S. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 497.

59. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability*, 498. These Gospels also show evidence of internal coherence which bodes well for their use in historical reconstruction.

60. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 313–14.

lasting impact due to viable channels and a stable means of cultural transmission.[61] Likewise, the charge of "cultural borrowing" should be a last resort—if the text in question (and the society that produced it) cannot supply its own meaning system—then cross-cultural points of contact should be pressed for help. Additionally, adjacent cultural sources may be employed to fill in the picture or to reinforce a biblical account. In the case of Luke's Nazareth synagogue incident, the accusation by scholars that he personally fabricated the scene to use it as a polemical text should not be assumed before other feasible historical explanations are explored.

Cultural comparison may not always be the search for direct cultural influence. In the case of Jewish and Greco-Roman practice, the two cultures may "breathe" the same "worldview air" with respect to certain social priorities. While differences between educational systems, aims, and practices may be apparent in any comparison, one also looks for similarities at the level of values. What value did Jews and Greeks place on the reading of material texts and what significance, if any, was attached to oral-interpretive reading? What similarities and differences existed between synagogue and Greco-Roman educational practice? Similar features and comparable priorities may establish little more than a shared cognitive environment, but those resemblances help to historically situate Second Temple Jewish practices.

Relevant to this topic are the frequent charges by scholars that ancient sources (and by extension modern interpreters) practice: (1) Anachronism—reading a future development back into earlier, sparse sources. An example would be reading the universality of Amoraic rabbinical schooling back into the Second Temple era. (2) Polemical texts—the rapid dismissal of ancient

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61. John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 19. He offers about a dozen principles, but they do not all apply in this study. This research utilizes Walton's comparative guidelines that are germane to Luke 4 and the historical context of Jesus's reading literacy. cf. John H. Walton, "Understanding Torah: Ancient Legal Text, Covenant Stipulation, and Christian Scripture," *BBR* 29 (2019): 1–18.

sources as "irrelevant" due to the ancient authors' apparent polemical, theological, or apologetic aims. As an example, Luke, Josephus, and Philo all depict first century synagogues as environments of vigorous *tôrâ* instruction. (3) Diachronic development of culture and texts—an example would be the assumption that ancient texts are the result of a linear progression of eons of "oral voicings" eventually resulting in final written forms.[62] This process would envision texts to be the result of an accumulation of traditions as narratives were told and retold and so on.

This dissertation questions all three of the above assumptions at various points with respect to the development of texts, traditions, and cultural systems especially as they relate to Luke's Gospel. Questions that drive this disagreement are: (1) When faced with a fully realized system in one period (Amoraic) and sparse texts in a previous era (Second Temple), is the assumption of anachronism the only interpretive option? Surely some mediating choices would be present in some instances. (2) Are all polemical texts by nature lacking in historical value? Why should one think that to be true? Likewise, when several polemical texts exist in the same era *attesting to roughly the same phenomena*, why dismiss those claims as mere "rhetoric" lacking historical validity? Keener suggests that "Agendas are not intrinsically incompatible with historical information; as modern journalists and other authors recognize, a writer or editor may slant a story by how one tells it rather than by inventing information."[63] (3) Are all ancient texts the accumulation of oral-traditional accretions amassed over long periods of time? Some texts may not fall into this category, especially given the self-referentiality of existing witnesses to the contrary.[64]

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62. Gregory Nagy, *Homeric Responses* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 8.

63. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability,* 134.

64. This certainly would not deny that significant redaction has occurred among biblical texts. But the question is to what extent and whether that redaction is synchronic or diachronic.

Summary of Method

It seems then that the project of historiography is to offer a critical descriptive analysis of sources while the researcher rightly faces and recognizes his/her own preferences and cultural biases. The aim is to reconstruct the past responsibly and plausibly, with a view to establishing the best explanation for ancient historical claims. To summarize, the method is historiographical and biblical-theological. We describe what primary sources say and observe what they do not say, and then analyze comparatively those sources relative to the attestations and artifacts of the ancestral (Hebrew Bible), adjacent (Greco-Roman), and prime-era (Second Temple Jewish) cultures. It is then necessary to adjudicate between competing explanatory possibilities by using a "best explanation" rubric.[65]

Assumptions and Theoretical Scope

Luke's Sources

Undoubtedly in any descriptive-comparative-analytic approach to texts there exist certain assumptions made on the part of the researcher. The following assumptions limit the scope of this research on the subject. I assume that Luke's theological aims and insights were set into motion by Jesus himself on whom Luke (and other Synoptic Gospel authors) reliably reported. This moves the research in a decidedly expositional-hermeneutical direction and away from a

65. Michael Licona defines a spectrum of historical certainty with probabilities, not absolute certainties. The spectrum includes, "certainly not historical, very doubtful, quite doubtful, somewhat doubtful, indeterminate (neither improbable nor probable, possible, plausible), somewhat certain (more probable than not), quite certain, very certain (very probably true), certainly historical." It should be noted that plausibility and probability assessments are inherently subjectively judged, hence the need for a CR approach. Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 112–13.

speculative compositional focus that is characteristic of Higher Criticism.[66] Tradition critical scholars have tended not to approach Luke's Gospel as a credible historical source in of itself, particularly as it concerns Luke's hidden (Q) sources.[67] Others disagree with this perspective, pointing to sections of close replication between Luke and his known sources (Mark and Matthew). Keener summarizes,

> We should expect them [Synoptic authors] to adapt their sources where we cannot test them in ways comparable to where we can. When Matthew and Luke (on the standard view) follow Mark so closely, sometimes nearly word for word, it seems incredible to suppose that they often simply invent entire stories from whole cloth wherever we cannot test them, any more than we would expect such invention from other ancient writers who follow their sources where we can test them.[68]

It is, therefore, reasonable to infer that Luke's two-volume set is a close approximation of his original, unnamed sources shaped by his thematic and Christological aims.[69]

Luke's Genre and Method of Historiography

Luke begins by referring to his writing as διήγησις, a "narrative account." A detailed

66. What emerged in the higher critical school of thought was an emphasis in historical incredulity, and the chief figure who embodied this skepticism was Rudolf Bultmann (1885–1976); For a perspective on the collapse of Bultmann's theories see Anthony LeDonne, "The Rise of the Quest for an Authentic Jesus: An Introduction to the Crumbling Foundations of Jesus Research," in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity,* ed. Anthony LeDonne and Chris Keith, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2012), 14. Most historians assume Markan and Matthean priority and assert that Luke followed unknown (to us) sources as closely as he did the known sources (Mark and Matthew). The "hidden" (Q) traditions for unique Lucan "special material" (L) are unidentified. This content includes the infancy narratives (Luke 1–2), his genealogy (3:23–38); the five miracle stories (5:1–11; 7:11–17; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19); narrative vignettes (10:38–42; 19:1–10); more than a dozen distinct parables or allegories (7:40–43; 10:29–37; 11:5–8; 12:13–21; 13:6–9; 14:28–30, 31–32; 15:8–10, 11–32; 16:1–9, 19–31; 17:7–10; 18:1–8, 9–14); unique aspects to the passion narrative (23:6–12, 34, 40–42, 46); resurrection appearances including the revelation on the road to Emmaus (24:13–53).

67. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, xxxi. Nolland, for example, thinks that Luke did not follow his sources well.

68. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability,* 499.

69. Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 8. cf. Philo, *Life of Moses* (*Moses* 1, 2); Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist*; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7:520 also claims accuracy with little interest in strict chronology. It was common for ancient sources to claim accuracy in their prologues, whether they achieved such precision or not.

examination of Luke's biographical genre is beyond the scope of this project.[70] Various proposals regarding Luke's genre have been made, including ancient novella, monographs, historiography, and biography. It seems best to categorize Luke as something akin to Roman biographies, *bioi* (βίοι), and it appears that Luke has some features in common with ancient monographs.

Luke's Purpose

Proposals for the purpose and aim of Luke's Gospel abound.[71] Howard Marshall sought to correct the Conzelmannian view of *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history) asserting that Luke's Gospel is not merely about "salvation-in-history" but "salvation itself."[72] Marshall maintains, "Of all the Evangelists he is the most conscious of writing as a historian, yet throughout his work the history is the vehicle of theological interpretation in which the significance of Jesus is expressed."[73] That Luke writes history with a theological perspective was not strange for his

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70. For precedent research on ancient βίοι see Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974); cf. Talbert, *What Is a Gospel?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); Other proposals have been made. See Greg Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography*, Suppl. *NovT* 64, (Leiden: Brill, 1992); Richard Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1992); More recently see Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability*.

71. For historical views on Luke's purpose, beginning with the forefather of Redaction Criticism, see Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell, (New York: HarperCollins, 1961), 16; Helmut Flender*, St. Luke, Theologian of Redemptive History,* trans. Reginald H. Fuller and Ilse Fuller, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 142; Ernst Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM Press, 1964), 28; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, *A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 100–102; Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 40.

72. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 92.

73. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 35. cf. Keener, *Acts*, 115. As for Luke's second volume, Keener concludes, "Acts is history, probably apologetic history in the form of a historical monograph with a narrow focus on the expansion of the gospel message from Jerusalem to Rome."

time.[74] Luke's commitment to chronological matters is debatable, depending on whether the interpreter accepts Mark and Matthew as the more exact sequential accounts of Jesus's life. It will be assumed for this study that Luke's purpose was to provide a well-ordered historical account which supplied the basis for his reader's certainty of faith (Luke 1:1–4).[75]

Organization of the Research

The organization of this research unfolds over seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the problem, a researchable question, a philosophy and method of historical inquiry, proposes a thesis to solve the emergent issue, articulates the assumptions and the scope of the research, and provides an overview of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the tertiary literature relative to Jesus's literacy. Addressing the question of Jesus as a culturally literate reader gives vital attention to an often-overlooked historical debate concerning Luke 4:16–18. This chapter will outline the three major approaches to the issue of Jesus's reading aptitude: (1) The Received View: Jesus as a Literate Teacher; (2) The New Majority View: Jesus as an Illiterate Peasant; (3) Mediating Views: Jesus as a Cultural-Literate Reader.

Chapter 3 directly engages the primary literature concerning Judaic reading practices leading up to the Second Temple period. This chapter will address the primary arguments of those scholars in the new majority camp by examining reading as a diverse competency in the ancient world relative to Roman Palestine. The evidence suggests a more flattering picture of Jewish education than can be found in the often-disparaging accounts of critical scholars.

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74. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability,* 199–200.

75. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 40.

Chapter 4 begins an exposition of Luke's first synagogue scene in an examination of the Lucan unit (Luke 4:14–15) providing an assessment of the claim among some scholars that Mark-Matthew, and Luke are contradictory accounts with respect to the Nazareth synagogue incident.[76] This chapter introduces Luke's high Christology, a crucial factor to his portrait of Jesus. It notes significant background issues related to the regional context—Jewish Sepphoris and devout Nazareth—possibly explaining a cultural motivation behind the Nazarene's visceral reaction to Jesus. The chapter examines the claim that Luke intended to drop Jesus's artisan status (as a carpenter) in order to appeal to a Greek audience's preference for literate philosophers.

As something of an excursus, Chapter 5 establishes the Isaian text read by Jesus in synagogue (Isa 61:1–2; 58:6). Based on a theory of metalepsis which involves dual metonymy, it will be argued that Luke intended his audience to understand that Jesus read or cited the entirety of Isaiah 61, inferring the intertextuality of other passages in the Servant of Yahweh section of Isaiah. The themes of favor for Israel and vengeance on God's enemies are coextensive and continue into Second Temple literature which likely establish that "reading" as a received tradition for Jews in first century Palestine. The exegesis of Isaiah and Second Temple texts raise the issue as to what kind of teacher could have overturned such a well-established tradition.

Chapter 6 considers Jesus's exposition of the Isaian passages with respect to his own assumed authority. As a lay reader of texts, Jesus was expected to read the haftarah and resume his place in the congregation. However, Jesus offended his hometown congregation by taking the posture of an authoritative teacher. Claiming to fulfill the passage, Jesus's exposition employed sapiential foreshadowing and his appeal to the figuralism in the Elijah and Elisha narratives. His

76. The Markan and Matthean accounts are nearly identical and will at times be listed in this hyphenated form, Markan-Matthean or Mark-Matthew.

exposition reveals the identities of all involved in the synagogue worship service. Moreover, rather than ignoring it, Luke intended his readers to see the theme of God's vengeance as "hovering over" the entire synagogue encounter.

Chapter 7 pulls all the research together to summarize Jesus as a culturally acceptable reader whose unilateral interpretive exposition made him culturally unacceptable to the religious authorities and devout Jews of his day. Far from portraying Jesus as a scribe-gone-rogue, or a pretentious scribal-literate, Jesus's claims signal that he has God's own authority to announce a startling "new" tradition. His new reading confronted the Nazarenes' perceived privileged status as the people of God and equally confronted their ethnocentric attitudes toward Gentile outsiders, that much is sure. But the implication of him doing so was that he posed a singular threat to their system of social rule—something no scribal aspirant nor legitimate scribal-literate leader would ever do. But it is something that one who presumed to have divine authority would do. This subversion of traditional readings was his custom. The final chapter concludes with some suggestions about where to go from here

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW OF JESUS'S LITERACY AND ILLITERACY

Chapter 2 outlines major scholarly opinions regarding Jesus's ability to read and teach the Scripture. This study will categorize the different approaches to Jesus's literacy as the Received View, the New Majority View, and various Mediating Views. Historically, scholars have affirmed Jesus as a Galilean teacher who was trained in the scribal arts or at least "literate to some degree."[1] Scholars involved with the First Quest for the historical Jesus primarily held this position by default, taking for granted that he was able to read and write and interpret the Tanak authoritatively.[2]

The Received View: Jesus the Scribal Literate

The "Lives of Jesus"

According to this view, Jesus of Nazareth was fully capable of reading and teaching owing to his scribal education or its equivalent. This perspective asserts the ubiquity of Jewish education in first century Roman Palestine and Jesus's participation in it.[3] Concerning this era of Jesus scholarship, Jennifer Stevens observes, "Scholarly preoccupation with the historicity of the Gospels generated a form of biblical literature known as the 'Lives of Jesus.'"[4] This literature

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1. Chris Keith, *Jesus's Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee*, LNTS 413 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011), 9.

2. Paul Foster, "Educating Jesus: The Search for a Plausible Context," *JSHJ* 4 (2006): 7–33, here 20. See also Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans. W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1910), 19–21. This designation "quest for the historical Jesus" should by no means be read to mean a quest for the *biblical* Jesus, as scholars of this persuasion are far more interested in discovering the alleged historical Jesus behind the text.

3. Keith, *Jesus's Literacy*, 9. Keith disagrees with Botha and Craffert that most scholars today hold this view and instead shows that the majority perspective is of an illiterate Jesus. cf. Pieter J.J. Botha and Pieter Craffert, "Why Jesus Could Walk on the Sea but Could Not Read or Write: Reflections on Historicity and Interpretation in Historical Jesus Research," *Neot* 39 (2005): 5–35, here 35.

4. Jennifer Stevens, *The Historical Jesus and the Literary Imagination* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 34.

was highly speculative, particularly with regard to Jesus's psychological state. Paul Foster notes, "There was a time when New Testament scholarship knew much about the childhood, upbringing, education, and formative influences that shaped the boy Jesus."[5] This era of Jesus scholarship is characterized by growing doubts concerning the supernatural contents of the Gospels but generally strong affirmations of Jesus's literate status. This survey will offer a selective representation of scholars who have held this opinion.

Father Henry Didon's *Jesus Christ* asserted that Jesus was educated in "the home, the synagogue, and the workshop."[6] Didon's view was that Jesus was something of a well-educated student. Likewise, D.F. Strauss affirmed that Jesus was as an educated instructor. Similar to Didon, Strauss simply assumed that Jesus was educated at home, in the synagogue, and as a first century tradesman, conferring upon him functional scribal equivalency.[7] For Strauss, the only debatable issue was whether his education was private or rabbinic.[8] He observed that people concluded that Jesus did not teach as a scribe; however, that is not to say that he was not trained like one.[9] Likewise, Alfred Edersheim emphasized Jesus's divine instruction, which must have been superior to that of the rabbis but took place separately form the Jewish academy.[10] Edersheim claimed that Jesus's elementary school education in the local synagogue was finished before his relocation to rural Nazareth. Before entering public ministry, Jesus "had indeed

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5. Foster, "Educating Jesus," 7.

6. Fr. Henry Didon, *Jesus Christ* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner & Co., 1893); David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (London: Chapman Brothers., 1846).

7. David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Volume 1* (New York: Calvin Blanchard, 1860), 191–205.

8. Foster, "Educating Jesus," 9. See also Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 202.

9. Strauss, *Jesus*, 203.

10. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1898), 35.

'learned' but in a school quite other than those which alone they [the rabbis] recognised."[11] Edersheim read rabbinical education back into the Second Temple period. Similarly, Henry W. Beecher asserted that Jesus's affinity for and knowledge of the Torah must have been nurtured in the synagogue and at home, as he was nourished by the poetic books, crafting his teachings after their form. The Jewish nation was zealous about the universal education of its children.[12] He states, "We may perceive that his education, remote from the temple, not only saved him from the influence of the dead and corrupt schools of Jerusalem, but brought him into sympathetic relations with the most lowly of life."[13] The notion of Jesus's private education held by most First Quest scholars is taken for granted.

The Interim: No Quest to the Second Quest

German theologian Albert Schweitzer's (1875–1965) writings brought a halt to the speculative theories concerning the *Lives of Jesus* literature.[14] What emerged was an emphasis on historical incredulity, and the chief figure who embodied this skepticism was Rudolf Bultmann (1885–1976).[15] While Karl Barth (1886–1968) pursued the neo-orthodoxy of *fideism* (a Jesus of faith), Bultmann pursued a kerygmatic Jesus of existential experience.[16] This "No Quest" interim

11. Edersheim, *The Life and Times*, 35, 312.

12. Henry Ward Beecher, *The Life of Jesus the Christ* (New York: J.B. Ford and Co., 1871), 223.

13. Beecher, *The Life of Jesus the Christ*, 46.

14. Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede,* trans. W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1910); cf. Stanley Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity in Historical Jesus Research* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 30–5. Porter documents that most scholars affirm three distinct periods of the historical quest for Jesus: 1778–1906 (First Quest), 1953–1988 (Second Quest coinciding with Ernst Käsemann's 1953 lecture reinvigorating the study, 47), and the supposed "Third Quest" 1988–present day, which seems to be reliant on the same historical critical criteria and methods.

15. Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

16. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 52.

period was followed by a vigorous return to the historical inquiry into the Gospel. The Second Quest for the historical Jesus is generally thought to have begun with the reading of Ernst Käsemann's (1906–1998) paper, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus" (1953).[17] Käsemann lectured to Bultmann's former students at Marburg University and insisted that unless Jesus is rooted in history, he may get pulled into the service of all manner of ideologies.[18] The Bultmannian-Käsemannian era of scholarship envisioned an evolutionary development of the gospel tradition. The earliest oral traditions surrounding the Palestinian Jesus were absorbed into the later theologizing of Greek Christian communities. The Gospels were produced to address the *Sitz im Leben*—the "situations in the life" of a later Hellenistic and literate church.[19] Consequently, interest in Jesus's literacy and education waned during the "No Quest" to the "Second Quest" period.

The Third Quest (1965–present) for the historical Jesus has largely been in response to Second Quest presuppositions.[20] This new quest is distinguished from the preceding searches by two factors: first, was a return to Jesus's Palestinian and Judaic milieu[21] and second was the increasing departure from the Criteria of Authenticity—the methodological handmaiden of form

17. Ernst Käsemann, "The Problem with the Historical Jesus," in *Essays on New Testament Themes*, SBT 41, trans. W.J. Montague (London: SCM, 1964), 36.

18. N.T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol 2: Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 23.

19. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy,* 31–2.

20. Robert Funk, *The Gospel of Jesus According to the Jesus Seminar* (Salem, OR: Polebridge Press, 1999). The application of the color-coding system to acknowledge the "authentic" sayings of Jesus, which was based on the criteria of authenticity, resulted in a truncated gospel. However, Ben Witherington stresses that it was not all that clear which historical critical methods were relied upon for the production of these "authentic" gospel sayings. See Ben Witherington III., *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 46. cf. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory*, 83.

21. The publishing of the DSS in 1991 accelerated this push to place Jesus back into the Jewish context of his day.

and source criticism.[22] Contemporary scholars have based their research in the trove of insights emerging from the Dead Sea Scrolls, first published in 1991, in addition to insights from the rabbinic sources such as the Mishna, Tosefta, and the Talmud (Palestinian and Babylonian). Proponents of a literate Jesus envision a Jewish educational structure that was nearly universally available and compulsory for all Jewish male students at that time.

Rainer Riesner

German pastor and theologian, Rainer Riesner, epitomized the Third Quest for the historical Jesus concerning the training and expertise of Jesus of Nazareth. He detailed educational options for Jewish students in *Jesus als Lehrer*.[23] His emphasis was on the commonly employed techniques of memorization in both the home and the local synagogue.[24] Riesner made a strong case for Jesus's literacy. For him, the universal presence of *tôrâ* learning and reflection was enough to produce a "Jesus of Nazareth" who was fully proficient in the Hebrew Bible.[25] Riesner believed that the synagogue system also housed a *bet sefer* elementary

22. Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), ii. See also Allison, "How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria of Authenticity," in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, ed. Tom Holmen and Stanley Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2010). He states, "That we differentiate between metaphorical narratives from historical narratives is a fact about us, not necessarily a fact about first century Christians." Jonathan Bernier, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus after the Demise of Authenticity: Toward a Critical Realist Philosophy of History in Jesus Studies*, LNTS 540 (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 1. In what Bernier refers to as the "Criteria approach's obituary." cf. Anthony LeDonne and Chris Keith, eds., *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity* (London: T&T Clark, 2012).

23. Rainer Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung der Evangelien-Überlieferung*, WUNT 3 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 259–64. When Riesner's thesis on Jesus's Jewish education appeared in 1981, it was the most comprehensive treatment of Jesus in his Jewish setting relative to his education. This thesis has attracted considerable critical response. See Gerd Theissen and Dagmar Winter, *The Quest for the Plausible Jesus: The Question of Criteria*, tran. Eugene Boring (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

24. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, 499

25. Riesner, Wellhausen, Gerhardsson, Drazin, and Safrai are most often the proponents of a fully developed Jewish school system existing in Jesus's day.

initiative to educate young boys in the Scripture and wisdom (1 En. 83.1; Jub. 7.38-39; 4 Macc. 18.10–19).[26]

Birger Gerhardsson

In his monumental work on the memory practices of ancient Jews, *Memory and Manuscript*, Birger Gerhardsson claimed that the earliest Christians preached and taught about Jesus against the backdrop of Pharisaic Judaism—a sect devoted to the Oral Torah which "when compared with the written, had an interpretative, particularizing, complimentary and sometimes modifying function."[27] It was against this background, Gerhardsson insisted, that readers of the Gospels must see an oral tradition that was stable, controlled, and normative for Pharisaic Judaism in Jesus's time.[28] Because he largely adopt Safrai's educational scheme which projected rabbinic education back into the Second Temple period, Gerhardsson sought to account for the apparent facility with Scripture observed in the Gospels among Jesus and his interlocutors.

Paul Eddy and Greg Boyd

In *The Jesus Legend*, Paul Eddy and Greg Boyd further promoted these insights. They echo the *Lives of Jesus* literature that affirmed Jesus's literacy to be on par with the scribal elite.[29] Eddy and Boyd made a significant circumstantial case for the exigency of literacy among

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26. Rainer Riesner, "From the Messianic Teacher to the Gospels of Jesus Christ," in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, ed. Tom Holmén and Stanley E. Porter, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 406.

27. Birger Gerhardsson and Eric John Sharpe, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity; with Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1998), 83.

28. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written*, 83.

29. Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd, *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 247.

Jewish males in Roman Palestine.[30] According to their view, the tide of Jewish culture had long shifted into the direction of and created a demand for knowledge and interaction with the Jewish Scriptures. This meant that Jesus must have been, at the very least, as literate as any other Palestinian male, and perhaps, much more so.[31] Jesus was therefore also uniquely gifted in rhetoric and argumentation which made him a memorable teacher. Jesus's disciples could easily remember such a spellbinding orator who was viewed as a legitimate competitor among his fellow rabbis and other trained scribal leaders.

Paul Foster

Paul Foster's seminal article "Educating Jesus: The Search for a Plausible Context," criticizes John D. Crossan's "rural Galilean peasantry" model.[32] He highlights several lines of evidence that suggest that the emerging new consensus view of Jesus's illiteracy may be overblown and too easily assumed. Noteworthy is Mary's relationship to Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah who was a priest of Israel. Foster argues that Luke intended his readers to understand that Mary was a blood relative of Elizabeth's, and, at the very least, this association may suggest that Jesus was not, as Crossan asserts, a representative of the lowest strata of Galilean peasant society. He states, "Consequently this would increase the probability that he may have been born into a stratum of society where literacy was valued, and elementary education (at least in reading the Scriptures) reflected a link with the priestly class and wider Jewish religious piety."[33] Furthermore, Foster observes that the primary passages that depict

30. Eddy and Boyd cite Dunn's article "Did Jesus Attend the Synagogue?" in *Jesus and Archeology*, ed. J.H. Charlesworth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 221–22.

31. Eddy and Boyd, *The Jesus Legend*, 247.

32. Foster, "Educating Jesus," 9. Crossan's view is taken up in the next section.

33. Foster, "Educating Jesus," 17.

Jesus with any capability to read or write are quite incidental. Luke 4:1–16 and John 7:15 do not foreground the fact of Jesus's literacy or education, and that observation is beside the point for the authors in their own contexts.[34] The patristics demonstrated an interest in "schooling" Jesus, as is noted in the *Alpha-Beta Logion*. This text depicts Jesus three times in his youth at school, learning in a miraculous context.[35] While Irenaeus does contrast the Inf. Gos. Thom. with the "true Scriptures," Foster nevertheless shows that most Ante-Nicene patristics thought of Jesus as a learned rabbi.

The New Majority View: Jesus the Illiterate Peasant

In recent years, scholars have largely challenged the assumptions surrounding the Received View of Jesus's education, often citing several lines of evidence: (1) The rarity of ancient sources affirming a general education system in the Second Temple period. (2) Newer research regarding illiteracy rates in ancient Rome and, in particular, the high degree of illiteracy in Roman Palestine.[36] (3) The failure of archeological evidence to support a first century synagogue educational system.[37] (4) And finally, an anthropological hermeneutic that is then extrapolated to the specific texts that speak of Jesus of Nazareth's education (John 7:15; Luke 4:16; 24:27).[38]

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34. Foster, "Educating Jesus," 17–8, 32.

35. Foster, "Educating Jesus," 22. Citing Merick, "The most relevant patristic testimony comes from Irenaeus (ca. 180; *Haer.* 1.20.1) where is found the well-known Alpha-Beta logion, found twice in the Inf. Gos. Thom. (14.2), giving us a date in the second half of the 2d century at least for this logion." P.A. Mericki, "The Infancy Gospel of Thomas," *ABD*, 542.

36. William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 25–7. Catherine Hezser takes Harris's research further to show that literacy rates were likely worse in Roman Palestine in *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine,* TSAJ 81 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 230, 356.

37. Botha, "Schools in the World of Jesus," 249–52; See also Botha, "The Social Dynamics of the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition," *Neot* 27 (1993): 205–32.

38. Chris Keith, *Jesus's Literacy,* 125–7.

Proponents of the New Majority View of Jewish education have drawn attention to the fact that Jesus left behind no original literature.[39] Clearly, this evidence involves an argument from silence rather than an argument from extant literature or artifacts. The "missing schools" and the missing literature penned by Jesus himself, for these scholars, is evidence that Jesus must have been an illiterate agrarian Nazarene. Jesus's own facility with texts is nothing more than the retrojection of a fully realized Christology in which Jesus is envisioned to be a literate product of a widely available scribal education.

Oral folklore is typically understood to be the once living traditional substrate beneath or behind a culture's literary texts as they appear in final form. Studies in oral tradition came to prominence through the research of Walter Ong and Jack Goody.[40] Adapted by biblical scholars and applied to biblical studies, orality has dominated discussions on literacy for decades.[41] According to proponents of this view, the biblical texts bear the marks of an oral residue—deposits of oral tradition that were commemorated and eventually codified. Several seminal studies generated renewed interest in the subject of Jesus as an oral tradent, a mere performer of textual tradition.

Goody-Ong-Kelber: Orality Versus Literacy

Jesuit priest, Walter Ong, and social anthropologist, Jack Goody, hypothesized that

39. While this in of itself is not conclusive, it does seem that a scribal-Jesus (or its equivalent) would be predictive of a scribal legacy from him. See Werner Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 14. The converse, of course, is that an illiterate-peasant Jesus would likely be depicted as occasionally (or frequently) inept in his handling of Scripture. Jesus is never portrayed that way in the Synoptic Gospels. Even Crossan thinks Jesus was adept and creative in his use of Scripture, such that he was able to impress his fellow peasants.

40. Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 8–9. Ong explicitly denies the existence of "oral texts." A subject that this project argues for in Chapter 3.

41. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 11–12.

orality and literacy were two separate skill sets. This theory dominated the oral-literate landscape in the humanities and social sciences for decades.[42] On this model, there remains a sharp contrast between oral and literate cultures.[43] The development of literacy and literary culture signals the "Great Divide" of human history—separating societies into "oral" and "literate."[44] Marvin Miller summarizes, "What Goody suggests, along with Ong, is that 'there is both a qualitative difference between oral and written language, and a particular oral mindset.'"[45] Once the largely spoken-word society transitioned to literateness, spoken-word features such as epithets, formulae, quotations, "living voice" referentiality, poetic structures, and the like, were all absorbed into texts that now furnish evidence of an oral deposit in extant texts.[46] Orality and literacy are viewed as "opposing technologies" rather than symbiotic modes of enculturation.[47]

Indebted to the Goody-Ong thesis on oral and folklore tradition, Werner Kelber's *The Oral and the Written Gospel* began with an assessment of the claims of Birger Gerhardsson's controversial research in *Memory and Manuscript.* Kelber intended to provide an alternative background for the oral folklore world of Jesus, contrasting Gerhardsson's rabbinic oral-memory model. Speaking of Dibelius and Bultmann, Gerhardsson concluded, "It is therefore difficult—or at least it ought to be difficult—to accept the pioneer form-critics' solution of the problem of the

42. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 32–33; Jack Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral: Studies in Literacy, Family, Culture, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

43. Marvin Miller, *Performances of Ancient Jewish Letters: From Elephantine to MMT* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Academic, 2015), 67.

44. Robert D. Miller II, *Oral Tradition in Ancient Israel*, BPC 4 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 8.

45. Miller, *Performances of Ancient*, 67. He quotes Goody, "Canonization in Oral and Literate Traditions," in *The Power of the Written Tradition* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2000), 27.

46. Miller, *Performances of Ancient*, 68–69.

47. Miller, *Performances of Ancient*, 72.

origin of gospel tradition."[48] He instead turned to rabbinic Judaism to develop his theories on Gospel transmission. Kelber summarizes Gerhardsson's position, "Both teachers of oral tradition and oral materials themselves are regarded as 'living books' that served to complement collections of scrolls. In the end, there exists no substantial difference between the processes of oral versus written transmission: both are empowered by the same mechanism of mechanical memorization."[49] Gerhardsson's theory relied upon the relatively static nature of the school systems and the Pharisaic practice of oral transmission (which is assumed to be a constant from Ezra to the Mishnah). Kelber's critique in *The Oral and Written Gospel* included a comment on Luke's reading Jesus. He stated, "The notion of Jesus as an expounder of Scripture (Luke 4:16–22; cf. 24:27) reflects this evangelist's literary, visualist proclivities more than the linguistic realities of the life of Jesus."[50] In other words, Luke's portrayal of Jesus as a public reader and expositor of texts is unhistorical. For Kelber, Jesus was entirely "unliterary" because his world was oral and transactional and did not embody the "textual bias of a high-literacy culture."[51]

William V. Harris: Mass Illiteracy in Ancient Rome

Another groundbreaking volume that drew attention to the issue was William V. Harris's *Ancient Literacy.* Harris estimated that approximately ten percent of the population of the ancient

48. Gerhardsson and Sharpe, *Memory and Manuscript*, 11. Gerhardsson effectively critiqued many of the assumptions concerning form criticism relative to gospel transmission, namely the various and ambiguous means of transmission that were the subject of endless speculation.

49. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written*, 10.

50. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written*, 14.

51. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written*, xiii; cf. Robin Lane Fox, "Literacy and Power in Early Christianity," 127. Fox agrees with the Kelber thesis that, "Jesus himself is nowhere recorded as authorizing, or encouraging, the writing of a memoir, or Gospel, about himself. Instead, among early Christians, his sayings were transmitted orally, and oral tradition continued to carry special authority well into the second century."

Greco-Roman world was literate.[52] Harris defines "literacy" as the ability to read and write texts; however, he also affirmed craftsman's literacy among the artisan class. He stated that reading alone was "normally more widespread and sometimes has been much more widespread than the ability to write."[53] Harris's research on ancient literacy is generally accepted and his views are broadly acknowledged by a cross section of scholars.[54] While terminology in the book tends to give the impression that a literacy-illiteracy dichotomy existed, a careful reading demonstrates that even Harris presupposed something of a spectrum when he states, "There are infinite gradations of literacy for any written language."[55] Commenting on this, Keith writes, "This reality ultimately makes the dichotomy literate/illiterate false."[56] If the literate/illiterate distinction was as clear and unambiguous as some claim, this would necessitate a far lower estimate of literate skills than if literacy did not, as the literacy-spectrum model proposes, include oral-reading/recitation of texts.[57] The significance of Kelber's and Harris's research is not in the specific charge that Jesus was illiterate. These studies provide the theoretical basis of orality and a largely illiterate Roman world from which others extrapolate an unschooled Jesus.[58]

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52. William Harris, *Ancient Literacy,* 15–22. cf. Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 16–22. Hezser notes that Harris's monograph was the first to address the issue of ancient literacy from a historical, rather than a social-scientific perspective. Harris's research was the initial catalyst for the recent challenges to the standard view on Jesus's education.

53. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 4.

54. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 18.

55. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 5.

56. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy,* 89.

57. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 4.

58. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy,* 19. Keith states, "Not all of the following scholars who argue for or assume an illiterate Jesus are explicitly dependent upon Kelber or Harris, although many are. The current suggestion, however, is not that they all are explicitly dependent upon them, but rather that Kelber, Harris, and others such as Horsley have generated a shift in the state of the discussion." cf. Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, and Performance* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2008); Horsley, *Scribes, Visionaries, and the Politics of Second Temple Judea* (London: Westminster John Knox, 2007); *Revolt of the Scribes* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2010).

Catherine Hezser: Pervasive Illiteracy in Roman Palestine

Building upon Harris's insights, Catherine Hezser directly addresses the literacy prospects of a Roman Palestinian in Jesus's world. She concludes,

> The likely phenomenon that at least ninety percent of the Jewish population of Roman Palestine could merely write their own name or not write and read at all must lead to a new assessment of our understanding of ancient Judaism as a "book-religion" and a greater emphasis on other, non-textual forms of religious expression.[59]

Kelber's, Harris's, and Heszer's research on literacy and orality paint a picture of extensive illiteracy in the ancient world; however, Karel van der Toorn warns, "Determining the level of literacy in the ancient Near East is not a matter of merely accumulating percentages and figures. In the absence of incontrovertible evidence, estimated literacy rates fluctuate according to the motives, bias, and personal assumptions of modern scholars."[60] That is, no ancient records of literacy rates are available for historians to draw on. They must simply make inferences from available sources. Nevertheless, Hezser offers a direct challenge to the notion that Judaism, and, by extension, Christianity, were "bookish" faiths.

John D. Crossan: Jesus the Illiterate Peasant

Building upon the research of Harris, John D. Crossan theorized that the historical Jesus can be found where three vectors triangulate: (1) cross-cultural anthropology—the Jesus of history must be the product of a known sect in the Mediterranean region. That is, a plausibly historical Jesus must emerge from within a known sociocultural class. (2) the Greco-Roman-Jewish framework—Jesus's life was the consequence of a Romanized-Jewish milieu. In other

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59. Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine,* TSAJ 81 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 230, 356.

60. Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 53.

words, if it was not true of Roman Palestine it could not be historically true of Jesus. (3) the literary/textual vector—the "real Jesus" is embedded in the pages of Gospel texts comprising layers of tradition. This means that the text does not present the historical Jesus but rather the historical Jesus must be exhumed from the layers of tradition which comprise the finished text of the NT. For Crossan, all three vectors "must intersect at the same point for any of them to be correct."[61] This approach is self-consciously reductionistic and critical.

Relative to Jesus's education, he asks, "If, for example, we are tempted to describe Jesus as a literate middle-class carpenter, cross-cultural anthropology reminds us that there was no middle class in ancient societies and that peasants are usually illiterate; so how could Jesus become what never existed at his time?"[62] The statement explicitly denies an artisan class of Jews who were more than modest provincial farmers. Metal workers, carpenters, stone masons, tax collectors, and fishermen are swept away into "illiterate peasantry." On this point Crossan is clear, "Since between 95 to 97 percent of the Jewish state was illiterate at the time of Jesus, it must be presumed that Jesus was also illiterate."[63] The assumption is that the general situation, namely the limited opportunity for learning in Jesus's world, is enough to deny the existence of a scribal-literate, or lay-literate Jesus. With respect to Luke 4:16–22, Crossan puts a fine point on it,

> Scenes, in other words, such as Luke 2:41–52, where Jesus's youthful wisdom astonishes the learned teachers in the temple at Jerusalem, or Luke 4:1–30, where his adult skill in finding and interpreting a certain Isaiah passage astonishes his fellow villagers in the synagogue at Nazareth, must be seen clearly for what they are: Lucan propaganda

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61. John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), Prologue; John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); Crossan, "Open Healing and Open Eating: Jesus as a Jewish Cynic," *BR* 36 (1991): 6–18.

62. Crossan, Jesus: *A Revolutionary Biography*, Prologue.

63. Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, 25.

rephrasing Jesus's oral challenge and charisma in terms of scribal literacy and exegesis.[64] For Crossan, the "second vector" or line of evidence that establishes Jesus's peasant and thus illiterate status is Greco-Roman and Jewish History in late antiquity. Jesus may have been part of a smoldering peasant uprising that emerged and was remembered by followers precisely because the revolutionary culture stood in stark contrast to an elitist and highly educated world. Despite this, Crossan believes that Jesus must have been an anomaly—a novelty among his Palestinian countrymen. The original Jesus movement started amid illiterate peasants, including Jesus, but later transitioned to regional scribal leadership.

But does it follow that Jesus himself was a peasant in a narrower or specific sense, especially given that occupationally Jesus is described as a woodworker, or τέκτων?[65] Keener clarifies that, strictly speaking, "carpenters were artisans, not peasants, and many ascribe them to the upper ten percent of non-aristocratic Galilean society."[66] Jesus's disciples were also tradesmen and zealots, not agrarian peasants in particular.[67] Keith also has reservations about the appropriateness of the term "peasant" to categorize Jesus.[68] It is true that one may infer Jesus's adjacency to rural society based on his provenance and the many agrarian parables in the Gospels. However, to then extrapolate from the general rural (and thus illiterate) conditions of Galilee to the specific instance of Jesus of Nazareth may be a rushed judgment. Keith notes that

64. Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, 28–9.

65. Jesus is called both the son of a carpenter (Matthew) and "the carpenter" (Mark). But it is clear from the overall usage that "artisan" or "craftsman" or "builder" may also be a good rendering in certain contexts.

66. Craig S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus*, 21; Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine in the early Hellenistic Period, Vol. 1.* (London: SCM, 1974).

67. Keener, *The Historical Jesus*, 21.

68. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite*, 132.

the ancient world abundantly attests to exceptions to general conditions.[69] Most people were illiterate, but some were not. Most women were powerless, but some were well-respected and prominent. Most Jews were *tôrâ*-observant, but some clearly dabbled in the occult or practiced prostitution. Extrapolating from general conditions does not tell us much about the individual case of Jesus. That said, for Keith, "The historian's choice is whether Mark's Jesus or Luke's Jesus is more historically likely for a first-century Nazarene."[70] He supposes that the two pictures of Jesus were not complimentary but, instead, contradictory.

Pieter F. Craffert and Pieter J.J. Botha: Jesus the Magical Literate

In an article titled "Why Jesus Could Walk on the Sea but He Could Not Read or Write," Pieter F. Craffert and Pieter J.J. Botha curiously interpret Luke 4:16 as an ontologically real but culturally descriptive event. Craffert and Botha insist that ancient cultural phenomena cannot be effortlessly translated into modern-day vocabularies.[71] While they do assert Jesus's peasant status they also conclude, "Seen as a report of a cultural event, Luke 4:16 should be related to Jesus's authoritative and demon-conquering activities. He is the son of God who can employ various techniques; including 'reading.'"[72] They argue for a magical reading of the text, akin to what shamans practiced in some parts of Asia. They also argue that the peasant class in Roman Palestine had a more transactional view of literacy education. Seen through the lens of "survival" and other regional practicalities, the peasant family would not have sought education to gain

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69. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite*, 132.

70. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite*, 133.

71. Pieter F. Craffert and Pieter J.J. Botha, "Why Jesus Could Walk on the Sea but He Could Not Read or Write," *Neot.* 39 (2005): 5–35; see also Botha, "Schools in the World of Jesus: Analysing the Evidence," *Neot.* 33 (1999): 17, 249–252.

72. Botha, "Why Jesus Could Walk," 34.

pedigree, for personal enrichment or leisure, or even purely for the sake of "literacy" itself. The provincial Jew may have had trade/craft literacy, or would have been able to recognize warning signs, inscriptions and other "letter groupings," and even a degree of numeracy. Yet Botha and Craffert maintain that "This is the level of 'literacy' of first century Palestinian society, and 'formal' education had little to do with promoting any kind of literacy."[73] The time investment needed to educate a child would necessarily take them away from the home or family trade, and, of course, the peasant class could not afford such a thing.[74] This concept was taken up and challenged by the recent publication of Brian J. Wright, whose research highlights the pervasive existence of public, communal reading events as a leisure exercise that existed at all levels and classes within the Greco-Roman society.[75]

Chris Keith: Jesus the Scribal-Illiterate Artisan

In his seminal research, *Jesus's Literacy,* Chris Keith observes that scholars who have addressed the issue "have underestimated the complexity of literacy in the ancient world, the complexity of the claims concerning Jesus's scribal-literate status in the earliest sources, the complexity of scholarly evaluation of those claims, and the complexity of Jesus's relationship to various audiences."[76] Keith's statement of the problem seems sharp and precise.[77] He abandons the *status quaestionis*—namely, the "literacy-illiteracy dichotomy upon which almost all prior

73. Craffert and Botha, "Why Jesus Could Walk," 29.

74. Craffert and Botha, "Why Jesus Could Walk," 29.

75. For Wright's case, see the next section on "Mediating Views."

76. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 5. Keith effectively delineates a spectrum of literacy, differentiating scribal/authoritative literacy from other types of literacies.

77. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 1.

studies have been based."[78] Similar to Botha and Craffert, Keith agrees that this contrast is simplistic and fails to consider the intricacies and the social impact of literacy, in addition to the social features that determined the attainment of literacy in ancient Judaism.[79]

Furthermore, Keith maintains that although the Jewish world into which Jesus came was an oral-aural society, it "was also inundated with texts and writing—marriage contracts, land contracts, censuses, tax receipts, holy texts, imperial markings on coins, and so on."[80] For him, literacy and textuality were two distinct spectrums in the ancient world, with the following categories: (1) Semi-Literacy: a well-attested state of affairs from the Greek papyri; lower-level Roman officials often fell in this spectrum between illiteracy–literacy.[81] (2) Signature-literacy: the acquisition of basic letters to be able to sign one's name on a deed, wedding/divorce certificate, and the like.[82] (3) Illiterate yet textual: Keith notes the distinction between being illiterate while also being largely "textual" in their social orientation. Egyptian papyri, for example, depict people as having significant interactions with texts.[83] (4) Illiterate and non-textual: This would describe those who were both functionally illiterate yet also disinterested due to disadvantages.[84] (5) The textual and literate—those who know γράμματα. Persons who know γράμματα and have been educated in letters. The literate population, admittedly a small segment

78. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 25.

79. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 25.

80. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 86.

81. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 86. See also Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 5.

82. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 86. cf. Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Greco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 10. He cites, "Petaus could at least produce a short formula in addition to his name, even if imperfectly. Many other ancients' literate skills did not extend beyond writing his or her name."

83. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 86.

84. *LEB*, Christopher G. Foster, "Scribe, Critical Issues," np given.

of society, would have also evidenced degrees of literacy skills and ability, with reading and writing as distinct skill sets. Keith's research fills a significant gap in scholarship in that it provides a nuanced approach to the various gospel memories of Jesus found in Mark 1:22, Mark 6:3; Luke 4:16–20, and John 7:15.[85]

With respect to Jesus's education, however, he does stipulate that "Jesus was not a scribal-literate authority but was nevertheless perceived as one on some occasions."[86] Keith highlights a significant gulf between craftsman's literacy and scribal literacy. He defines scribal literacy as "literate skills that allow some educated individuals to function as authoritative interpreters of texts."[87] This would include religious scribes, priests, Sadducees, and Pharisees.[88] By contrast, the artisan-craftsman and skilled laborer likely possessed craftsman's literacy to varying degrees. Keith notes, "Not to be a scribal-literate, however, was not necessarily to be completely illiterate."[89] While scribal literacy is tied to one's social power within society, craftsman's literacy is centered around a trade.[90] Therefore, one's social function as an artisan class member was not scribal or authoritative. Jesus, as a carpenter, likely could not read in the way that Luke depicts. If he could, Keith claims, he would be the only artisan class person to

85. Since the writing of *Jesus's Literacy*, a significant scholarly response and contributions to the study have been witnessed. See Anthony LeDonne's *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020).

86. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite*, 13.

87. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 110.

88. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite*, 27.

89. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 112.

90. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 113. See also William Harris whom he cites repeatedly, *Ancient Literacy*, 315.

ever have been recorded as doing so.[91]

To summarize, the theory of Jesus's illiteracy is grounded in (1) Kelber's *orality versus literacy* perspective—Jesus was either an oral tradent or a literate rabbi but likely was not both or anything in between. (2) Harris's and Hezer's seminal studies on illiteracy rates in Rome and Palestine—if the world was largely illiterate, then so was Jesus who grew up in agrarian Nazareth. (3) At best, the artisan class could have achieved only craftsman's status, which is a far more limited skill set than scribal competence with texts, obtainable only by those in elite positions of authority such as scribes, Pharisees, or Sadducees.

Mediating Views: Jesus as a Cultural-Literate Teacher

Mediating views on Jesus's literacy propose that Jesus was somewhere between artisan/craftsman's literacy and scribal literacy. This perspective usually entails Jesus's ability to read without being able to write much; and interprets extant evidence of first-century synagogues in favor of non-specialized education for agrarian and artisan people.[92] This cultural education would not have conferred upon Jesus the status of a scribal-literate, though it would have given him ample opportunity to become proficient with Scripture. Jesus's upbringing supplied the essential education needed for him to effectively read and intelligently interact over interpretive matters without the expectation that he would have achieved scribal or Pharisaic interpretive authority. The following scholars have advanced various theories as to Jesus's educational standing and the increasingly bookish milieu of Second Temple Judaism.

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91. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite*, 20. This is a claim I will take up in Chapter 3. The circumstantial case, especially considering the democratization of reading in Qumran (as attested by 1Qs) provides a strong rebuttal to his view.

92. E.D. Hirsch Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (New York: Random House, 1988), xi. Hirsch's definition of cultural literacy is an analogy to mechanical literacy (reading and writing)—that is, to be proficient and fluent with the core concepts, values, defining symbols, and narratives of a given culture.

Craig Evans: The Uninitiated, Literate Jesus

The notion of a "lay scribe" or perhaps a lay prophet-teacher is evident in Craig Evans's assessment of Jesus's reading ability. He alludes to several biblical texts, demonstrating Jesus's ability to read and acknowledges some ambiguity related to his competence as a writer.[93] Evans grants that Jesus was likely not formally trained as a scribe/scholar yet maintains that Jesus could read Hebrew fluently.[94] Regarding the Jews' questions about Jesus, Πῶς οὗτος γράμματα οἶδεν μὴ μεμαθηκώς, translated "How does he know learning not having studied?" (John 7:15),[95] the crowd affirms two realities about Jesus as a teacher: First, he is clearly not a member of the scribal guild as he possesses knowledge μὴ μεμαθηκώς, "not having studied."[96] Second, the fact that he has not "studied" (in a formal sense) did not stop him from achieving learning in the Scriptures. The phrase "he knows learning" (γράμματα οἶδεν) is an explicit admission that Jesus had acquired "letters" or had achieved "learning." Evans states, "The reference here is to a lack of formal, scribal training, not to having had no education whatsoever. Jesus has not sat at the feet of a trained, recognized rabbi or sage."[97] However, Evans does claim that Jesus was trained in some sense, at least enough to be thought of us a literate to some degree, "Although there is no unambiguous evidence for the literacy of Jesus, there is considerable contextual and circumstantial evidence that suggests that in all probability he was literate."[98] Circumstantial

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93. Craig A. Evans, "Jewish Scripture and the Literacy of Jesus," in *From Biblical Criticism to Biblical Faith: Essays in Honor of Lee Martin McDonald*, ed. William H. Brackney and Craig A. Evans (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007), 1.

94. Evans, "Jewish Scripture," 42–43.

95. My own translation.

96. This semantic case seems to have merit. BDAG's entry seems to strongly support Evans's insights.

97. Evans, "Jewish Scripture," 42.

98. Craig Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence* (Louisville: John Knox, 2012), 82.

evidence would include the Shema (Deut 6:4–10), which was the heart of the Torah, and Evans believes this strongly implies the presence of basic biblical literacy among young Jewish boys. To be *tôrâ* compliant was to obey the Shema which commanded the fastidious learning of the Mosaic covenant. This would explain how both Jesus and his disciples are thought of as ἰδιῶται—they are clearly outside the scribal-literate guilds yet appear to have an aptitude, not just with *traditions* but with *texts*.

This observation applies equally to Jesus's disciples. Evans makes the lexical case that ἀγράμματοί εἰσιν καὶ ἰδιῶται (Acts 4:13) does not mean that the disciples were "unlearned" but merely unaffiliated. His lexical case corrects the KJV translation of "unlearned and ignorant" and instead indicates that the disciples are merely "uninitiated" in a scribal academy. Evans concludes,

> The comments in John 7:15 and Acts 4:13 should not be taken to imply that Jesus and his disciples were illiterate. In fact, the opposite is probably the intended sense, as most commentators rightly interpret. That is, despite not having had formal training, Jesus and his disciples evince remarkable skill in the knowledge of Scripture and ability to interpret it and defend their views.[99]

Thus, "To be an ἰδιώτης is to be one outside of the guild, or outside of the group. This seems to be corroborated by Paul in 1 Cor 14:16, 23–24, referring to the 'outsider' (so RSV) or 'ungifted' (so NASB) as an ἰδιώτης."[100] BDAG defines the term ἰδιώτης as "one who is not knowledgeable about some particular group's experience, one not in the know, outsider."[101] In the Corinthian correspondence, Paul refers to himself as ἰδιώτης, relative to the philosophical schools—he is not

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99. Evans, *Jesus and His World*, 43.

100. Evans, "Jewish Scripture," 43. BDAG entry of "ἰδιώτης" reads: "a person who is relatively unskilled or inexperienced in some activity or field of knowledge, *layperson, amateur* in contrast to an expert or specialist of any kind (the uncrowned person in contrast to the king)."

101. BDAG, s.v. ἰδιώτης, 468.

"uneducated" but rather is "uninitiated" to their particular group. Likewise, those who were outsiders to the Church in Corinth were ἰδιώτης, because they lacked *membership*, not *education* and learning. That Paul also considered himself to be a *tôrâ*-learned Jew is evident from his pedigree statements made to the Corinthians and the Philippians. The term is to be taken to refer to a "layman" and an outsider to the group—not as an uninformed simpleton with no ability to read or debate with sufficient rhetorical skills. This, coupled with the many allusions to Jesus handling and orally reading texts in the Gospels strongly suggests that he was proficient with them, albeit not quite a scribal-literate.

James D.G. Dunn: A Reader Not a Writer

James D.G. Dunn also affirmed Jesus's education. While he must have had some competence with texts, at least enough to publicly read and discuss them, he most likely was not a trained rabbi and did not perform the many writing duties of the professional scribal class.[102] Dunn asks,

> Can we be more specific about Jesus's education? In particular, would he have been able to read and write? There is a strong presumption of widespread illiteracy among the lower social groups in the Roman Empire. But as we have seen, Second Temple Judaism put a great emphasis on Torah study. The writing prophets could already assume a reading and writing public.... Consequently, even a Galilean villager (of some ability) might well have learned to read. Jesus's quite widely attested challenge, "Have you not read?" probably presupposes his own reading ability.... Moreover, the presence of Scripture scrolls is attested in Palestinian villages as early as *1 Macc.* 1:56-57 and confirmed by Josephus for both Judea (*War* 2.229) and Galilee (*Life* 134).[103]

According to Dunn, Jesus was likely "literate but unable to write" in a scribal sense, which included transcribing and translating Scriptures, in addition to creating and curating other

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102. James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered,* vol. 1 of *Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 313–4.

103. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 313–14.

documents.[104] Dunn's view seems to be that Jesus was something of an organic intellect who could read and teach with fluency and effectiveness. He concluded that Luke's portrayal of Jesus as a semi-educated rabbi teaching in the synagogue was not out of the question when he stated, "The picture painted in Luke 4.16–17 is in essence quite credible."[105] Jesus, the literate reader in Luke, is not necessarily a fiction. However, Dunn insisted that the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels is the one that made an impression on his followers. And that impression, for some, was that he was a learned and skilled teacher.

Larry Hurtado: Lay-Literacy and Book Culture

Larry Hurtado's book, *Destroyer of the gods*, maintains that scholars have too often failed to appreciate Christianity's uniqueness among the religious practices of adjacent cultures.[106] Hurtado suggested that reading practices were comparatively more frequent in synagogues than in the Greco-Roman Gymnasiums or lecture halls. On the basis of a comparative study of Christian and Greco-Roman literature, Hurtado denies the romantic notion of a purely oral phase of tradition transmission apart from texts. While oral modes of expression were undoubtedly indispensable and appreciated in a Roman context, the spoken word "went fully hand-in-hand with an equally strong appreciation for texts of various kinds, both in early Christianity and in the larger culture of that time."[107] From the time of Paul to the age of

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104. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 315. Dunn cites Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 1:271–278, 303–309, followed by T.E. Boomershine, "Jesus of Nazareth and the Watershed of Ancient Orality and Literacy," in *Orality and Textuality*, ed. J. Dewey, 7–36. He notes that both Crossan and Chilton deny Jesus's literacy as either a professional scribe or even a layman. See Chilton, *Rabbi Jesus*, 99.

105. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 315.

106. Larry Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 9.

107. Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods*, 2041.

Constantine, the breadth and depth of early Christian literature is striking—all of which was produced to explain, interpret, or defend first century Christian writings.[108] This profusion of second century literary product was set into motion by the founders of the Christian faith and tradition.[109] Along with the canonical Gospels, the time, expense, and focus needed to produce this quantity of literary works would impress and commend itself on successive generations of Christians.

This preoccupation with textuality resulted in a proliferation of books, likely accelerating the transition from scroll usage to codices.[110] The Christian preference to collect the writings of the NT is noteworthy.[111] Hurtado also claims that the more recent studies on the widespread presence of grammar readers and instructional texts throughout Roman history to the Byzantine period suggest "a greater number of people progressing on beyond elementary education, and so a general growth in literacy in the Roman period."[112] The artifactual evidence at Pompeii

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108. Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods*, 2116; Hurtado cites Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature: A Literary History*, *vol. 1, From Paul to the Age of Constantine*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005). Of the nearly 14,000 Greek and Roman letters produced in Paul's era, Seneca wrote the largest of the non-Pauline corpus, consisting of about 4,100 words, and the average letter contained approximately only 200 words. Hurtado states, "By comparison, Paul's smallest letter, Philemon, is 395 words, extraordinarily large for what looks to be a simple personal letter.... If we consider Paul's larger letters, these are simply off the scale."

109. Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods*, 2314. Second- and third-century Christian papyri included letters (such as 1 Clement and Diognetus), exhortational documents (*Didache* and Shepherd of Hermas), sermons (Melito), theological discourses (*Against Heresies*), and apologetic works (Justin's *First Apology* and Tertullian's *Against Marcion*.)

110. Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods*, 2365.

111. Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods*, 2397. The scroll was the "prestige bookform of the day, and so, if Christians wanted to commend their texts to the wider culture, especially the texts that they read as Scripture, it would seem an odd and counterintuitive choice to prefer the codex bookform for these texts."

112. Hurtado, "Oral Fixation," 331; cf. Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 63. Likewise, Hurtado notes that Cribiore's assessment of the evidence was for literacy at many levels, suggesting gradations between semi-literacy and scribal literacy, Hurtado, "Oral Fixation," 331. cf. Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 189–192.

persuasively argues for widespread lay-literacy among the "sub-elite levels of society."[113] This evidence includes the existence of shipping labels, property for sale signs, defamatory graffiti, campaign posters, engravings and inscriptions, signs, epithets, and public instructions and directional signs—all of which indicate the presence of a widespread sub-elite literacy among the artisan and working classes.[114] Other collections from the Greco-Roman era suggest literacy among non-elites. The collection of the Roman *tabulas* made of wood at the Roman fort Vindolanda establishes lay-literacy in the Western Roman Empire (90–120 CE).[115]

Brian Wright: Widespread Communal Literacy

Brian J. Wright's book *Communal Reading in the Time of Jesus* calls into question the dominant assumptions of those in the New Majority camp: (1) producing manuscripts were always penned by professional scribes, (2) writing materials such as papyrus were hard to come by, (3) writing was exclusively within the purview of trained scribal elites, (4) books were read exclusively by professional readers. With respect to this last insight, Wright sifts through primary sources to uncover public-communal reading events, demonstrating that they were common among people in both the Greco-Roman and Jewish cultures.[116]

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113. Hurtado, "Oral Fixation," 331; cf. Ben Witherington III, "Education in the Greco-Roman World," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, eds. Joel B. Green and Lee McDonald Martin (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 188. See also in the same volume E. Randolph Richards, "Reading Writing and Manuscripts," 346–47. Richards agrees with Millard who suggests that Jewish literacy rates were higher than Greco-Roman counterparts because of their commitment to Torah, but no higher than 15 percent total.

114. Hurtado, "Oral Fixation," 331. See J. L. Franklin, "Literacy and the Parietal Inscriptions of Pompeii," in *Literacy in the Roman World*, ed. M. Beard et al. JRA 3 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 77–98.

115. Alan K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, "The Vindolanda Writing-Tablets (Tabulae Vindolandenses IV, Part 1)," *Britannia* 41: 187–224; For a description of the significance of these Vindolandian writing tablets for later use of codex book forms, see Serena Ammirati, "The Use of Wooden Tablets in the Ancient Graeco-Roman World and the Birth of the Book in Codex Form: Some Remarks," *Scripta* 6 (2013): 9–15.

116. Wright, *Communal Reading*, 207.

His research challenges Crossan's and Botha's view of mere transactional craftsman's literacy. Communal reading events took place over a widespread geographical area, as is evidenced by a survey of about twenty or so first century authors—some of whom were not born of high social standing.[117] Wright was able to show that the readers of texts belonged to all walks of life from clerks, emperors, youths, the elderly, women, elites, scribes, parents, rhetors, politicians, students, plebs, crowds, hosts, and guests.[118]

Additionally, various reading skill levels were witnessed among the ancients. Readers were said to be able to read well or be lacking in skill. They were trained and amply prepared, or they were ill-qualified, superficial, or offensive. Readers could be particularly proficient—capable expositors able to skim texts quickly.[119] They could read verse-by-verse and or be selective in citation. They are said to have performed texts with flawless inflection or to have mangled a piece with thick foreign accents.[120] Readers could perform with exacting precision or could be allowed to openly recite and paraphrase, providing the reading was considered conceptually accurate.[121]

The NT similarly reflects this variability in reading venues and practices. Far from being an activity of the elite, communal reading events were organized across social and class lines and

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117. Wright, *Communal Reading*, 110–111. Wright identifies well over a dozen locations and states including, "Asia, Aphrodisias, Rhodes, Gabaroth, Athens, Nicopolis, Tomis, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Celaenae in Phrygia, Prusa, Rhodes, Vienne, Corinth, Borysthenes, Tarsus, Narbo, Rome, Tyana, Jericho, Magna Graecia, Spain, and Umbria. Several general areas were also cited, such as the area between Nicaea and Nicomedia, the coastal land of Asia Minor, southern Italy, and the Lacedaemon province in Greece."

118. Wright, *Communal Reading*, 113.

119. Wright, *Communal Reading*, 113.

120. Wright, *Communal Reading*, 113.

121. Wright, *Communal Reading*, 109, 115–6.

were conducted in various venues by a variety of participants in diverse cultures.[122] These reading events could be public (Acts 17:16–34) or private (Acts 5:42) and were conducted small venues (Acts 8) or large spaces (John 6:59). They included both formal readings in the synagogues (Matt 4:23; Luke 4:16) and readings in informal venues (Acts 17:17). They took place in homes (Luke 1:40), court rooms (Acts 18:12–3), private residences (Acts 28:23), Solomon's temple (Acts 3:11), well-known lecture halls (Acts 19:9), within the church (Acts 11:26), and out in public (Acts 19:30–31). They could also include social outcasts or lower social classes (John 6:31; Acts 8:27).[123] Wright asserts that all of this overturns the previous consensus (what he calls a "simplistic notion") that only a few privileged community leaders could have been engaged in public reading.[124] There remains the issue, however, of what constitutes "reading" in an ancient context, which Wright does not spend much space to define.

Lucretia Yaghjian: An Auraliteracy–Scribaliteracy Spectrum

At the start of the twentieth century, biblical scholarship discovered the rich and promising field of oral tradition. By the end of that century, attention to the subject had been largely abandoned due to its perception as "wand-waving" Romantic pap.[125] The thesis on "the

122. Wright, *Communal Reading*, 204.

123. Wright, *Communal Reading*, 205.

124. See Wright's Appendix in which he cited from Bik 3:7e "The priests would lead through the reading those who know how to read and those who do not know how to read." This is not an argument that all could read or recite proficiently. Reading in the NT also involved access to manuscripts (Luke 4:17–20; Acts 8:28) but at times could imply knowledge of texts without the manuscripts being present (Luke 19:47; 20:1; 21:37–48; 24:45–47). These events involved a high degree of tradition-control in reading (Luke 4:28–29; 13:14–15; 19:47–48; Jn 7:40–44; 12:34; 18:21; Acts 13:42; 17:18; 18:26; 20:30–31; 1 Cor 14:26; Gal 3:13–14; 2 Thess 3:14; 2 Pet 3:16; Rev 22:18–19).

125. Robert D. Miller II, *Oral Tradition in Ancient Israel*, BPC 4 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), xiii. From Hermann Gunkel in 1910 to the 1950's when Folklore and oral tradition theory were used to define and defend orality studies in biblical composition.

great divide" between orality and literacy was challenged during the 1980's.[126] Rather than an "orality versus literacy" framework, modern scholarship has turned to a spectrum of orality and written literature, both being considered a type of ancient literacy. The interdependence of the oral and the written outweighs any supposed competition between these two means of communication.[127]

Lucretia Yaghjian addressed this tendency by broadening the definition of "reading" in a Jewish and Mediterranean context where the oral and written intersected. For ancient Jews, "cultural literacy, or 'knowing the tradition,' did not depend on technical literacy, or 'knowing letters,' even though the social practice of reading embraced both of these."[128] She proposes a spectrum that includes: (1) auraliteracy—the regular hearing of Scripture in the synagogue producing congregants with an essential skill set of familiarity with texts, but also producing little-to-no grapho-literate training or experience in chirography. (2) oraliteracy—the "oral recitation or recall of a memorized text (or story from the text)."[129] Oraliterate readers are those who not only regularly hear but can perform and converse over the finer details of Scriptural texts. Both categories would be considered *illiteracy* in the modern sense. Botha and Craffert suggest that "What we call illiterate may have been, in antiquity, oraliterate or auraliterate."[130]

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126. See Deborah Tannen, "The Oral/Literate Continuum in Discourse," in *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy*, ed. Deborah Tannen (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1982), 1–16. And also Tannen, "The Myth of Orality and Literacy," in *Linguistics and Literacy*, ed. William Frawley, (New York: Plenum, 1982), 37–50; cf. Dan Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity: Lectors, Manuscripts, and Sound in the Oral Delivery of John 1–4* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

127. William A. Graham, "Summation," in *Oral-scribal Dimensions of Scripture, Piety, and Practice*: *Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), n.p.

128. Yaghjian, Lucretia, "Ancient Reading," in *The Social Sciences and the New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 208.

129. Yaghjian, "Ancient Reading," 208.

130. Wright, *Communal Reading*, 203.

(3) oculiteracy—which she defines as "linguistic decoding (by eye) from a written text."[131] This is the ability to read from a material text due to many years of aural-oral interaction in the learning process. This act of reading would be, for Jesus, identification with a general Judaic book culture of his day, not necessarily the scribal-literate culture of elitist Judaism. And finally, (4) scribaliteracy—the specialized ability to read and write as well as transcribe the Scriptures or other important texts.[132] This, according to Yaghjian is for "technical, professional, or religious purposes on behalf of a particular interpretive community or 'school.'" Lastly, (5) illiteracy—the inability to interact at any level with texts as a reader or writer. Yaghjian affirms that to refer to auraliteracy or oraliteracy as "illiteracy" is to foist upon ancient people a modernist, ethnocentric stigma.[133] While Yaghjian does move the conversation forward on the discussion, Botha and Craffert object that she is still too dependent on Shmuel Safrai's rabbinic education-centered model.[134] They question whether modern researchers are even asking culturally appropriate questions, much less finding the right cultural answers,

> The question (whether he was literate or not) is reduced to a simple yes/no, and the choice (especially when "yes") substantiated by means of an itemizing of references to "schools", "education" and "teaching". This reductionist approach ignores the hermeneutical rule that all these concepts must be placed in their own cultural meaning systems before one can employ them as analytical categories.[135]

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131. Yaghjian, "Ancient Reading," 208.

132. Yaghjian, "Ancient Reading," 209.

133. Yaghjian, "Ancient Reading," 209.

134. Craffert and Botha, "Why Jesus Could Walk on Water," 31. They note in particular her use of modern educational terminology. It is agreed that the term "literacy" is certainly not ancient. But this would not preclude ancient people from having cultural equivalents conceptually. The Safrai and Nathan Drazin model is characterized by the existence of the Sopherim (Great Synagogue) after Ezra (515 BCE), the development of the Zugoth (212 BCE), or "pairs" of leaders who presided over the Sanhedrin as the *Nasi* and *Abet' din* (president and vice president) also overseeing Israel's educational training, and then the emergence of the Tannaim, or professional "repeaters" who possessed encyclopedic knowledge of Torah (10 CE), eventually followed by the Amoraim (230–250 CE), or "interpreters" who were the master-teachers and rabbis of Judaism.

135. Craffert and Botha, "Why Jesus Could Walk," 25.

The impulse to move in the direction of "that world" and "the other"—to really give their context a fair hearing—is commendable. Yet, their criticism of Yaghjian seems misplaced. She does not invoke Safrai at all and employs the term "literate" mainly as a modality and not primarily in a modern-western or a Mishnaic/Talmudic sense for that matter.[136] Yaghjian's spectrum has been mentioned by several scholars, mostly in a positive light, but is yet to be applied as a useful heuristic tool to understand Jesus and his audience.

Craig Keener: Oral Discipleship Education

In his prodigious volume, *Christobiography*, Craig Keener stresses the importance of ancient memory practices, even among those considered technically illiterate, stating, "Widespread illiteracy and, even for the literate, the relatively rare possession of books brought memory to the fore in ancient pedagogy."[137] Keener draws a distinction between "illiterate" and "literate" but sees this point to be immaterial with respect to whether Jesus or the disciples could have learned large amounts of material. He concludes, "Memory practices noted among ancient disciples apply to disciples in general, not exclusively to the literate. Not all disciples of sages came from the ranks of the educated."[138] While Jesus's oral learning process would have been sufficient for his audience, unlike Yaghjian, Keener still seems to maintain a sharper distinction between orality and literacy.

Summary of Views

This brief survey has tracked the various and significant approaches to Jesus's literacy,

136. Still, Botha's and Craffert's critique should be taken seriously. If the ancient Jews did not even have words for "literacy" or "illiteracy," then one must be careful not to impose all these ideas upon them.

137. Craig S. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 423–24.

138. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability*, 440.

particularly as it relates to Luke's account of a "reading Jesus." It has been shown that the Received View of the church is that Jesus was a scribal-literate or its equivalent. The Lives of Jesus literature largely assumed his schooling. Jesus was a trained scholar who was considered a legitimate rabbinic competitor by his peers within their scribal-literate system.

Conversely, scholars who deny Jesus's literacy (and his rabbinic authority) base their research on the orality theory of Kelber and the illiteracy projections of Harris. Kelber asserted that Christ was entirely unliterary. Crossan stressed that Jesus was a mere illiterate peasant while Hezser, extrapolating from Harris' work, affirmed that most Palestinian Jews were without literacy, and this included Jesus. Keith embraces the insights of Harris's and Hezser's studies, but only in so far as they agree with Mark's account, which he takes to be contradictory to Luke's. This majority view today constitutes the widespread assumption of a largely oral culture that was not very good at passing on tradition owing to faulty cultural memory practices. This chapter has shown that already present in these approaches is a mediating instinct between scribal literacy and illiteracy.

A third and mediating category has attempted to avoid the extremes and the certainty of the Received View and the skepticism of the New Majority View. Craig Evans has sought to establish that short of scribal literacy, Jesus was able to read well and had limited writing abilities as a competent lay literate. The semantic case for *idiotes*, meaning "an outsider to the guild" is compelling, given Paul's self-referential use of the term related to philosophical schools. Hurtado has broadened the discussion to consider the unprecedented book culture of Jesus's followers and the explosion of books and codices in the first and subsequent century—strongly implying an interest in "books" stemmed from Jesus himself. Rather than being projected back into the first century from a literate era of Christianity, it is Jesus and his disciples

who set into motion the book fixation of later Christians. Brian Wright has altogether challenged certain notions of a purely oral phase in Christian tradition, observing the ubiquity of communal reading events that crossed social and ethnic boundaries for the ancients. Keener has reminded us that oral education was prolific in the ancient world, and the issue of Jesus's grapholiterate status is probably moot. Moreover, Yaghjian has widened our horizons regarding what could have been considered a "literate" act of reading, including frequent aural reception and oraliterate recitation, not merely oculiteracy and scribaliteracy.

The next chapter engages the primary literature to examine the literary and cultural background of Luke's reading Jesus. Chapter 3 assesses a cross section of texts from the Tanak and the Second Temple literature to rabbinic sources, along with some corollary texts from the adjacent Greco-Roman culture, to consider Luke's claims about a Scripture-reading-and-interpreting Jesus.

CHAPTER 3: ORAL LITERACY AND NON-SPECIALIZED EDUCATION IN THE SYNAGOGUE

Chapter 2 examined the tertiary sources pertaining to Jesus's literacy. Scholars of the new majority perspective on Jesus's education largely deny that he was capable to read or interpret Scripture in synagogue settings. This chapter examines various features of ancient reading, namely (1) Reading and textuality: what role did texts play in reading? (2) Reading as oral textuality: what oral performance features characterized the act of reading texts, and what was the interplay between orality and texts in the learning process? (3) Reading and interpretive competence: what hermeneutical capabilities were expected when texts were read? Who could effectively interpret the Scriptures and to what degree? (4) Reading and authority signaling: what did the act of reading signal about the individual performing the task? What social expectations did local congregations and audiences implicitly hold for their readers?

Reading and Textuality: From Moses to Ezra

Walter Ong asserts that out of tens of thousands of human languages that have ever existed, only 106 have developed into literature and literate culture.[1] Of those literate societies, an even smaller number developed anything like a sacred text.[2] If Ong is correct, Jews can be placed in a privileged anthropological category, perhaps even the most privileged position

1. Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 7; cf. Ong, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 260. At the time of writing, Ong noted that of the 3,000 or so languages in existence today, only about seventy-eight have been committed to written form. Today there are likely more as literacy rates have dramatically increased. Yet, the "extinction" of languages is far more common than their preservation, and this is usually due to a lack of literature that performs a sacred function. If a culture's language goes extinct, David Crystal observes that those languages in the domain of religion are the very last to be affected. See David Crystal, *Language Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 109.

2. Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* 154. Ong asserts that despite the Greek fixation with Homer, "the ancient Greeks and Romans had no sacred texts, and their religions are virtually empty of formal theology."

among ancient civilizations regarding book culture. In what follows, this study examines the textual foundation of Hebrew religion and its relevance to the reading competency of individuals within the Jewish community.

This Book of the Covenant

The Pentateuch introduces the reader to "this book of the law" (Deut 28:58, 61; 29:20, 21, 27; 30:10), which eventually came to be known as "the Book of Moses" (Ezra 6:18).[3] This record of God's covenant and dealings with Israel became the foundation of Jewish identity and praxis (Exod 18:20). It likely referred initially to the Mosaic covenant code (Exod 20:22–23:33), that is, laws governing religious, cultic, social, and moral practice, in addition to ethical relationships between fellow Israelites and foreigners.[4] This סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית "book of the covenant" was read to the people by Moses (Exod 24:7).[5] Moses handed it to priests to curate along with other sacred objects (Deut 31:9), and its placement near the Ark of the Covenant indicated its venerable status (Deut 31:26). The priestly sons of Levi were to provide people with biblical instruction, first by educating their sons as apprentices in the priestly guild (Exod 40:14–15) and then by delivering ethical and sectarian instruction during festivals (Exod 24:8; Num 35:1–8; Deut 31:9–13).

In subsequent centuries, the sacred writings of Judaism would grow to include the books of Joshua (Josh 24:26), the "books of the Kings" (1 Sam 10:25; 1 Kgs 11:41; 1 Chron 9:1; 16:11; 17:9; 20:34; 24:27; 2 Chron 35:27; 36:8), the "books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" (1

3. Alan R. Millard, "The Practice of Writing in Ancient Israel," *BS* 2 (1973): 82–83.

4. *LEB*, Jacob N. Cerone, "Covenant Code." Cerone explains that the *Covenant Code* and the *Book of the Covenant* are almost certainly interchangeable terms.

5. Unless otherwise noted, all Hebrew citations hereafter are from the *BHS.*

Kgs 14:19–2 Kgs 21:25),[6] the five books of the "Psalter" (Pss 1:1; 41:13; 42:1; 73:1; 90:1; 107:1; 139:16), and the various books or scrolls of the Prophets (Isa 29:11, 12, 18; 30:8; 34:16; Jer 25:13; 30:2; 51:60; Ezek 2:9; Dan 9:2; 12:4; Nah 1:1).[7]

After the period of exile and the Jewish people's return to their land, Ezra, the scribe and priest, led them in a national revival as he read the book of the law to the congregation in public (Neh 8:1–9). The books of Ezra and Nehemiah recount the return of Israel from exile, the rebuilding of Solomon's temple, the administration of the settlers, and the spiritual renewal that occurred under Ezra's guidance. As a priest and a trained scribe, Ezra was well suited for his role as a reformer. The priestly scribes were custodians of the sacred archive; they were copyists whose responsibility was to keep the manuscripts from deteriorating, supply new copies when old ones wore out, and instruct the people in God's commands.[8]

This exposition and the assembly's attention to the law constituted a turning point for Israel. While they reinstituted various aspects of the temple cult—the priesthood, the sacrifices, observance of the festivals, and the teaching of Scripture (by Ezra and the priests)—the role of their sacred books and the prominence of the scribal office would hereafter dominate Jewish religion. Harry Gamble observes, "Without denying the currency of oral tradition, it is increasingly recognized that Christianity, which emerged from a textually oriented Judaism and

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6. Other references include 1 Kgs 14:19; 15:31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:39; 2 Kgs 1:18; 10:34; 13:8, 12; 14:15, 28; 15:11, 15, 21, 26, 31. This source is distinct from the Books of the Chronicles of the Kgs of Judah (1 Kgs 14:29; 15:7, 23; 22:45; 2 Kgs 8:23; 12:19; 14:18; 15:6, 36; 16:19; 20:20; 21:17, 25; 23:28; 24:5).

7. The Hebrew Bible also mentions other non-canonical books that have apparently been lost to history, such as the *Book of Jashar* (Josh 10:12–13; 2 Sam 1:18), *the Book of Yahweh's Wars* (Num 21:14), *Acts of Solomon* (2 Chron 9:29). cf. Kristin De Troyer, "'Is This Not Written in the Book of Jashar?' (Joshua 10:13c): References to Extra-Biblical Books in the Bible," in *The Land of Israel in Bible, History, and Theology: Studies in Honour of Ed Noort*, ed. Jacques van Ruiten and J. Cornelis de Vos, VTSup 124 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 45–50.

8. Russell T. Fuller, "Ezra: The Teacher of God's Word and the Agent of Revival," *SBJT* 9 (Fall 2005): 53.

whose constituency comprised a rough cross-section of Greco-Roman society, was also early engaged in the use, interpretation, and production of texts."[9] Again, if Walter Ong is correct concerning the vanishingly small number of human cultures that have produced literature in any sense, this would put the Hebrew people, and, by extension, the Christian faith, in an elite classification with respect to the emergence of a book culture.

Second Temple Textuality

Judaism's interest in a sacred textual tradition continues into the Second Temple Jewish materials. The second-century Letter of Aristeas, for example, upheld the sanctity of the Tanak on the occasion of the biblical text's translation into Greek.[10] The Hebrew Scriptures permeate Second Temple literature, drawing on biblical figures such as Shem, Ezekiel, Zephaniah, Ezra, Baruch, Abraham, Adam, Elijah, and Daniel.[11] Charlesworth observes that the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs represent a style of writing "found in the Old Testament (cf. Gen 49), but which did not reach maturity until the time of the Second Temple."[12] These patriarchs' pseudepigraphical last words and rites all draw upon similar tropes, themes, and patterns already present in the Torah.[13] As an example, pseudo-Levi charges the people to "teach your children letters also so that they might have understanding all their lives as they ceaselessly read the law of God" (T. Levi 13:1).[14] Undoubtedly, Levi is a scribal-literate teacher instructing his own

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9. Harry Y. Gamble, "Literacy and Book Culture," *DNTB* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 646.

10. Let. Aris., 177.

11. J. H. Charlesworth, "Introduction," in *OTP*, vi.

12. Charlesworth, *OTP*, 773.

13. Charlesworth, *OTP*, 773.

14. The author explicitly claims to have been a priest at the age of nineteen (*T. Levi* 12:5).

children. Yet, the literature he represents was likely written for all Jewish children in the tradition of OT moral exemplars.

The literature, therefore, portrays pseudo-Enoch as a "wise man" and a "scholar" (2 En. 1:1). Enoch has a vision in which the books of the LORD's deeds are brought out of the heavenly storehouse, and the heavenly mediator commands him to take the books and deliver them to be read by *all the people* so that "they will read them and know their Creator" and the "people are expected to read and understand 'the books.' And distribute the books in your handwriting to your children and children to [their] children; and the parents will read from generation to generation" (2 En. 33:3).[15] This sentiment echoes Moses's command in the Shema. When pseudo-Enoch finally delivers the "books," they are given "from the lips of the LORD" to learn the "deeds of the LORD," that Enoch recorded in his handwriting for posterity (2 En. 47:1–2). Literature supposedly delivered from the LORD was read orally from God as a living oracle transcribed into texts and passed down to succeeding generations. Those generations are expected to read, understand, and practice this wisdom. While pseudo-Enoch himself is said to be a scholar, the content of the "books" he received in heavenly visions are for "all the people."

Similar to the Hebrew Bible, the Second Temple Pseudepigrapha shows a keen interest in "books" and the passing on of literature to subsequent generations. In addition to the body of literature itself being an attestation to the growing importance of Jewish textuality, the books bear an internal witness to the importance of relaying heavenly visions, blessings and curses, warnings, interpretations, and instruction through textual traditions.

15. Charlesworth, *OTP*, 157.

Reading as Oral Textuality

Another characteristic feature of Jewish book culture is undoubtedly its central modal expression—orality. A detailed examination of oral theory is beyond the scope of this research.[16] This study will be contented to examine one narrow feature of oral tradition, namely oral textuality. Oral textuality involves the textualization of the oral and the oralization of texts. It can be defined as the act of storing a living and vocalized cultural tradition in a material manuscript (an artifact) intended for frequent public hearing (aural transmission) through regular public oral reading and/or exposition (oral traditions).[17] As William A. Graham observes, "Too often lost to us is the central place of the scriptural word recited, read aloud, chanted, sung, quoted in debate, memorized in childhood, meditated upon in murmur and full voice, or consciously and unconsciously used as the major building block of public and private discourse."[18] Oral-textuality is a fundamentally different way of viewing the interplay between oral tradition and written materials. Raymond Person suggests that the Deuteronomistic history (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings) and Chronicles "still portray at least some texts as oral compositions existing in written form that primarily act as mnemonic aids for their own internalization."[19] The oral dimension allows the material text to speak coherently within an

16. Many orality studies have quoted the bishop of Hierapolis, Papias's preference for the "living voice" over written tradition, "And whenever anyone came who had been a follower of presbyters [apostles], I inquired into the words of the presbyters ... For I did not imagine that things out of books would help me as much as the utterance of a living and abiding voice" Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, 3.39 (Kirsopp Lake, LCL).

17. Rebecca Haigh, "Oral Aspects: A Performative Approach to 1QM," in *Dead Sea Discoveries 26*, (2019): 189–219.

18. William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), ix.

19. Raymond F. Person, "The Role of Memory in the Tradition Represented by the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles," *Oral Tradition* 26 (October 1, 2011): 537–50. Person writes in the tradition of precedent scholars, Albert Lord and John M. Foley, building on their insights.

emergent social context.[20] The material text likewise anchors oral communication, providing a limiting principle and necessary parameters for interpretive expression.[21]

Oral textuality abandons the now passé model of diachronic development between oral and written literature called "the great divide." Susan Niditch observes, "The form-critical approach is grounded in the notion that early, oral, simpler works eventually written down and complicated by literature sophisticated writers. The former are primitive, and the latter are complex."[22] Linear progression theorists argued that oral tradition was passed on for very long periods, possibly centuries, before eventually being written for posterity. Alex Jassen reflects this view well when he states, "Ancient Israel was long an oral culture. The emergence of a written text such as the Bible reflects a gradual shift within ancient Israel from an oral culture to a textual society."[23] A theory of the evolutionary development of folklore is at the heart of this model. As tradition accumulates, it "snowballs," assimilating new material before becoming a text. Hughson T. Ong is critical of this supposed divide between oral and written tradition stating,

> So, too often, they dichotomize ancient and modern societies in such a way that assumes and views the latter as primarily textual-media cultures. But this perhaps is a misnomer, not least because our modern world is as much an oral-media society as it is a textual-media one. The only difference is likely the fact that in ancient societies oral media takes precedence over textual media. There will be no "history" if the ancient societies were not also a textual-media culture.[24]

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20. Ong, *Orality*, 7.

21. Robert D. Miller II, *Oral Tradition in Ancient Israel*, BPC 4 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 99.

22. Susan Niditch, "Hebrew Bible and Oral Literature: Misconceptions and New Directions," in *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres*, ed. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote, WUNT 260 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 3–18; See also Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word. Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 117–20.

23. Alex Jassen, "Review of How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel by William M. Schniedewind," *JHS* 5 (2004–2005): 102.

24. Hughson T. Ong, "Jesus' Bilingual Proficiency," in *Sociolinguistic Analysis of the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 88–112, here 91.

Robert Miller likewise rejects the theory of the "great divide" and declares, "We must abandon a model of oral literature becoming a written Bible to be re-oralized in the Jewish community. There was an interplay of oral and written composition and performance throughout Israel's history."[25] Miller maintains that authors composed their literature from both a vocalized and written tradition when he states, "Oral and written literatures were simultaneously part of ancient Israel for the entire time of the Hebrew Bible's composition."[26] Literature served the purpose of providing public speakers with material to read and teach aloud, while Israel received an "aural" education in Scripture and the covenant.

Oral textuality was made possible, provided three conditions were present within a society: (1) Cultures that produce texts—where writing and reading are known and practiced, there exists the potential for oral-textual culture.[27] Even if the skill of writing and producing literature is possessed by only the privileged scribal class, that culture simultaneously promotes oral and written texts.[28] Miller states that "ancient Israel was never without writing."[29] Likewise, they were never without a voiced tradition. As Joachim Schaper states, "Never in its history had Israel been a primary oral society, i.e., a society entirely untouched by writing, as becomes clear

25. Miller, *Oral Tradition*, 121.

26. Miller, *Oral Tradition*, 121.

27. Aaron Koller, "The Diffusion of the Alphabet in the Second Millennium BCE: On the Movements of Scribal Ideas from Egypt to the Levant, Mesopotamia, and Yemen," JAEI, 20 (2018): 1–14. Koller states that "Human beings have been speaking for 200,000 years, creating art for 80,000 years, but writing for just only 5,000 years." The earliest writing systems in Uruk were like modern traffic signs. Grammatical signs did not come until much later. Writing was not originally literary but administrative. The Narmer Palette ca. 3100 BCE—is evidence that Mesopotamian and Egyptian scribes began to write phonetically.

28. Niditch, "Hebrew Bible and Oral Literature," 6.

29. Koller, "The Diffusion of the Alphabet," 58.

from the existence of scribes in her midst from the earliest times."[30] The two did not so much develop diachronically but were co-existent and mutually interpretive in the production of a finished literary product (synchronic).[31] Sacred texts became repositories of a living interpretive tradition, and new texts were added for new situations and contexts.[32] This process suggests a synergistic development between texts and oral expression.[33] (2) The internal witness of extant texts—the symbiosis of written texts and the oralization of literature as an internal attestation bodes well for its existence.[34] The practice of writing and reading literature came into vogue before the twelfth century BCE—allegedly before textual tradition was possible in Israel; and oral tradition continued well after the fifth century BCE—allegedly after material texts rendered

30. Joachim Schaper, "The Living Word Engraved in Stone: The Interrelationships Between the Oral and Written and the Culture of Memory in the Books of Deuteronomy and Joshua," in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity: The Fifth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 20. See also Tom Thatcher, *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text: Beyond the Oral and Written Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 27.

31 James Barr, "The Synchronic, the Diachronic, and the Historical: A Triangular Relationship?" in *Synchronic or Diachronic: A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis*, Johannes de Moor ed., (Leiden, Brill: 2021); cf. Christo Lombaard "The Old Testament Between Diachrony and Synchrony: Two Reasons for Favouring the Former," *JSem* 15 (2006): 18–31; For a response, see Alphonso Groenewald "Old Testament Exegesis: Reflections on Methodology," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 63 (2007): 1017–31. Diachronic approaches seek to get at the original "historical form" *behind* the finished text, while synchronic approaches tend to read the text as it has come to us, with little interest in their historical-literary developments. For a mediating position, see Norman K. Gottwald, "Between Diachronic and Synchronic Approaches," *JHS* 10 (2010): 29. Gottwald reads the premonarchic era of ancient Israelite history as fundamentally egalitarian in its practice communitarianism and views the social justice laws to have been decentralized among the premonarchial tribes. Of late there has been a profitable interaction between the two camps.

32. Schaper, "The Living Word Engraved in Stone," 20.

33. The alternative to a synchronic development would necessitate that biblical authors or "redactors" were guilty of anachronistically projecting textuality back into previous eras. However, the texts in question (Tanak) exhibit all the earmarks of an oral residue existing simultaneously with text production.

34. Marianne Schleicher, "Accounts of a Dying Scroll: On Jewish Handling of Sacred Texts in Need of Restoration and Disposal," in *The Death of Sacred Texts: Ritual Disposal and Renovation of Texts in the World Religions,* ed. Kristina Myrvold (Abingdon, U.K.: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2016), 3. The "death" of scrolls and the Jewish practice of replacing them has no textual imperative, meaning, the biblical authors themselves did not foresee the disposal of decaying texts. See also William M. Schniedewind, "The History of Classic Hebrew: From the Invention of the Alphabet to the Mishnah," in *Religion Compass* 13, (2019): 1–12. Paleo Hebrew goes back to Egyptian origins. The Alphabet was invented in Egypt in the early second Millennium BCE cf. Koller, "The Diffusion of the Alphabet," 8.

oral expression unnecessary.[35] The likelihood of oral textuality increases if the texts in question internally witness to an ongoing interaction between these two forms of media. (3) The existence of difficult-to-read texts—oral proficiency was necessary for anyone learning to read literature that did not lend itself to private and personal learning. David Carr observes, "Many ancient texts were not written in such a way that they could be read easily by someone who did not already know them well."[36] Hebrew and Greek texts were largely written without chapter divisions, paragraphs, or even word divisions. Moreover, similar to the Egyptian alphabet, Paleo Hebrew lacked vowels.[37] This presupposes that any educated reader would have obtained facility with the material before public readings, suggesting an oral learning process for young readers.[38] Carr affirms that these difficult-to-read texts "stood as a permanent reference point for an ongoing process of largely oral recitation."[39] Gamble observes that writing and reading were closely associated with the spoken word such that "texts were commonly inscribed from dictation and, once inscribed, were normally read aloud, so that at the level of composition and use the oral and the written were interpenetrating."[40] Regarding a Second Temple context, Keener observes,

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35. Miller, *Oral Tradition*, 54. See also Schleicher, "Accounts of a Dying Scroll," 3. She finds that the now *passé* view of the evolutionary progression from oral to textual tradition is barely supported by extant evidence.

36. David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablets of the Heart: The Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.

37. Florian Coulmas, *Writing Systems: An Introduction to Their Linguistic Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 113; See also Aaron Koller, "The Diffusion of the Alphabet," 58. This is also evidenced by Qumran Hebrew texts which also lack inflection marks or vowels. See William M. Schniedewind, "Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage," *JBL* 118 (1999): 235-52; cf. Eric D. Reymond, "Qumran Hebrew: An Overview of Orthography, Phonology, and Morphology," (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 38. Reymond notes that various letter placement and letter groupings in the Qumran texts strongly imply the use of vowels. James Barr also viewed the deficient spellings of the hiphil in the MT to imply the use of an earlier short vowel, for example. See *The Variable Spellings in the Hebrew Bible: The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

38. Carr, *Writing on the Tablets*, 4.

39. Carr, *Writing on the Tablets*, 4.

40. Gamble, "Literacy and Book Culture," 646.

"Because written materials were less accessible, the focus of ancient education was on recall of content, although such recollection was not verbatim memorization in the modern or even the late rabbinic sense. The point of ancient education was 'mastery of content,' without which it would be impossible to access historical and literary allusions."[41] Judaic society was increasingly and widely characterized by a lively interaction of oral and written expression.[42] The representative nature of material texts necessitated an oral reader who could quickly decipher and perform them. Regarding other Ancient Near Eastern literature, Gamble states, "Correspondingly, almost all ancient texts were composed in consideration of how they would sound when read aloud. In general, it was more common to hear a text read than to read it oneself."[43] Recent studies on oral tradition and folklore have drawn scholars' attention to many societies that produced oral and written literature simultaneously.[44] When an ancient culture developed literature in any form, when that literature shows internal evidence of a textual-oral interaction, and when the literature in question was difficult to learn or read apart from an oral educational process, there existed the potential for oral textuality within the culture. Oral textuality furnishes the theoretical framework for the emergence of oraliterate readers.

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41. Craig S. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 424.

42. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability*, 646.

43. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability*, 647.

44. Miller, *Oral Tradition*, 20. cf. Carr, *Writing on the Tablets*, 5. He also mentions Sumerian-Akkadian, Egyptian, Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Syrian cultures had textuality that presupposed a high oral proficiency with the contents to be able to quickly scan or perform them.

The Tanak as Oral Text

According to its own internal witness, the reading and hearing of texts was a central practice in forming Jewish identity. Therefore, the Shema of Israel charged Jewish parents to remember the law and play an active role in passing it on to their children. The Shema begins, שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד׃, translated, "Hear O Israel! The LORD [is] our God, the LORD is one."[45] Education was instituted by God in an aural-oral process that involved "hearing" in the assembly. Moses then explains that parents were to rehearse the stories in order to teach their children. Moses stated, "You shall teach them diligently to your children" (Deut 6:7). The Hebrew word for "teach" is שָׁנַן (ESV, RSV), also translated as "impress" (NIV) and "repeat" (NASB, CSB). The term שָׁנַן means "to sharpen" and is often used as a metaphor meaning "to perfect the tongue" in repeated discourse (Pss 64:4; 140:4) or to be pierced with the bitterness of words (73:21).[46] The focus is on preparation and readiness by honing one's knowledge through rehearsal and discourse. Moses was primarily concerned with the direct transmission of the covenant from father to son. The father and son relationship existed within the context of a strong family unit and family network.[47] The practice of rehearsing and retelling stories was to enable them to remember the texts. To be "Torah observant" meant to obey and practice the

45. *BHK,* 327. Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh. A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250–1050 B.C.E*. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). I take a synchronic approach here in terms of exegesis, without minimizing the important contribution of various redactional studies noting textual anomalies in the Pentateuch. For a few examples, see J.K. Aitken, *The Semantics of Blessing and Cursing in Ancient Hebrew* ANESSup (Louvain: Peeters, 2007), 23; Jeremy Smoak, *The Priestly Blessing in Inscription and Scripture: The Early History of Numbers 6:24–26* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Ziony Zevit, "Writ on Rock—Script on Stone," in *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 350–438.

46. *HALOT*, s.v. שָׁנַן, 1606. A similar word, "mishnah," means to repeat or reiterate.

47. Andrew Davis, "Fathers and Sons in Deuteronomy 6: An Essential Link in Redemptive History" *JBMW* 12 (Spring 2007): 23–4.

Shema, which was considered the "greatest commandment" by Jesus and his Torah-compliant culture (Matt 22:36–40).

Moses commanded Israel to "bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (6:8–9). Moses prescribed physical reminders as mnemonic devices to aid their memory of the covenant. The word "bind" is קשׁר, meaning "to secure" or "fasten." It metaphorically came to refer to those regulatory precepts that were binding for the Hebrew people.[48] In poetic literature, קשׁר could refer to tethering animals to a leash (Job 40:29), to be passively "bound up" in the life of another (Gen 44:30), or it could mean to ally oneself or resolve to act (1 Sam 22:8). The word could be used literally, but Moses stresses the symbolic devotion of the heart (Duet 11:18). They were also to "write them" כָּתַב on the door frames and gates. Writing can be literal meaning to pen a document (Exod 32:32; 1 Kgs 21:8; Jer 36:18) or metaphorical as a sign of ownership (Isa 44:5). It can refer to one's spiritual destiny, as is the case in the decree regarding the metaphorical "books of life" that reveal "everyone written for life" (Isa 4:3), or a picture of binding wisdom around the neck and the writing of Yahweh's precepts on the tablet of the heart (Prov 3:3; 6:21; 7:3). Whether the individual Jewish parent possessed literacy or not, the emphasis here was on passing the covenant on to posterity through memory aids as they orally sharpened their knowledge of the Torah. However, the expectation that Jewish parents can "teach," "bind," and "write" them for the instruction of future generations is already present in the Shema.

Similarly, other vital texts depict the gathered congregation reading, hearing, and verbally interacting with the Scripture (Josh 8:34-35, Neh 8:18, and 13:1). Joshua copied the Torah of

48. GKC, 747.

Moses (Josh 8:32) and convened a meeting in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant. After copying the text in its entirety, the narrator states, "Joshua read aloud all the words of the law the blessings as well as the curses—according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read aloud (קָרָא) before the entire assembly of Israel" (Josh 8:34–35).

Similarly, Josiah instituted reforms in Israel (640 BCE) by first publicly reading (קָרָא) the entirety of the books of Moses (the Law) and then proceeding to demolish and cleanse the temple and the land of all idolatrous symbols and cult leaders (2 Kgs 23). It was in listening to the Law being read that national renewal took place. After the exile, Ezra reinstituted the Jewish festivals involving daily reading (קָרָא) of the book of Torah aloud in the gathered assembly.

Ezra personifies the shift in Judaism from prophetic oracles to scribal governance. Michael Wilkins observes, "Idealized education in Israel now became centralized in one basic pursuit, the study of Torah, and Ezra was the individual who exemplified that centralization."[49] The post-exilic reform under Ezra was an attempt to reeducate the returned exiles in their sacred texts. This ethos of Jewish learning and lay interaction with the books of Scripture would become normative in subsequent generations. And the συναγωγή and ἐκκλησία, meaning the "assembly" of the people, was the environment where that occurred.[50]

While texts were present in the aforementioned "readings," the Hebrew verb קָרָא "to read," appears elsewhere in contexts that describe a public oral address, stressing both the "calling out" of the message and its collective reception.[51] The essential meaning of קָרָא is "to

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49. Michael J. Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew's Gospel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1995), 70.

50. N.T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol 1: The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 157–165.

draw attention to oneself by loudness of the voice."[52] Examples include the LORD God who קָרָא "called out" to Adam (Gen 3:9), the angel who קָרָא "called out" to Abraham from heaven (Gen 22:11), God instructing Gideon to קָרָא "declare aloud" to the troops of Israel (Judg 7:3), and Moses who קָרָא "called" an assembly to קָרָא "call out/read" the covenant to the Israelites (Exod 24:7).[53] Marvin Miller affirms that, "Written texts are uniformly assumed to be proclaimed aloud (Josh 1:8; 2 Kgs 19:14; Isa 29:18; etc.), as the verb for reading *qārā*, 'crying out' or 'calling,' indicates."[54] The connection of reading and verbally calling out is unmistakable in Scripture. Miller states, "There appears to be no unequivocal use of *qr'* referring to private reading, there are only public, oral presentations in the Hebrew Bible.... Thus, it is reasonably safe to assume that reading was primarily verbal rather than silent and closely associated with oratory."[55] It must be stressed that when the word קָרָא does not involve material texts, *it always refers to the subject orally "calling out" or "crying out" to someone* (Ps 99:6; Judg 8:1; 1 Sam 28:25). But, does a physical text always have to be present for "reading" to take place? At least one other passage suggests this may not have been the case.

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51. Marvin Miller, *Performances of Ancient Jewish Letters: From Elephantine to MMT* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Academic, 2015), 76. He cites the Egyptian practice of burying sarcophagi with scrolls beginning with the phrase *ḏd mdw* "to be spoken"—a practice apparently maintained until Middle Kingdom (2100–1650 BCE). See 21–2.

52. *HALOT*, s.v. קָרָא, 1128.

53. Miller, *Performances of Ancient*, 77.

54. Miller, *Oral Tradition*, 110.

55. Miller, *Performances of Ancient*, 77.

King Jehoiakim destroyed an oracle dictated by Jeremiah and written by Baruch (Jer 36:1–26).[56] The text is one of the only passages in Hebrew Scripture that reveals how prophets received and composed texts for audiences.[57] First, Yahweh discloses a message (oracle) הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה to be delivered to Jehoiakim (36:1). Gerald Keown observes, "The phrase מגלת־ספר, 'book-scroll,' occurs only here, v 4, Ps 40:8, and Ezek 2:9."[58] Then, the narrative discloses the process of composing the oracle, involving Baruch, the סֵפֶר "scribe" writing down בַּסֵּפֶר קָרָאתָ "the book you have read" (Jer 36:5, 8). Baruch was to read it "in the hearing" of the elders (36:13–15), and Jeremiah received the "book" from God as an oracle. Before Baruch read the book, it had to be קָרָא "read" from memory and from the פֶּה "mouth" of Jeremiah (36:27). Likewise, after Baruch read from the scroll, Micaiah orally relayed כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע בְּקָרְאֹ בָרוּךְ בַּסֵּפֶר, "all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the scroll" (Jer 36:13). Jehoiakim is unsatisfied with the mere oral reading and sends Jehudi to obtain the material scroll and bring it before him.[59]

After the king burns the book, Jeremiah instructs Baruch to write down the message again (36:27–28). He then repeats the oracle from the book that is imprinted on his memory (36:29). Thus, Jeremiah could orally קָרָא "read/call out" the text while the educated scribe wrote the text in proxy. And so, Jeremiah is said to be the composer of the oracle. The use of the root

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56. Gerald L. Keown, *Jeremiah 26–52*, WBC 27 (Waco, TX: Word, 1995), 201. Keown notes that most scholars think that this passage represents the occasion of the "core" of the book of Jeremiah being written.

57. Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 345. Brueggemann notes that the text reveals the essential character of prophetic ministry, which is confrontational.

58. Keown, *Jeremiah 26–52*, 201. In both the Psalm and Ezekiel's text, the מגלת־ספר appears as a heavenly oracle (an oral word) delivered in the symbolic "scroll" or in the book form to the recipient.

59. Keown, *Jeremiah 26–52*, 201.

qr' (קָרָ) where texts are present indicates a nearly identical usage where *qr'* (קָרָ) occurs in contexts where no material text is present or before any material text was composed.[60] This process challenges the implied divide between graphic and oral material and the grapho-literate writer and oral-reader.[61]

Oral Textuality in the Second Temple Literature

Before Josiah's reforms, reading was an oral act, including the making of treaties (Gen 21:30–33), land purchases (Gen 32:14–22), and wedding contracts (Gen 29:16–30).[62] God "reads" the covenant to Moses who writes it down (Exod 17:14; 34:27). Joshua is to read the Torah to the people, and on it, he (and they) must "meditate" וְהָגִיתָ, meaning "to mutter; to recite" frequently in order to retain its contents (Josh 1:8; Ps 1:2). The earliest Jewish and Christian sources seem to affirm a "living voice" of oral traditions that emerged to elaborate on the written Scriptures and their meanings. Shaper states, "Deuteronomy and Joshua provide us with numerous references to the Written Torah being brought to life through recitation, meditative murmuring and public readings."[63] The purpose of voiced and textual traditions was to keep the memory of God's actions and covenant alive within the culture.

With respect to the Second Temple literature, the author of Maccabees describes the Maccabean revolt as being preceded by קָרָא "loud cries" of readings from the Torah to petition for divine help (1 Macc 3, 48, 12, 9; 2 Macc 8, 23). The Qumran community, likewise, had a

60. Daniel Boyarin, "Placing Reading: Ancient Israel and Medieval England," in *The Ethnography of Reading*, ed. by Jonathan Boyarin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 11. Citied in Miller, *Performances*, 77.

61. Boyarin, "Placing Reading," 78.

62. Miller, *Oral Tradition*, 78.

63. Schaper, "The Living Word," 16.

strong tradition of reading aloud to commemorate sacred themes from the narratives of creation-cosmos, covenant, and legislation (4Q265:3; 4Q319:4; 4Q320–21; 4Q185; 4Q370; 4Q462; 4Q501:1–2).[64] Similarly in Sirach, Ben Sira states, "For wisdom becomes known through *speech*, and education through *the words of the tongue*" (Sir 4:24, NRSV). Education, for Ben Sira, appears to have been an oral process of passing wise tradition on to the next generation of learners.

Jesus customarily confronted the ancestors' traditions, declaring them "the traditions of men" (Matt 15:1–6; Mark 7:1–13). Josephus mentions living traditions, particularly the oral customs of the Pharisees, that were a source of dispute between popular Jewish sects,

> What I would now explain is this, that the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the laws of Moses: and for that reason it is, that the Sadducees reject them: and say, that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word; but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our fore-fathers. (Josephus, *Ant.* 13*:*10.6 [Thackeray, LCL])

These oral interpretations intended for aural reception were considered authoritative and were binding for the people, having been transmitted verbally for posterity.[65] Similarly, Philo describes this era as a time when numerous supporting traditions flourished, "Besides these there is a host of other things which belong to unwritten customs and institutions or are contained in the laws themselves" (Philo, *Hypoth.* 7:6 [Colson, LCL]). The creation of oral traditions based on the Written Torah was common practice in the Second Temple period. Torah readings

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64. Benjamin G. Wold, "Memory in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Exodus, Creation and Cosmos," in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity: The Fifth Durham–Tübingen Research Symposium*, WUNT 212 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 51.

65. Alan J. Avery-Peck, "Oral Tradition: Early Judaism," *ABD*, 34. Many Orthodox Jewish scholars affirm that the Oral Torah in the Mishnah was essentially passed down from the Pharisees after which it underwent "editing" in its written form ca. 200 CE

enabled "cultural memory" and thus, wide transmission. The Second Temple itself became a "site of memory" in which large blocks of covenantal lessons were committed to recall.[66]

However, the Jews were hardly the only culture to prize oral memory of large blocks of written material. Keener provides an example,

> More learned people complained that the "stupid" rhapsodes could all do the same, without understanding the true sense of what they were reciting. Boys memorized various parts of the *Iliad*, though apparently most successfully the first two books and the beginnings of other books. Greeks deemed memorizing some of Homer quintessential to Greek culture, and Homer continued to be memorized into the Middle Ages.[67]

Memorizing and orally performing select texts were critical skillsets for both the grapho-literate and oraliterate students.

With respect to adjacent cultures, the Greek philosopher Ephesus Heraclitus, in an extant work from the first century BCE, lamented that children "learned to chant his [Homer's] abominable stories from memory. From the very first age of life, the foolishness of infants just beginning to learn is nurtured on the teaching given in his school. One might almost say that his poems are our baby clothes, and we nourish our minds by draughts of his milk."[68] Oral education was standard in Greco-Roman society, and a strong emphasis was placed on vocalized readings of Homer in public and the dictation of discipleship content to pupils.[69] Plato likewise instructed his students to "Let this letter be read, if possible, by all three of you gathered together, otherwise

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66. Joshua E. Burns, "Jerusalem Temple," in *DBAM*, ed. Tom Thatcher et al. (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 401. Temple iconography was vital in cultivating the ongoing contents of covenant. The physical space and the symbolism that permeated this space was a constant reminder of their national stories and laws.

67. Craig S. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 424–25. He cites Xenophon, *Symp.* 3.5–6; Epictetus, *Disc.* 2.19.6–7; Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.35–36.

68. Donald Andrew Russell and David Konstan, eds., *Heraclitus: Homeric Problems*, (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2005), 3, *All.* 1.5–7. Heraclitus claimed that only at death would a Greek be freed from Homer' domineering influence (*All*. 1.7).

69. *Cic.* Att. 14.21; Quintilian, *Inst*. 11.2.33; David E. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature & Rhetoric* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 219.

by twos, and as often as you can in common."[70] The expectation of a repetition of reading by disciples of a great master was commonplace among the early Greeks.

This re-reading could furnish them with the opportunity to memorize and gain *sophia* (wisdom/prudence). Hearing a text being read also granted disciples the opportunity to hermeneutically interact with the material, so long as the tradition remained substantially intact. Cephalus recalled the account of Antiphon, a young philosopher, reciting a discussion between Zeno, Parmenides, and the young Socrates from memory.[71] His memory was aided by "often hearing" the conversation by Pythodorus.[72] Cephalus notes that Antiphon rehearsed the stories to perfection when he was young. After being pressed repeatedly to recite the dialogue for his friends, Antiphon reluctantly "orates" the account of Zeno "reading his scroll," as his friends "heard the reading" in the context of public performance. Thus, the text serves as the material aid for the recitalist to recall and perform publicly all that has already been rehearsed and learned orally.

In a Second Temple Jewish context, every grapheme was commemorative—texts aided the recall and recitation of their creation narratives, their covenant, and laws.[73] The reader's ability to rehearse the tradition on cue was not dependent on the presence of a material text. Still, the rehearsal included precise interactions with texts already learned through many hours of routine repeating and interpretive interaction with the material. Far from being dominated by scribal-literate elites, most of the disciples of ancient masters belonged to the artisan class. In

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70. John M. Cooper ed., *Plato Complete Works* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1997), 410.

71. Plato speaks of Cephalus, who is depicted as the narrator speaking directly to the reader.

72. Keith, *Jesus's Literacy*, 127.

73. Schaper, "The Living Word," in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity*, 21.

ancient Greece, for example, the overwhelming number of disciples following masters from the craftsman class caused Lucian to register a complaint.[74] Disciples were expected to learn and become proficient with their masters'/rabbis' teachings, interpretively engaging with them.[75] Students who obtained occuliteracy spent innumerable hours hearing texts being read to them before directly engaging with the material text itself.[76]

Reading and Interpretive Competency

Similar to oral reading of inspired oracles from memory, קָרָא also seems to be associated with varying degrees of interpretive competency. As noted above, the Hebrew parent was to pass on Moses's covenant to their children. Not only were they to remember it, but they were also expected to demonstrate a certain fitness for interpretation. Moses commanded them to "talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise" (6:7b). The Hebrew word דָּבַר, "talk, speak" refers to continual discourse or ongoing conversation.[77] Learning would not take place through mere recitation of the material but would happen as they deliberated over the meaning of the Torah in various contexts. An understanding of the law was acquired through practice and exposition, which was a form of contextualization.

74. Keener, Christobiography: *Memory, History, and the Reliability*, 440. Citing Lucian, *Fug.* 12, 14; *Vit. auct.* 11.

75. Michael Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew's Gospel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1995), 110–24.

76. Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 177.

77. GKC, 186.

Interpretive Competency in the Tanak

The prophets continued this tradition of orally interpreting and applying the law in new contexts. At times when the nation strayed, God would reprimand them for their lack of interpretive insight. Isaiah, for example, delivered an oracle in Ariel, the city where David had camped years earlier (Isa 29:1). The oracle predicts a siege on the city and a concurrent "dumbing" of their minds to receive the truth. God would make their prophets "sleepy" with "eyes shut," giving them "covered" heads (Isa 29:9—10). The picture of God making them metaphorically "sleepy" or closing the eyes of understanding is straightforward. Jesus likely alludes to this passage when he chastises the scribes and Pharisees for their perpetual spiritual blindness (Matt 23:16–19). Though they are technically literate, they are unable to "read" the message.[78] Jesus states that he had been called to open the eyes of the "blind" (Luke 4:18) and this has a double meaning of those who are literally blind (John 5:3); and those scribal-literate leaders who are metaphorically blind to the truth (John 9:41).

The concept of "covering the head" is likely understood as a metaphor for "hiding" someone from something, as is the case with Noah's children "covering" their father's nakedness (Gen 9:23).[79] The idiom in Isaiah is a euphemism for covering the head in confusion or mist.[80] The result is that the words of the prophecy will be unintelligible, because the readers will not be able to unseal the scroll's meaning. Isaiah makes the distinction, "If it [the scroll] is given to one who can read (קָרָא) and he is asked to read it, he will say, 'I can't read (קָרָא) it, because it is

78. Thomas R. Hatina, "Did Jesus Quote Isaiah 29: 13 against the Pharisees? An Unpopular Appraisal," *BBR* (2006): 79–94; cf. Geoffrey D. Robinson, "The Motif of Deafness and Blindness in Isaiah 6: 9–10: A Contextual, Literary, and Theological Analysis," *BBR* 8 (1998): 167–86.

79. וַיֵּלְכוּ אֲחֹרַנִּית וַיְכַסּוּ אֵת עֶרְוַת "walked backward and covered their father's nakedness."

80. The term also curiously describes God simultaneously "revealing" himself to while also "concealing" himself from the people through a cloud. See Exod 24:15,16, 40:34; Num 17:7; 9:15,16.

sealed.'[12] And if the document is given to one who cannot read (קָרָא) and he is asked to read (קָרָא) it, he will say, 'I can't read (קָרָא).'" (Isa 29:11–12). Once Yahweh reverses this situation, the result for Judah and Jacob is that "Those who are confused will gain understanding, and those who grumble will accept instruction" (Isa 29:24). The implication here is that the inability to "read" applied to both the technically literate and illiterate members of the population owing to spiritual blindness. When Yahweh redeems his people, he will awaken and restore their interpretive acumen, thus making them "readers" who understand his messages, regardless of the attainment or absence of grapho-literacy.

Similarly, the people are said to have provoked Yahweh by "reading omens" (2 Kgs 17:17)—meaning they sought to interpret events employing these unlawful pagan sources. After God restores the people to their land, Ezra and the priests "read the book from the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that they could understand the reading." Throughout the history of Judaism, interpretive exposition constituted a vital feature of Jewish cultural reading.

Second Temple Interpretive Methods

In the Second Temple period, both Josephus and Philo engage in interpretive commentary on the Scripture. Josephus from the vantage point of a trained historian and Philo as a hellenized Jewish philosopher.[81] Qumran literature is likewise crucial to our understanding of Jewish interpretive trajectories, particularly the interpretive insights pertaining to the OT found in 1 Enoch, Jubilees, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Songs of Solomon. 1

81. James H. Charlesworth, "Introduction for the General Reader," in *OTP 1*, xxvi. cf. Philo, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged,* trans. Charles Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996); Herbert W. Basser, "Josephus as Exegete," *JAOS* (1987): 21–30; Annette Y. Reed, "The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the Testament of Abraham," *JSJ* 40 (2009): 185–212.

Enoch, for example, contains numerous references to the Hebrew Scripture, including the fall of the watchers, Israel's history, humanity's fall, and many instructive parables. E. Isaac states that themes of righteousness and evil and the upcoming Messianic reign "are interpreted, elaborated, and presented through the paradigm of apocalyptic dualism, wherein sharp distinctions are drawn between the opposing cosmic powers of good and evil and between the present and coming ages."[82] The Apocryphal writings comment on and also mimic the canonized OT writings.[83] George Brooke observes that within Qumran literature, poetic exegesis abounds across all genres, with the hymnologist drawing allusions and anthologizing biblical concepts using biblical terminology. He states, "poems and prayers, even large parts of wisdom writings, do not quote chunks of Scripture explicitly identifying them with introductory formulae, but they weave scriptural phraseology often plundered from a wide range of sources into new spiritual works."[84] Brooke refers to these writings as "parabiblical," in that "nearly all the sectarian literature in the Qumran library depends in one way or another upon biblical antecedents."[85] By perusing the Qumran literature, the Apocryphal works, and the Targums, one may get a more precise picture of Jewish interpretive interests and the growing sophistication of interpretive procedure. The

82. E. Isaac, "A New Translation and Introduction," in *OTP 1*, 9–10.

83. Isaac, "A New Translation and Introduction," 9–10.

84. George J. Brooke, "From Bible to Midrash: Approaches to Biblical Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls by Modern Interpreters," in *Northern Lights on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Anders Klostergaard Petersen, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 3.

85. Brooke, "From Bible to Midrash," 6.

Second Temple Jewish interpretive methods may be broken into several different categories all with overlapping foci.[86]

Pesher (פֶּשֶׁר)

An Aramaic loan word, pesher appears in Ecclesiastes 8:1 "Who is like the wise? And who knows the interpretation (פֶּשֶׁר) of a thing?" Sirach used the word in the context of the pursuit of discernment through prayer, so that the physician too may be granted "understanding" (פֶּשֶׁר) from the Lord (Sir 38:14).[87] Those who are "wise and intelligent" are able to not only learn wisdom but are expected to interpretively interact with its principles. Sirach reflects this when he states, "Knowledge is speech" (21:18) and "When a knowledgeable person hears a wise saying, he praises it and adds to it" (21:15),[88] which may indicate the expectation of learning through interpretive interaction.

Other passages stressing interpretive competence with the Qumran literature are too numerous to cite.[89] A few notable examples suffice to explain the pesher method. The Habakkuk Commentary was one of the earliest Qumran manuscripts to be published.[90] The Commentary is

86. This subject has garnered no small amount of scholarly attention. A full treatment is beyond the scope of this project. See Bilha Nitzan, "The Pesher and Other Methods of Instruction," in *Mogilany 1989: The Teacher of Righteousness* (Cracow: Enigma Press, 1991), 209–20; James Charlesworth and Carol A. Newsom, *Angelic Liturgy: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999); Edward M. Cook, *Solving the Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls: New Light on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); J. Kampen and M. J. Bernstein, eds., *Reading 4QMMT: New Perspectives on Qumran Law and History* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996).

87. Sirach reads, "He who sins against his Maker, will be defiant toward the physician," cited from NRSV, Sir 38:15.

88. Sir 21:15.

89. Timothy H. Lim, *The Formation of the Jewish Canon*, ed. John J. Collins (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 126. He notes "By the second half of the first century BCE the sectarians already had an implicit sense of authoritative Scriptures," including the books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Writings (see 4Q397, 11Q13, 4Q491).

90. The Habbakuk Commentary (1QpHab) published in 1951.

widely regarded as the standard by which to evaluate other pesher scrolls.[91] The formula citation in pesher follows an exact reading (*lemma*), close paraphrasing, or interpolative reading wherein another text is inserted into the biblical text for explanatory purposes.[92] The application of historical texts to present or future situations is the key to pesher interpretation. Peter Flint observes, "In many instances a person or thing specified in the base text is interpreted as a completely different one."[93] Examples abound, including "the evil one" (1QpHab 1:13), interpreted as the "Man of the Lie" (1QpHab 5:11), and the "prideful man," (1QpHab 2:5) understood as the wicked Priest of the Second Temple (1QpHab 8:8).[94]

Peshat (פְּשָׁת)

Peshat refers to the literal meaning of the Scripture or "the flattened out" sense.[95] The purpose of peshat was to discover, through intense study, the author's intended meaning within his own setting rather than the *midrash*—the implied or inferred meaning for a present context. The term דרשׁ, *derash* appears variously meaning *to interpret* (2 Sam 11:3; Ps 111:2; 2 Chron

91. Peter W. Flint, "Habakkuk Commentary (1QpHab)," *DNTB*, 437.

92. For example, in 1QpHab, Habakkuk 1:17, "he [God] will not have mercy." The interpreter inserts Isaiah 13:18 as part of the text rendered, "they will not have mercy on the fruit of the womb." cf. Flint, "Habbakuk Commentary," 438. cf. Gert T.M. Prinsloo, "Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism and the Dead Sea Scrolls: What Not to Expect from the Pesher Habakkuk (1QpHab)," in *Scribal Practice, Text and Canon in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. George J. Brooke et al. STDJ 130 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 36.

93. Flint, "Habakkuk Commentary," 438.

94. Flint, "Habakkuk Commentary," 438. Flint notes that the Chaldeans of pseudo-Habakkuk's day are identified as the Romans in the Habakkuk Commentary. The Pesher on Isaiah (4Q164) includes another noteworthy example. This fragment provides a window into the Qumran community's self-perception. The eschatological Jerusalem and the new temple is allegorically interpreted as the devout community in Qumran (1Qs 5.5–6; 8.5–6; 4Q174: 1–2 I, 6–7); see Devorah Dimant, "Qumran Pesharim," *ABD,* 247; Michael Fishbane, "Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran," in *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud*, *Vol. 1 Mikra*, ed. Shmuel Safrai, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 336–9; cf. Charlotte Hempel, "Interpretative Authority in the Community Rule Tradition," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 10 (2003): 59–80.

95. David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 340; cf. Louis I. Rabinowitz, "The Study of a Midrash," *JQR* 58 (1967): 143–61.

17:4; Ezra 7:10) in the Hebrew Bible, as does the verbal form of *talmid* (*lemud*) in Isaiah. This process of reading with interpretive skill became more prominent in the early scribal (fourth century BCE) to the early rabbinic periods (second century CE). Peshat was the preferred method of exegesis among the scribal guilds.[96] David Brewer notes that scribal peshat distinguished itself by the following commitments: (1) The Scripture is internally self-consistent and thus free of error. (2) Every part of the Scripture is weighty and not to be ignored or overlooked. (3) The Scripture is read according to its original context, carrying a deliberate meaning for its hearers. (4) Therefore, the Scripture is not understood with *derash*, that is *hidden* or secondary meanings. (5) The Scripture only has one valid textual form. This eliminates LXX and other non-Masoretic texts from consideration.[97] The scribe thus seeks to cite one Hebrew text with exacting precision for the lemma or the correct reading in synagogue gatherings.

Halakah (הלכה)

Halakah (הלכה) refers to "the way, the road" (Deut 11:19; 1 Sam 9:9; Isa 33:15). The Halakhic (הלכה) interpretation of Scripture is evident in the Dead Sea Scrolls, particularly in the sectarian literature, encouraging obedience in matters of ritual law in anticipation of a glorious future for the eschatological community.[98] The noun form of halakah appears twice in the "Rule

96. David I. Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 17, 172. Brewer concludes that the main difference between Jewish exegesis prior to the rabbinic era concerned the issue of texts in contexts. Whereas scribal Judaism likely leaned toward peshat and flat sense, later rabbinic and Pharisaic schools were characterized by (1) texts removed from their contexts, (2) multiple interpretations of a given passage, and (3) exegesis based on variant or alternative manuscript readings.

97. Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, 165–171; see "Peshat," in *EJ*, s.v. פְּשָׁט, 652. In both the Mishnah and in Tosefta, "pashaṭ" is used most often in a non-figural sense (m. Sukkah 3.11, t. Pesacḥ. 10.9).

98. Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Legal Texts at Qumran," *DNTB*, 636. Sectarian literature includes: Rule of the Community (1QS), Rule of the Congregation (1QSa or 1Q28a), the War Scroll (1QM), Damascus Document (CD), Precepts of the Torah (4QMMT), Temple Scroll (11Q19–21; 4Q524, 4Q365a), Ordinances (4Q159, 4Q513, 4Q514); 4Q Halakha A (4Q251), Purification Rules (Tohorot A, B), Harvesting, Leqet (4Q284a), and Rebukes by the Overseer (4Q477).

of the Community" (1QS 1:25; 3:9).[99] Brooke affirms that many scholars have regularly assumed the dominance of the Pesharim in the sectarian scrolls, with its "characteristic atomistic tendency of identifying items in the authoritative text with matters in the commentator's present or immediate future."[100] These are legal interpretations that juxtapose "two or more earlier authoritative traditions to form the basis of new rulings and fresh insights to the ongoing significance of old ones."[101] The issue with halakic teaching is its regulatory and thus binding function on the adherent. The Second Temple Jews taught the law (oral regulations) out of the law (written Torah).

Haggadah (נגד)

Derived from the Hebrew root *ngd* (נגד), *haggadah* means "to propose, announce, inform,"[102] often involving explanation or exposition (Exod 13:8; 1 Sam 24:19; 2 Sam 7:11; Isa 48:6; Zech 9:12). While halakah designates the regulatory and binding laws for community life, haggadah is less binding and more illustrative.[103] Brooke observes, "There is narrative interpretation of which the most significant characteristic is the explanatory expansion of an earlier narrative sequence."[104] Often, this could involve an exposition highlighting blameworthy

99. John P. Meier, "Is There Halakha (the noun) at Qumran?" *JBL* 122 (2003): 150–155. Meier argues that the term here in the Qumran document had not yet taken on the technical sense that was awarded to it in the later rabbinic literature. cf. Vered Noam and Elisha Qimron, "A Qumran Composition of Sabbath Laws and Its Contribution to the Study of Early Halakah," *DSD* 16, (2009): 55–96.

100. George J. Brooke, "From Bible to Midrash," 2.

101. George J. Brooke, "From Bible to Midrash," 2.

102. *HALOT*, s.v. נגד, 666.

103. Gary G. Porton, "Haggadah," *ABD*, 19; *EncJud* 2: 354, 358–59; 6:410–11.

104. Brooke, "From Bible to Midrash," 2. Many more interpretive devices are used within this general five-fold hermeneutical scheme.

and praiseworthy behavior in biblical texts. This kind of moralizing was commonly observed in Qumran sectarian texts.[105] Its purpose was to provoke a response from the community of faith.

Apocalyptic (גָּלָה, ἀποκάλυψις)

Apocalypticism as a concept derived from the Hebrew idea of "revealing" (LXX ἀποκαλύπτω; Hebrew, גָּלָה). It appears to have developed from within the Jewish prophetic tradition.[106] The close association between apocalypse and prophecy is evidenced by internal apocalyptic sections within prophetic texts (Isa 24:1–27:13. Zech 12:1–21; Dan 7:1–12:13), Likewise, Josephus's canon categorizes apocalyptic books such as Daniel, Zechariah, and Ezekiel with the prophetic corpus (Josephus, *Ant.* 10.11.7). The prophets repeatedly appeal to Yahweh, urging him "to reveal" his word to their "ears" and "eyes" (Num 24:4; Amos 3:7; 1 Sam 20:22). The act of "unveiling" begins to take on ominous significance (Isa 5:13; Jer 1:3; Ezek 39:23; Amos 1:5; 5:5; 6:7; Lam 1:3; Nah 2:8; Isa 49:21).

The literature of Apocalypse is typically characterized by the angelic mediation of the revelatory message, eschatological fulfillments, and emphasis on the day of the LORD—a final battle between good and evil resulting in the new creation. Jewish Apocalypse presents the alternating visions of God working in history and sovereignly reigning over the nations in cryptic symbolic form.[107] Apocalyptic was not only a genre but a hermeneutical approach to the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, as demonstrated by Jubilees and the Testaments of the Twelve

105. Brooke, "From the Bible to Midrash," 2.

106. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 112. A later rabbinic example is Megillah*,* the tenth tractate of the Mishna. It typically refers to a long, convoluted form of explanation and can mean "scroll" or "book."

107. Todd R. Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypses in the Book of Jubilees* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 8. The one exception to this is the Second Temple book of Jubilees, which uses these tropes in the service of a realized eschatology and apocalyptic fulfillment.

Patriarchs.

Sapiential (Wisdom) Exegesis (חָכְמָה)

The Hebrew word for wisdom, חָכְמָה often referred to prudence and wise decision making (2 Sam 20:22; 1 Kgs 2:6; Isa 10:13) and at times, personified in female terms (Job 28:12, 18, 20, 28; Prov 8:1–36; 9:1–6; Ecc 8:1). In Judaism there was a rich history of the artisan having been invested with divine wisdom (Exod 28:3; 31:3, 6; 35:31; 36:1–2). God is said to rule through the kings with wisdom (1 Kgs 3:28) and to have created the world by wisdom (Jer 10:12; Ps 104:24). Moses was the archetype of חָכְמָה, or "sapiential teaching," passing on the laws of the LORD to Israel so that they would become a "wise" nation (Deut 4:6–7). Moses's successor, Joshua, is also "filled with the Spirit of wisdom (חָכְמָה)" (Deut 34:9).[108] Wisdom was most often associated with Kings who ruled by divine appointment (2 Chron 9:22). In the Second Temple period, the *Ben Sira Scroll* exemplifies the pursuit of wisdom and understanding. Sapiential literature could function polemically to reassure the public of centralized authority in defense of the scribal vocation.[109] Crenshaw observes,

> Ben Sira's defense of the scribe's vocation has some affinity with the much earlier Egyptian *Instruction of Khety*.... Naturally, opposing views among the sages resulted in literature-rich with polemic. Sometimes polemical attacks on outsiders intrude into sapiential texts, as when Ben Sira's anger explodes against traditional enemies of Israel and the Wisdom of Solomon launches a verbal assault against Egyptian idolaters."[110]

Though commentators agree that Ben Sira did not view himself as an OT prophet, he did maintain that his teachings and those of his great grandfather were inspired by the Spirit in some

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108. "Sapience" derives from the latin term *sapiential* meaning "wisdom."

109. James L. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence* (New York: Yale University Press, 1998), 76–77.

110. Crenshaw, "*Education in Ancient Israel*," 76–77. Again, just because *Ben Sira* had a polemical aim does not mean that historians should dismiss it as unhistorical.

sense. For example, Ben Sira describes his inspired teaching and claims, "I will again pour out teaching like prophecy, and leave it to all future generations."[111] Samuel Adams suggests, "The statement in Sir 24:33 does not convey Ben Sira's direct identification with prophetic figures, especially since the author considers his instructional discourse to be 'like prophecy.'"[112] The wisdom text 4Q185, instruction[a], (formerly Sapiential Work A[a]), is extant in a Hebrew fragment that follows the form of Proverbs and the *Ben Sira Scroll*.[113] It contains discourses and *markarisms*, or "blessings" to exhort the faithful. Schofield notes, "Like other ancient wisdom texts, the wise teacher in this work refers to his audience as his sons and closely connects wisdom and Torah."[114] The wise and righteous sought education in the Torah to discern the principles for right living.

Similarly, *sapiential prophecy* is defined as the prophet's sage knowledge communicated through prophetic formulaic expression. As previously discussed, Ben Sira already integrated these two genres. David Aune states, "In Palestine sapiential prophecy is represented by a variety of figures, all of whom appear to stand in the Hasidic tradition."[115] This "wisdom" prophecy is similar to clerical (priestly) prophecy, in that it lacks a particular eschatological focus. However,

111. Sir 24:33.

112. Samuel L. Adams, "Sage as Prophet? Allusion and Reconfiguration in Ben Sira and Other Second Temple Wisdom Texts," in *Tracing Sapiential Traditions in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 96; cf. Johann Maier, "Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation in the Qumran Literature," *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, *Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300).* ed. M. Sæbø (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).

113. *LEB*, Alison Schofield, "Dead Sea Scrolls, Wisdom Texts," n.p; see *The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada*, (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and the Shrine of the Book, 1965).

114. Schofield, "Dead Sea Scrolls," n.p.

115. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity,* 144.

it is different in that it is not bound to the priestly vocation.[116] This theme will be revisited in Chapter 6 of this study as it relates to Jesus's exposition using sapiential-prophetic proverbs.

Interpretive Skill in Adjacent Cultures

Cultures that were adjacent to Judaism likewise prized interpretive reading. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (*Inst.* CE 35—100) was a famed instructor and master in Roman rhetoric. In his multi-volume *Institutio Oratoria*, he detailed proper education in oratory. Among the topics covered were oral readings of texts. He provided guidelines for study, memorization, the art of delivery, use of gestures, vocal projection, and the like. Noteworthy was his emphasis on professional oratory which he contrasted to the novice skill of mere reading. The professional rhetor is knowledgeable on wide-ranging issues, having been instructed in "so many things on which society is chiefly based" (12.3.1). However, the mere "reader" simply recites or transmits information with little ability to engage in the interpretive arts (Inst. 12.13.2). Thus, reading skills could be acquired without much written instruction. In some cases, writing could also be developed as a rote skill without much attention to fluent reading.[117]

Another example serves to illustrate the need for interpretive reading. The Roman author and grammar teacher, Aulus Gellius (125–180 CE), recalls having confronted a young man who

116. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 144.

117. Paul Foster, "Educating Jesus," 30; cf. Quint., *Inst.* 1.1.4–7. Quintilian described the "professional reader" in pejorative terms. The result was an orator who knows the contents of texts or may know some customs but is unacquainted with both as a reader (*Inst.* 12.13.6–7). This level of reading (without interpretive insight) was considered "the least laborious kind of study" (*Inst.* 12.3.9). He lamented that Greco-Roman children were phonetically taught the letters without the corresponding visual symbols, meaning that they learned to read without learning to write. He strongly advocated teachers to instruct their students orally rather than with grapholects. Quintilian expressed concern that students will have trouble later in life when reading skills need to be translated to writing skills. Like the insights of Dionysius, reading was usually developed first and not considered to be scribal expertise until the student acquired writing skills, and that at a fairly proficient level.

sat in a bookshop, foolishly boasting that he alone could interpret the Satires of Marcus Vallo.[118] Gellius recalled that the young man "displayed [read and interpreted] some passages of no great difficulty, which he said no one but him could presume to explain."[119] It happened that Gellius had in his possession the very manuscripts in question. Handing the scrolls to him, he challenged the young man to read a particular passage from the books and interpret them for the crowds.

After a clumsy recitation and explanation of the texts the youth handed them back to Gellius in disgrace. Gellius then engaged in a biting assessment of his interpretive-reading abilities, "Inexperienced pupils taking up the book could not have been more laughable in their reading; he both crushed the meaning and mangled the words" (*Noct. att.* 13:31; 1–11 [J.C. Rolfe, LCL]). This example illustrates three aspects of reading: (1) Its oral and recitative functions. The immodest "reader" first performed texts with little difficulty—presumably those he had aurally learned and memorized. (2) The boastful young man could read but only at a novice level. (3) The youth did not brag that he could "read" the texts but that he alone could interpret their meaning. However, his hermeneutical competence became immediately suspect to Gellius and the crowd that had gathered.

A final example from Greco-Roman culture warrants mention. Lucian of Samosata was an orator and debater in Rome (125–180 CE). His signature approach was epideictic mockery and he delivered diatribes on superstitious beliefs. Lucian recalls a Syrian arriviste who owned an extensive collection of books in *The Ignorant Book-Collector*,

> To be sure you look at your books with your eyes open and quite as much as you like, and you read some of them aloud with great fluency, keeping your eyes in advance of your lips; but I do not consider that enough, unless you know the merits and defects of

118. Leofranc Holford-Strevens, *Aulus Gellius: An Antonine Scholar and His Achievements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Mikeal C. Parsons, "The Character of the Lame Man in Acts 3–4," *JBL* 124 (2005): 295–312.

119. Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att.* 13:31; 1–11 (J.C. Rolfe, LCL).

> each passage in their contents, unless you understand what every sentence means, how to construe the words, what expressions have been accurately turned by the writer in accordance with the canon of good use, and what are false, illegitimate, and counterfeit. (Lucian, *Ind.* 2 [Harmon, LCL])

Lucian goes on to say that the book collector is "uneducated," meaning he had not apprenticed with a recognized master (*Ind.* 3). Even though the collector could "have a book in hand and read all the time" with fluency, he failed to understand their deeper significance due to a lack of association with an interpretive or philosophical "school" (*Ind.* 3–4). For Lucian, the act of reading aloud with "great fluency" was a novice skill set and by no means transferred to him the status of a scribal-literate member of the intelligentsia of Greco-Rome.[120]

The aforementioned examples illustrate a distinction between the simple act of reading and interpretation, while also highlighting the need for developing interpretive competence. Jews and their Greco-Roman counterparts appeared to have shared the same cognitive environment on the matter. They valued the art of interpretive reading. While Jesus may not have been trained in the guilds as a scribe, Pharisee, or priest, like every other Jewish male, he would have been expected to live a Torah compliant life. Torah compliance entailed becoming proficient with Mosaic law, which included a fitness for interpretation (Deut 6:4–10). Moreover, there was an increasing emphasis on the interpretive arts within the various expressions of Judaism as is evidenced by Second-Temple Jewish literature. The scribal-literate leaders presiding over

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120. For further studies on the practice of hermeneutics in Ancient Greece, see Francisco Gonzalez, "Hermeneutics in Greek Philosophy," in *The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics*, Jeff Malpas, Hans-Helmuth Gander eds. (London: Routledge, 2014), 13–22; Ravshanbek Alijonovich Abduvoitov, "The Hermeneutic Concept of the Translation of Prose and Novels," *Oriental Renaissance: Innovative, Educational, Natural and Social Sciences* 2 (2022): 483–90; Anthony C. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); For a study on points of contact between Greek and Qumran literature, see Armin Lange and Zlatko Pleše, "The Qumran Pesharim and the Derveni Papyrus: Transpositional Hermeneutics in Ancient Jewish and Ancient Greek Commentaries," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context*, (Leiden, Brill, 2011). For the precedent studies see Asher Finkel,"The Pesher of Dreams and Scriptures," *RevQ* 4 (1963–1964): 357–70; Bilhan Nitzan, *Pesher Habakkuk: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea (1QpHab): Text, Introduction and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986), 51–54.

synagogue services would have modelled an aptitude for interpretation, and individuals who had the ability and interest could mimic those interpretive skills. This interest in books and hermeneutical proficiency existed among Jews and Greco-Romans.

Reading as a Non-Specialized Competency

Before analyzing the evidence supporting nonprofessional literacy in a Second Temple Jewish context, the research must first distinguish between scribal and lay education. It is stipulated that the Shmuel Safrai model of Jewish schooling is likely a later rabbinic development.[121] Meaning, it is possible that Safrai and Drazin have read a later era of schooling back into the Second Temple period.[122] Botha's assessment seems to be a considerable overreaction to the inflated claims of Safrai when he states, "Very few primary schools existed, that those few had a negligible impact on society, that household education was focused on daily skills and apprenticeships and that the synagogue 'as school' is very much an anachronistic depiction"[123] A few passages should suffice to demonstrate that Jewish schooling was synagogue-based, that synagogues were more than sufficiently accessible in the first century, and that they served as educational and enculturative centers that exerted a considerable influence on mainstream Second Temple Judaism.

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121. Safrai's model is best explained in the short book by Nathan Drazin, *History of Jewish Education*: *From 515 B.C.E to 220 CE* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1940).

122. Pieter J.J. Botha, "Schools in the World of Jesus: Analysing the Evidence," *Neot* 33 (1999): 225–60.

123. Botha, "Schools in the World of Jesus," 227.

Social Power and the Rise of the Scribal Literate Class

Several studies have already addressed the issue of the increasing centrality and authority of the scribal-literate class.[124] However, as Goodman has shown, "reading did not in itself bring power, but that writing—or at least writing of a particular kind—probably did."[125] Those who were trained in the family scribal guilds of Judaism had the ability to both read and write. For religious scribes, their adjacency to sacred texts transferred to them a certain social authority.

Jewish re-education received its first push in the time of the priest-scribe Ezra. The Jews entered a period when scribes, *sopherim* (סוֹפְרִים) proliferated (515–200 BCE).[126] Michael Wilkins observes, "While Ezra marks a distinct advance in the operation of the scribe, during the time of the Intertestamental period the scribe carried the study of Torah to new extremes."[127] It was during this period that the Jews developed technical training for scribal guilds beyond the priestly classes.[128] This group sought to contextualize the Torah to everyday Jewish life.[129] Never again would the people perish due to lack of knowledge of the sacred Scriptures or ignorance of

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124. Christine Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second Temple Period*, JSOTSup 291 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 312; cf. Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2001), 264. Saldarini shows that the social authority of scribes varied depending on their functions as either "high officials" or "lowly village scribes." Challenging the thesis that the Tannaitic era rabbis were the successors to the Pharisees, see Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton, *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008); See also Roland Deines, "The Social Profile of the Pharisees," in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature*, ed. Reimund Bieringer et al. JSJSup 136 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 122. Whatever else the Pharisees may have been, Deines suggests that they must have been a distinct group functioning as role models of a sanctified life for the common man.

125. M.D. Goodman, "Texts, Scribes and Power in Roman Judaea," ed. Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf, *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 99.

126. Drazin, *History of Jewish Education*, 35–40. In the qal, pf. סָפַר, סְפַרְתֶּם, interestingly, the words themselves refer to both writing and counting, which concerns numeracy.

127. Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World*, 70.

128. Julius Wellhausen, *The Pharisees and Sadducees: An Examination of Internal Jewish History* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001), 8.

129. *EJ*, s.v. "Soferim," XV:81.

how to apply the text (Isa 5:13). The scribes of this period proliferated and became known as the *sopherim*, "The Great Synagogue," and "The Great Assembly," respectively.

What distinguishes scribal Judaism under Ezra is a movement toward the education of the populace. From the Persian period (538–323 BCE) to the Hellenistic Near Eastern period (323–165 BCE), scribes were most often employed by the state and handled all written transactions. Additionally, scribes recorded religious documents, prophetic texts, poetry, chronicles, and sacred archives, training manuals, receipts, deeds, personal letters and the like. But it was not until the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphius (285–246 BCE) that significant advances emerged in scribal practice as attested by the trove of materials in the Zenon Papyri collection (P.Col.Zen.).[130] This archive of documents suggests that scribes proliferated in Palestine, giving rise to a more extensive bureaucracy.[131] The world was becoming increasingly inundated with documents and texts, and the scribes were responsible for producing those materials.[132]

Ben Sira's "Ode to the Scribe"

The text that is often cited by scholars of the New Majority view is Sirach.[133] Sirach is a collection of wisdom sayings and instructions composed by a pious Jewish sage (195 BCE).[134]

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130. Zenon was employed by Apollonius (260 BCE) as an advisor to Ptolemy II. See Christine Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second Temple Period*, JSOTSup 291 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 312; cf. Rosalie Cook, "Zenon Papyri," *DNTB*, 1300.

131. Cook, "Zenon Papyri,"1310; cf. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, 48. Superintending the gathering of revenue required exact records. Technical manuals also flourished, covering such topics as medicine, rhetoric, military tactics, engineering, mining, dyeing, agriculture, and bookkeeping. Examinations occurred in schools, and at Pergamum girls competed in calligraphy. Herodias' third mimiamb, "The Schoolmaster" (between 270–280 BCE), refers to a grown boy who had difficulty reading and writing. It takes for granted that to be Greek is to be educated, and that a woman could be literate.

132. Saldarini, *Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society*, 264.

133. Sirach is the English title found in the NRSV, the Latin title is *Ecclesiasticus*. The *Ben Sira Scroll* was written in Hebrew around 180 BCE, and then translated into Greek circa 132 BCE.

134. David A. deSilva, "Sirach," *DNTB*, 1116. The author identifies himself as Yeshua ben Eleazar ben

The author, Joshua Ben Sira, encouraged the pursuit of wisdom by all those who remained without learning. In his "Ode to the Scribe," several features appear prominent: "Σοφία γραμματέως ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς, καὶ ὁ ἐλασσούμενος πράξει αὐτὸς σοφισθήσεται," translating to "Wisdom of the scribe is in opportunity of leisure and those who lack business will become wise."[135] Schams observes,

> The majority of modern scholars believe that the references to the education, positions and functions of the wise man (Sir 38:32–39:11) should be linked to the wise scribe (Sir 38:24). According to this view, a class of either priestly or lay scribes existed who fulfilled public functions as advisors at royal courts, as counsellors, judges and as teachers of the Scriptures and wisdom.[136]

These two functions appear to be assigned to the one vocation of the scribe. Ben Sira instructs the Jewish learner: "Do not slight the discourse of the sages, but busy yourself with their maxims.... Do not ignore the discourse of the aged, for they learned from their parents; from them, you learn how to understand and to give an answer when the need arises." (Sir 8:8–9). Schooling at home was vital for Ben Sira. The sage, the wise man, the elder, and the scribe had all received their learning from the elders before them. However, ultimate authority rested in Moses and the Prophets. This presupposes a re-establishment of the tradition of parental education after the exilic period.[137]

The Perushim

Centuries after the close of the OT, the New Testament introduces the reader to a range of semantics, including "scribes and Pharisees" (γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι), "synagogue"

Sira (Sir 50:27).

135. Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World*, 70.

136. Schams, *Jewish Scribes*, 101.

137. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, 175.

(συναγῶγη), "synagogue ruler" (ἀρχισυνάγωγος), "Sadducee" (Σαδδουκαῖος), "study" (μανθάνω),[138] "traditions" (παράδοσις), "school" (σχολή), and "educate" (παιδεύω).[139] The question arises as to how these educational terms came into use by the Second Temple Jews. While they may not imply a fully realized education system, they also provide a vital link between Ezra's time and the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods.

The Pharisees' ostensible rise to prominence coincided with the Hasmonean dynasty (134–104 BCE).[140] The origin of the word "pharisee" has been debated; however, most who agree with the standard view identify them as the *perushim* (פְּרוּשִׁים; Greek Φαρισαῖος), meaning "separate ones."[141] Some scholars believe that the Pharisees were a derivative or an offshoot of the Hasidim, pious activists who initially supported the Maccabean revolt and stood against Antiochus Epiphanes's tyranny (1 Macc 2:41).[142]

In the NT, the scribes often accompany the Pharisees to challenge Jesus.[143] Both the scribes and the Pharisees concerned themselves with the diligent study of the Scripture and

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138. Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World*, 70.

139. Of particular interest in this context would be the noun form of σχολάζω, σχολή, from which English derives the word *school*; yet, in classical contexts, this appears to be the activity of elites due to the availability of much more leisure time to devote oneself to an academic pursuit. See David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablets of the Heart: Origins in Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 12. Carr prefers the term "enculturation" over "education" as the act of transferring culture to children was the aim of ancient people and "education" is difficult to envision today apart from the scholastic revolution and our high-literacy culture.

140. Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (New York: A.C. Armstrong & Son, 1889), 13, 289.

141. GKC, 831.

142. Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth* (Leiden: Brill, 1964) 4, 37. cf. 1 Macc 2:41 for an account of the *Hasidim's* role in the revolt.

143. In the Gospels, the Pharisees never come to Jesus alone but are always accompanied by the scribes, Sadducees, or the Herodians. As Josephus seems to indicate, the Pharisees were likely "the people's party."

careful compliance to both the written Torah and their unwritten traditions.[144] While all Jews observed ritual purity inside the temple complex, the scribes and Pharisees sought to observe purification laws and rites outside the temple when the festival was not in session.[145] Acknowledging their function as teachers Josephus states,

> The Pharisees have delivered *to their people* a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the laws of Moses; and for that reason, it is that the Sadducees reject them and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from their traditions of their forefathers.[146]

Josephus claimed that they directed their additional observances and teachings "to the people." The Sadducees proposed few explanations on the many ambiguous matters of Torah law. The scribes and Pharisees, by contrast, provided expertise and facility with the Torah that elevated them in the eyes of their countrymen. Jesus warned his disciples against the "yeast" of the Pharisees, a figural description of their "teaching" (Matt 16:11–12). Jesus acknowledged their social authority saying, "The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you" (Matt 23:2). Yet, Jesus forbade his disciples to pattern themselves after them as "instructors" because his followers had "one teacher—the Christ" (Matt 23:10). The Pharisees' teaching included evangelism of non-Pharisaic students to their doctrines (Matt 23:15), and they were recognized as the "teachers of the law" of Moses (Luke 5:17; Acts 5:34).

The Synagogue as an Educational Center

With capable leaders and authoritative teachers in place, the chapter now turns to an

144. Emil Schürer, *The History of Jewish People in the Age of Christ: Vol. II*, ed. Geza Vermes et al., (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973/2014), 381 See also Julius Wellhausen*, Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer: Eine Untersuchung zur Inneren Jüdischen Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 8.

145. Neusner, "Pharisee," *DJ*, 478.

146. Josephus, *Ant.,* 13:29 (Thackery, LCL). Emphasis mine.

analysis of the general, non-specialized education that was available in the late Second Temple period (200 BCE–90 CE). Short of scribal literacy, what evidence exists that the average Jewish male had access to education, such that they could proficiently read in the local synagogues?

To reiterate, the literature supports the theory of a social gulf between the two classes. However, the notion that the average artisan would not have been able to attain reading proficiency with texts does not appear to be sustained by the evidence. The charge of polarizing education (between craftsman and scribal literacy) is primarily owing to several critical a priori assumptions: (1) an over-reading of select Second Temple texts in favor of scribal-literate elitism (namely Ben Sira), (2) an underappreciation for the historicity of polemical literature, which strongly suggests general education for pious Jews, (3) the failure of scholars to apply the same hermeneutical convention of "polemical texts" to Sirach's "Ode to the Scribe," (4) the failure to account for scribal-literate elites' stated aims of educating the populace in order to sustain Judaic culture, (5) and the attestational and artifactual evidence strongly suggesting that the synagogue was, at the very least, an educational environment. The emergence and prevalence of the Jewish synagogue in the transmission and preservation of the Torah was the key factor in the rise of general education.[147]

In the LXX, the Greek συναγωγή translates to the Hebrew עֵדָה, meaning "a gathering place; assembly" (Exod 12:3). Conceptually, συναγωγή described the act of assembling to hear the law. However, it was during the Second Temple Period that the synagogue rose to prominence. The earliest extant witness to the synagogue mentions the בֵּית סֵפֶר meaning "the house of the book," where the unlearned are encouraged, "Draw near to me, you who are uneducated, and lodge in the house of instruction" (Sirach 51:23, NRSV; cf. 1 Macc 3:46). Ben

147. Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, 2.

Sira's call is to the uneducated, which presupposes that responding to the invitation was at least a possibility for the unlearned agrarian and artisan classes.

Yet, the synagogue, as an institution with dedicated facilities, would emerge later.[148] Craig Evans remarks, "Most archaeologists now speak of eight or nine synagogues that date to the pre-70 era. These include Capernaum, Gamala, the Herodium, Jericho, Magdala, Masada, Modi'in, Qiryat Sefer, and Shuafat. Two buildings—Capernaum and Shuafat—are in doubt; the other seven are not."[149] One tradition proposes that the synagogue came into use during the Babylonian captivity because of the absence of the temple.[150] The Hebrew Bible occasionally describes elders meeting at the city "gate" to deliberate over community matters (Deut 21:19; 22:15; Josh 20:4).[151] While Levine admits that the evidence supporting the establishment of a fully realized school system before 70 CE is scant, he also claims that "There is reason to believe that synagogue premises served in such a capacity in many, if not most, places in this era."[152] For Levine, the evidence comprises the well-established educational frameworks for children that

148. BDAG, s.v. συνάγω, 962. "Assemble" is συνάγω the verbal form of συναγωγή meaning "to cause to come together, gather."

149. Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013), 45. He states, "The archaeological evidence for a first-century CE (or earlier) synagogue at Capernaum is less than certain. The impressive limestone synagogue through which tourists today wander dates to the third or fourth century." The black basalt rock found below could be the foundation of the synagogue or previous private residences; cf. Eric M. Meyers and Steven Fine, "Ancient Synagogues: An Archaeological Introduction," in *Sacred Realm: The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World*, ed. Steven Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3.

150. Dan Urman and Paul V.M. Flesher, *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archeological Discovery* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 3; cf. Stephen K. Catto, *Reconstructing the First-Century Synagogue: A Critical Analysis of Current Research*, LNTS 363 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 123. Catto rightly cautions against making sweeping generalizations owing to the variety of practices. Yet, there are some themes that appear to be universal in the archaeological and epigraphic evidence, such as worship and prayer, and the reading of Scripture.

151. Solomon Zeitlin, "The Origin of the Synagogue," in *The Synagogue: Studies in Origins, Archeology and Architecture.* ed. Harry M. Orlinsky (New York: Ktav, 1975), 80.

152. Lee Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*: *The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

existed in the Greco-Roman world, in addition to the evidence that Hellenism exerted a profound effect on the educational developments within the Jewish culture.[153]

Dan Urman and Paul Flesher propose that Jewish synagogues were both cultural centers and worship houses.[154] The literary and physical evidence is strongly suggestive of a dual function in Judaism before 70 CE. The synagogues operated as multipurpose buildings: houses of instruction, civic community centers, and places of worship and study. Evans agrees, "First-century synagogues were probably multi-purpose and were not limited to religious meetings and services only."[155] Urman suggests, that "the synagogue as an institution had reached Galilee and even Jerusalem by the first century CE."[156] The Theodotus Inscription, for example, indicates a first-century synagogue.[157] The inscription is widely viewed as supplying pre-70 evidence supporting the role of the synagogue as a Jewish center of learning the Torah.[158] Leadership in the synagogue was possibly hereditary and passed down for generations. The inscription partly reads,

> Theodotus, son of Vettenos the priest and synagogue leader, son of a synagogue leader and grandson of a synagogue ruler (ἀρχισυνάγωγος), built the synagogue for the reading of the Torah and studying of the commandments, and as a shelter with boardrooms and water systems in order to provide for the needs of travelers from abroad, which his fathers, the elders and Simonides founded.[159]

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153. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue,* 144. The notion of widespread *tôrâ* instruction through the synagogue system after 200 BCE is historically plausible.

154. Urman and Flesher, *Ancient Synagogues*, 16. Unlike the division between the Greco-Roman gymnasiums and temples, Jewish religion made no such distinction between centers of worship and enculturation.

155. Evans, *Jesus and His World*, 58.

156. Urman and Flesher, *Ancient Synagogues* 23.

157. J. Randall Price and H. Wayne House, eds., *Zondervan Handbook of Biblical Archaeology: A Book by Book Guide to Archaeological Discoveries Related to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 264. Discovered in 1913 between the City of David and the Temple Mount.

158. Stanley E. Porter, "Inscriptions and Papyri: Greco-Roman," *DNTB*, 534.

159. As cited in Urman, *Ancient Synagogues*, 33.

The writing identifies Theodotus as the leader of the synagogue—a local priest who inherited this responsibility. The synagogue appears to have been constructed to facilitate the reading and study of the Torah and its commandments. Furthermore, the synagogue likely housed traveling rabbis or visiting Pharisees. The indication is that synagogues and those who led the gatherings presided over the reading and study of the Hebrew Bible.

With respect to first-century reading schedules Matthew Gordley states, "There is limited source material regarding the liturgy (religious rituals) of the synagogue. However, the material we do have offers a glimpse of rituals over various periods."[160] Gordley maintains that the Second Temple era was the formative period of Jewish education that later blossomed into rabbinic schooling.[161] The educational contents were likely conducted through antiphonal response and singing Scripture. Didactic hymnody was a primary mode of oral education for Second Temple Jews.[162] This educational-worship environment was the ideal location for Jews to congregate, learn their sacred texts, and teach their children as nearly all its operations were sectarian.[163] Levine notes,

> The centrality of the text in the synagogue's liturgical agenda was indeed revolutionary; the communal reading and study of the Bible made this institution, from its inception, radically different from other Jewish religious frameworks of antiquity.... Within the confines of the synagogue, the Jewish community not only worshiped, but also studied, held court, administered punishment, organized sacred meals, collected charitable donations, housed the communal archives and library, and assembled for political and social purposes.[164]

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160. Matthew E. Gordley, "Synagogue," under "Synagogue Worship in the First Century C.E," *LBD,* n.p.

161. Matthew E. Gordley, "Synagogue" (συναγωγή), *LBD,* n.p. He states, "Sources for this time period—including the New Testament, Philo, Josephus, other Jewish texts, inscriptions, and archaeological remains—tend to only mention synagogues and synagogue practices in passing (e.g., Luke 4:16–29)."

162. Matthew E. Gordley, *Teacher Through Song in Antiquity: Didactic Hymnody Among Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians,* WUNT 302 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 184.

163. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 2.

164. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 3.

The synagogue's various names reveal its purposes: "the house of prayer," "the sanctuary," "the holy place," "a Sabbath meeting place," and "the place of instruction."[165] These names seem to combine the function of study and worship. Safrai, however, viewed the act of study as worship,

> The study of Torah, however, was not only to learn proper conduct and action; it was also an act of worship, which brought the student closer to God. The study of Torah was a holy duty which became a religious experience. It was cultivated in public worship in the synagogue ... in the temple, at all public meetings, and in individual and private gatherings. Almost all of the literature of the second Temple period manifests the aim of Torah study.... All stages of education are centered around the Torah. Even the initial learning of letters of the alphabet was considered a religious act, as was children's further study.[166]

According to Safrai, learning and worship were not mutually exclusive acts. For scribes and Pharisaic teachers, the synagogue was an idyllic environment to circulate their doctrines and display their piety through a commitment to principles of separation.

The surviving literature suggests much diversity in practice, readings, liturgy, architecture, and function.[167] Yet few from the first century (prior to the temple's destruction) have anything like an attached schoolroom.[168] Criticizing Riesner on this point, Botha states,

> As part of his argument that the synagogues provided "even in small Galilean villages such as Nazareth a kind of popular education system", Riesner (1991:191) refers to a very revealing illustration from archaeology. "Encircled by a Roman legion and confronted with certain death, the zealots of Masada built or rebuilt a synagogue and opened a school room" (Riesner 1991:191). Although he claims support for this claim from Yadin (1978) it must be said that we do not have *any* archaeological evidence for *any* school in first century Palestine.[169]

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165. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 23, 170, 318–412.

166. Safrai, *The Jewish People*, 945–46. The word *Mishnah* stems from the Hebrew *shana*, meaning "to repeat," similar to *shanan*, meaning to sharpen (Dt 6:7).

167. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 318.

168. Botha, "Schools in the World," 225–60. This evidence is disputed by Urman who strongly suggests that some of the benches found built into the sides of the synagogue facilities were intended as rote learning/educational stations.

169. Botha, "Schools in the World," 249. Emphasis his. Commenting on Reisner's over-reading of the evidence and his propensity to assume "synagogue" and "school" to be interchangeable terms.

But this criticism presupposes that the synagogue itself was not already an educational center. This claim is refuted (below) by Ben Sira and challenged by epigraphic and attestational evidence.

Evans agrees partially with Botha that Safrai had overstated the case with reference to school systems housed in the synagogues, "Safrai makes a reasonable case for education and literacy in Israel in late antiquity, but none whatever for the presence of schools as such, whether located in synagogues or elsewhere in the first century."[170] However, Evans reminds the reader that the decree of Caesar Augustus specifically mentions synagogues and customary practices (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.6.163). These customs included gathering freely in the synagogue on the Sabbath without fear of prosecution, thievery, or interruption to their worship. Caesar's warning against stealing includes "their holy Scripture (βίβλους), or their sacred money, whether it be out of the synagogue on Sabbath (Σαββᾶτεῖον) or public school (ἀνδρών)"[171] and included a stiff penalty for disturbing their worship. Whether the decree intended to convey the idea of attached schoolrooms or referred to the synagogue itself as the school is unclear. Yet, the decree recognizes this practice going back from Augustus (27 BCE–14 CE) to the priestly family of Hyrcanus (134 BCE–104) in service to the emperor. With respect to physical spaces, Evans observes that "there were public buildings—even in villages—that functioned as synagogues in which religious services took place on the Sabbath and other days, and second, that these served other public functions, perhaps including education."[172]

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170. Evans, *Jesus and His World*, 58.

171. Josephus mentions nearly 20 cities with synagogues that existed before the birth of Jesus. He also mentions numerous imperial decrees regarding the Jews' freedom to practice their laws and convene on the sabbath in synagogue (Josephus, *Ant*. 14.213–14, 227, 235, 244–6, 256–8, 259–61; 19.281–5).

172. Evans, *Jesus and His World,* 59.

1Qs 6:6b–8a: The Democratization of Reading in Qumran

Scrolls found in cave one (1QS) of the Dead Sea region offer evidence of a growing community where the designation "one who studies the Torah" is applied to all the individuals within the group and not merely to priests, scribes, or Pharisees. A key passage in what is called the Community Rule (1QS) document reads, "And in every place where there are ten there shall be present a person who studies the law continually day and night one replacing the other. And the many shall keep watch together for a third of all the nights of the year to read the book, study the law, and pray together" (1Qs 6:6b–8a).[173] Charlotte Hempel states, "Speaking very broadly the impression gained is that interpretative authority originated as a shared grassroots commodity that characterized the community from its earliest days in small groups."[174] Additionally, a nearly identical description of "one who reads the law" is suggestive of a reading environment characterized as egalitarian communitarianism (1QS 8:11–12). The whole community of devout disciples are supposed to read the book, study, and pray together. The text stresses the need for perpetual reading and study within the community and shows a "lack of reference to a particular individual or group with privileged access to the meaning of Scripture."[175] That all members of the community were expected to pray and read together is clear. Prayer and reading have a symbiotic function in 1QS 8:11–12. If praying was not limited to the scribal-literate class, then

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173. See Charlotte Hempel, "Authority in the Community Rule Tradition," *DSD* 10, 2003. in *Authorizing Texts, Interpretations, and Laws at Qumran* 10 (2003): 59–80. She states, "The rendering 'one replacing the other' is based on an emendation of the Hebrew ... frequently adopted by commentators." Also, C. Hempel, "Community Structures in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Admission, Organization, Disciplinary Procedures," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, 2.67–92 cf. P. Wernberg-Møller, "Observations on the Interchange of *Ayin* and *Het* in the Manual of Discipline," VTSup 3 (1953): 104–7; M.J. Bernstein, "Interpretation of Scriptures," in *EDSS*, ed. L.H. Schiffman and J.C. VanderKam (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 376–83.

174. Hempel, "Authority in the Community," 79.

175. Hempel, "Authority in the Community," 68.

neither was reading and studying. Neither text mentions authoritative readers but instead underscores the necessity for all members of the community to alternate in the reading and study of the Scripture from morning till night.[176] Hempel concludes that the further from Jerusalem a faith community was, the more dependent they became on democratic and homegrown synagogue leadership.

More recent texts found in cave four of 4Q258 defer to a "priest or Levite" more explicitly, in which case community authority is centralized in him. The text reads, "And nothing that has been hidden from Israel but was found by the scribe shall the latter hide from these out of fear of a renegade spirit." The earlier Qumran texts lack any reference to the Sons of Zadok or a priest dispensing authoritative revelation (1QS). However, the later dated text of 4Q258 adds the "Sons of Aaron" to the congregation of Israel, bestowing on them a "vital role in the context of permitting suitable candidates to enter the community." Steven Fraade observes that each community had its own need "to shift legal authority, albeit to different degrees, from hereditary priests to non-priestly learned experts."[177] Eventually, non-Aaronic and non-Levite priests were appointed as a new "Aaronic priesthood" from within the community to regulate its doctrines and legal teachings. This resulted in a shared and co-operative environment of authority between the congregation and its teachers. Teachers were appointed from within the community to continue to instruct the faithful congregation in the revelations and precepts of Scripture. These individuals embodied the community's authority to read, teach, and explain the traditions. The presence of priestly governance in the later cave texts (4Q258) does not supplant or replace the

176. Hempel, "Authority in the Community," 65.

177. Steven D. Fraade, "Shifting from Priestly to Non-Priestly Legal Authority: A Comparison for the Damascus Document and the Midrash Sifra," in *DSD* 6 (1999): 109–25, here 124. Hempel sees an evolutionary development, while Fraade sees a happy coexistence between scribal and lay readers.

need for communitarianism though it does suggest a regulatory development in terms of leadership. However, that authority was indigenous—the congregation read, and the priests led or presided over that effort.

Philo: Priests and Elders Educate the People

As the Qumran community offers us a glimpse into an isolated congregation's reading and traditioning practices, Philo provides a window into Diaspora Second Temple synagogue practice. Philo (25 BCE–50 CE) was a Jewish philosopher who regularly attended and taught in the synagogue meetings in Alexandria.[178] Philo envisioned that his countrymen would go beyond moral instruction, stating, ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι καὶ τῶν πατρίων νόμων καὶ ἐθῶν ἐμπείρως ἔχειν, translated, "but also should have expert knowledge of their ancestral laws and customs" (Philo, *Hypoth.* 7:11). The "expert" in this context is ἐμπειρικός, meaning "experienced or practised in a thing; acquainted with it."[179] This description is applied to fathers within the home. Philo continues,

> What then did he do? He commanded all the people to assemble in the same place on these seventh days, and sitting together in a respectful and orderly manner hear the laws read so that none should be ignorant of them (7.13); And indeed, they do always assemble and sit together, most of them in silence except when it is the practice to add something to signify approval of what is read. But some priest who is present or one of the elders reads the holy laws to them and expounds them point by point till about the late afternoon, when they depart having gained both expert knowledge of the holy laws and considerable advance in piety. (*Hypoth.* 7:12–13)[180]

Several face-value claims can be made from this passage: (1) The public reading and teaching served to distinguish Jewish customs from non-Jewish ones. It appears that the "education" or instruction was devotional and cultural. (2) The people took pains to assemble weekly to hear,

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178. The dating of Philo is debated among scholars but generally held to be a contemporary of Josephus.

179. LSJ, s.v. ἐμπειρικός, 544.

180. Charles Duke Yonge with Philo of Alexandria, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 744.

interact, and be taught the Scriptures. (3) The reading was expository, accompanied by an interpretive discussion. The congregation listened with rapt attention until a particular reading evoked the need for further explanation and dialogue. (4) The reading was conducted by an official priest or a volunteer elder. Levine affirms: "There is no question that the presbyter was an integral part of the synagogue officialdom in many locales. Some thirty inscriptions from sites stretching across the breadth of the Empire take note of this office, from Elche in Spain to Dura Europos in Syria."[181] Elders were ever-present across geographical and cultural divides. Still, the term itself was used variously: as a designation for mature and honored congregants (per Philo), as prominent female leaders (πρεσβύτερα), a council (πρεσβύτεροι), as a founder and thus patron (πατήρ, μήτηρ), or as teachers (διδάσκαλοι).[182] These elders were indigenous, homegrown leaders.

The term זָקֵן "elders" refers to tribal heads in Israel before the exodus. They could select mature leaders among families or groups (Gen 50:7). After the exodus, they served as tribal leaders, meeting at the city gate to deliberate over community affairs and sacred matters (Deut 19:12; 21:19; 22:15; Josh 20:4; Exod 18:12; Num 11:16; Prov 31:23).[183] By the Second Temple era, elders were most often spoken of as heavenly beings in apocalyptic visions. Philo speaks of them as secondary readers when no priestly scribe was present to read.[184] In *Every Good Person*

181. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 432.

182. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue,* 447. Levine asserts that of the 130 or more inscriptions related to synagogues, scribal-literate terms such as "scribe" "priest" or "Pharisee," are altogether absent from within Roman Palestine. This may strongly suggest that elders were lay-appointed readers and instructors.

183. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 31.

184. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 412. Levine stresses that the various sites for ancient synagogues convey a variability in leadership in what he calls "a bewildering range of titles." It is, therefore, best not to see synagogue leadership as monolithic. Regional political and other forces likely shaped the leadership titles and organization of early assemblies.

is Free, he describes the reading taking place in the "sacred places," with the congregants "arranged in rows according to their ages, the younger below the elder, they sit decorously as befits the occasion with attentive ears. Then one of them takes the books and reads aloud. Another of especial proficiency comes forward and expounds what is not understood."[185] The phrase εἶθ᾽ εἷς μέν τις τὰς βίβλους ἀναγινώσκει λαβών, meaning "customarily, one of them who takes the books and reads aloud" is a reader inferred to have been selected from within the congregation, the antecedent of "them/someone" (τις) being the elder and younger members of the assembly. Sitting "below the elder" is likely a reference to the floor seats in front of the podium. And the implication is that the elder members sat on the stone bleachers surrounding the room on three sides.[186] Philo insinuates that the reader is less proficient, highlighting that the expositor is ἔμπειρος, meaning "more experienced, practiced, skillful."[187] Altogether, the sentence ἕτερος δὲ τῶν ἐμπειροτάτων ὅσα μὴ γνώριμα stresses the exceptional proficiency of the expositor over the lay reader. Philo also described this education as sufficient, such that the people did not feel the need to inquire of a priest or scribe,

> And so they do not resort to persons learned in the law with questions as to what they should do or not do, nor yet by keeping independent transgress in ignorance of the law, but any one of them whom you attack with inquiries about their ancestral institutions can answer you readily and easily. The husband seems competent to transmit knowledge of the laws to his wife, the father to his children, the master to his slaves. (*Hypoth.* 7:14 [Colson, LCL])[188]

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185. Philo, *Good Person*, 81–82 (Colson, LCL).

186.. Urman, *Ancient Synagogues*, 11, 35, 36, 36, 38. In some cases, the assembly halls had four levels of stadium seating reserved for elder members. Some synagogues were constructed with gilded chairs for honored guests, and other benches lined the wall where elders sat facing the congregation, with their backs turned to Jerusalem. See Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 433.

187. LSJ*,* s.v. ἔμπειρος, 544.

188. τοιγαροῦν οὐκ ἐπὶ θεσμῳδοὺς ἔρχονται περὶ τῶν πρακτέων καὶ μὴ διερωτῶντες οὐδὲ καθ᾽ ἑαυτοὺς ὑπ᾽ ἀγνοίας τῶν νόμων ῥᾳδιουργοῦσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅντινα αὐτῶν κινεῖς καὶ περὶ τῶν πατρίων διαπυνθάνῃ, προχείρως ἔχει καὶ ῥᾳδίως εἰπεῖν· καὶ ἀνὴρ γυναικὶ καὶ παισὶ πατὴρ καὶ δούλοις δεσπότης ἱκανὸς εἶναι δοκεῖ τοὺς νόμους παραδιδόναι.

Again, he makes several face-value claims here: (1) The synagogue educational culture was such that "they" (average attendees) had no need of inquiring of persons τῶν νόμων "learned in the law," because they were by no means ἄγνοια, "ignorant" or "unlearned."[189] (2) They were so well practiced in the Scripture that any one of them could answer an interlocutor ῥᾴδιος, "readily and easily."[190] (3) Older men were ἱκανός, a term meaning "to meet a standard, fit, appropriate, competent, qualified, and able."[191] Philo describes the reading and hearing of the Scripture in the public synagogue gatherings as reflecting diligence and commitment on behalf of the Jewish people. He recalled the challenge made by the Prefect of Alexandria, "will you sit in your congregation halls and assemble your regular company and read in safety your holy books, expounding any obscure point and in restful ease discussing at length your ancestral philosophy?"[192] The criticism reveals how outsiders understood the Jews gathering in synagogues to read, expound, and discuss in detail the meaning and application of their sacred textual tradition. Again, Philo stated,

> For it was customary on every day when opportunity offered, and pre-eminently on the seventh day, as I have explained above, to pursue the study of wisdom with the ruler expounding and instructing the people what they should say and do, while they received education and betterment in moral principles and conduct. Even now this practice is retained, and the Jews every seventh day occupy themselves with the philosophy of their fathers, dedicating that time to the acquiring of knowledge and the study of the truths of nature. For what are our places of prayer throughout the cities but *schools of prudence* and courage and temperance and justice, and also of piety, holiness, and every virtue by

189. BDAG, s.v. ἄγνοια, 13.

190. Stanley E. Porter, "Thucydides 1.22.1 and Speeches in Acts: Is There a Thucydidean View?" *NovT* 32 (1990): 121–142. Porter discusses the term ῥᾴδιος as an example of something undertaken with "relative ease," despite Thucydides's difficult but attainable task of remembering ancient speeches concerning the Peloponnesian War.

191. BDAG, s.v. ἱκανός, 472.

192. *Somn*. 2.123–128 (Whitaker, LCL).

> which duties to God and men are discerned and rightfully performed. (Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.127 [Colson, LCL])[193]

Philo refers to the synagogues as "schools of prudence" along with every other admirable virtue. The people pursued the study of wisdom as the ἀρχή, "ruler"[194] delivered exposition and instruction as to what they should "say" and what they should "do" while they received an education. This person was usually elected from within the quorum of ten volunteer men and took care of the physical arrangements for the synagogue service.[195] The Theodotus inscription indicates that some rulers inherited this position from parents and grandparents who constructed the buildings. They were held in high esteem but were not expected to read in the service unless a priest or reader was present (Meg. 4:21).[196] The congregation gathered weekly and dedicated themselves to study. That Philo identifies their synagogues as "places of prayer" and devotional training is consistent with inscriptional evidence. This purpose is confirmed by Theophrastus (as recorded by Diodorus Siculus), "During the whole time, being philosophers by ethnicity, they dialogue with each other about the deity, and at night-time they make observations of the stars, gazing at them and calling on God by prayer. They were the first to make sacrifices of other living beings and themselves; yet they did so by compulsion and not eagerness for the practice."[197] Theophrastus indicates that synagogue gatherings were highly interactive. He saw the Jewish people as a race of philosophers who engaged in continual discourse about their God.

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193 Emphasis mine.

194. BDAG, s.v. ἀρχή, 138. This word designates the ἀρχισυνάγωγος as a local leader who initiates the activity and governs the procedures of the synagogue.

195. Mark 5:22, 35, 38; Luke 8:49; 13:14; Acts 13:15; 14:2; 18:8, 17. Diverse accounts of the nature, election, and function of the ἀρχισυνάγωγος exist within primary sources.

196. Claudia J. Setzer, "Rulers of the Synagogue," in *ABD*, 842.

197. Diodorus Siculus*, Bib. hist*., 40.3.1–3.

Paul Foster embraces Philo's findings cautiously, speaking of this kind of evidence as considerably vague and "impossible to deduce any reference to formal education either in reading or writing."[198] Again, this kind of statement presupposes a literacy-illiteracy divide. However, the inferences from the above passages are arresting. While Philo's assertions may indicate a primarily aural-literate reception method practiced by the synagogue congregants, they are also intended to distinguish the Jewish people from nearby cultures and practices.[199] If the synagogue education of Jews was unremarkable, then why draw attention to it? If it did not produce a highly informed populace within Hellenistic Judaism, what purpose could Philo have had in highlighting this practice as a distinguishing feature? Corresponding to this is the NT leader named Apollos. Luke introduces him as a Jew and "a native of Alexandria" (Acts 18:24a), the same city and synagogue environment that Philo described. Apollos matches Philo's description of the average Jewish male being "competent in the Scriptures" (18:24b), and that he "he spoke and taught accurately" (18:25). After further instruction by Priscilla and Aquila, "he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus" (18:28). Nothing about his education or engagement within the synagogues is said to have been attributed to his scribal-literate training.

Josephus: Education Prized Above All

The well-known passages from the Jewish–Roman historian, Josephus (37–100 CE), also indicate that education was prized among Jewish people. Josephus's most pertinent comments defend Jewish religion's antiquity against Apion's charge that Judaism was not an ancient

198. Paul Foster, "Educating Jesus: The Search for a Plausible Context," *JSHJ* 4 (2006): 26.

199. Foster, "Educating Jesus," 26.

religion. Therefore, they should be regarded as a *reglio illicita* or "an illegal religion" within the Roman system. In response Josephus insisted,

> Above all (μάλιστα) we pride ourselves on the education of our children (παιδοτροφίαν), and regard as the most essential task in life the observance of our laws and of the pious practices, based thereupon, which we have inherited. If to these reasons one adds the peculiarity of our mode of life, there was clearly nothing in ancient times to bring us into contact with the Greeks. (*Contra Apion* 1.60–61)[200]

According to Josephus, that the Jews had not had much contact with the Greeks was evidenced by the peculiarities of their faith and the emphasis on the nurturing and education (παιδοτροφία) of children.[201] Josephus asserts that this practice was observed among their people μάλιστα, meaning "to an unusually high degree."[202] Josephus was indeed a member of the elite aristocracy, though this is not the context of his passage. He refers to the general education of Jewish boys and girls in a synagogue and homeschooling setting. He affirms that much the same practice has taken place in Judea when he writes of Moses,

> For ignorance he [Moses] left no pretext. He appointed the Law to be the most excellent and necessary form of instruction (παίδευσις), ordaining, not that it should be heard (ἀκροάομαι) once for all or twice or on several occasions, but that every week men should desert their other occupations and assemble to listen to the Law and to obtain a thorough and accurate (ἀκριβῶς) knowledge of it. (*C. Ap.* 2.175 [Thackery, LCL])[203]

He appears to directly contradict Ben Sira's assertion (cited above) that the artisan class could not obtain wisdom and education due to their grueling work schedule. Josephus instead depicts

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200. The Greek reads, μάλιστα δὴ πάντων περὶ παιδοτροφίαν φιλοκαλοῦντες καὶ τὸ φυλάττειν τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὴν κατὰ τούτους παραδεδομένην εὐσέβειαν ἔργον ἀναγκαιότατον 61παντὸς τοῦ βίου πεποιημένοι. προσούσης τοίνυν τοῖς εἰρημένοις καὶ τῆς περὶ τὸν βίον ἡμῶν ἰδιότητος οὐδὲν ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς χρόνοις ποιοῦν ἡμῖν πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐπιμιξίαν.

201. Foster, "Educating Jesus," 27.

202. BDAG, s.v. μάλιστα, 613.

203. The Greek here reads, Οὐδὲ γὰρ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑποτίμησιν κατέλιπεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ κάλλιστον καὶ ἀναγκαιότατον ἀπέδειξε παίδευμα τὸν νόμον, οὐκ εἰσάπαξ ἀκροασομένοις οὐδὲ δὶς ἢ πολλάκις, ἀλλ᾽ ἑκάστης ἑβδομάδος τῶν ἄλλων ἔργων ἀφεμένους ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκρόασιν ἐκέλευσε τοῦ νόμου συλλέγεσθαι καὶ τοῦτον ἀκριβῶς ἐκμανθάνειν· ὃ δὴ πάντες ἐοίκασιν οἱ νομοθέται παραλιπεῖν.

the learning of the law to be the highest pursuit of all Jewish people. They were to become παίδευμα, "instructed," meaning "that which is reared up or educated; nursling, scholar, pupil."[204] The word παίδευμα represents a family of words related to the process of education, discipleship, schooling, enculturation, acquiring expertise, excellence in breeding, and the nurture and support of students.[205] Foster is correct that Josephus does not provide the mechanics of this education. However, people were expected to regularly convene to ἀκροάομαι, meaning "give a hearing" to this instruction.[206] Aural-oral education seems presupposed here. It is by listening to the law that they gain ἀκρῑβωσις, a "thorough" and "accurate" knowledge of it.[207] Luke employs the term ἀκριβῶς to refer to the "exacting" teaching that Priscilla and Aquila provided for Apollos (Acts 18:25). Contexts convey the idea of demanding and rigorous instruction, resulting in someone who is "well educated" and taught.[208] This commitment to personal growth through knowledge gave leaders and teachers great confidence in their disciples.

Megillah: Multiple Readers in Synagogue

The research has saved the rabbinic literature for this section to demonstrate an evolving progress of Jewish education. With respect to the differences between Babylonian and Palestinian Talmudic traditions, Levine remarks, "In Babylonia, both the Torah reader and the

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204. LSJ, s.v. παίδευμα, 1286–1287. This word could also refer to the "thing taught" or the subject of instruction itself.

205. LSJ, s.v. see παίδευσις, παιδευτέος, παιδευτήριον, παιδευτής, παιδευτικός, παιδευτός, and παιδεύω. 1286–1287,

206. LSJ, ἀκροάομαι, s.v. 56.

207. BDAG, s.v. ἀκρῑβωσις, 39.

208. The term often appears in historical or medical works, communicating a certain fastidiousness. Likewise, it also occurs in several NT passages, with a strong emphasis on meticulous and exacting facility. See P.Oxy. 1381:111; *Ant.* 17.2.4; cf. Eph 5:15; 1 Thess 5:2; Luke 1:3.

congregation would read the *parashah* (Torah portion) every week; in Palestine people would read the *parashah* (following Babylonian custom) but the Torah reader would read according to the order of the triennial cycle."[209] By this period, everyone in the congregation was expected to read and recite the Law aloud, either simultaneously with or after reading the Torah scroll. The liturgy of this period included, "The recitation of prayers; the priestly blessing; the ceremony of introducing the Torah scroll and returning it; the Torah reading and its translation; the reading of the haftarah; the sermon; and the recitation *piyyutim.*"[210] Chapter four of the tractate Megillah describes that those who attend synagogue on the second, fifth, and seventh day (Sabbath) "read in regular order" (b. Meg. 3.6). The tractate dictates reading protocols for disciples,

> He who reads the scroll may stand or sit; if one read it, of if two shall read it, they have fulfilled their duty. In the place where the custom is to recite a benediction one should recite it, but where it is not customary to recite a benediction, he does not recite it. On the second day of the week, and on the fifth day, and on the Sabbath day at the afternoon service three persons read; they must not reduce the number nor add to it; nor do they conclude with a reading from the Prophets. He that begins the reading from the Torah and he that concludes it recites a benediction, the one at the start and the other at the conclusion. (Meg. 3:1–5)[211]

The context here is that the reading of the Torah preceded the reading from the prophets and the "two who may translate"—this was typically followed by as many as ten lay readers who read the *Hallel psalms* (T 3:20).[212] According to the Megillah tractate, a rather regimented reading protocol was in place by this period. Readers used the "scroll," with the option of standing or sitting. The benediction was recited, not read. On particular days, up to three people could read

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209. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 568.

210. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 375.

211. From the b. Meg. 3:1–4

212. Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, vol. 7b, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 208.

the text in public service. The reading was not a paraphrasing exercise but a strict oral reading, and the reader could not conclude with a passage from prophetic texts but a proper benediction. The context is a public, oral representation of texts.

Summary Conclusion of Chapter 3

This Chapter addressed the prevailing view among scholars that Jesus was incapable of reading Scripture or interpreting it because he was an uneducated oral tradent. Kelber proposed that Jesus was entirely unliterary. Crossan stresses the lack of opportunities for education in oratory or rhetoric faced by the agrarian class. Botha casts Jesus as a magical reader but not educated in any kind of synagogue school system in Galilee. Drawing from Harris's study on ancient literacy, Hezser asserts that Judaism indeed did not represent a bookish culture because no such thing existed in the first century. Keith accepts Hezser's view of semi-literacy but sees little to no opportunity for literacy and elite education available to craftsmen, an insight that appears to be affirmed by Ben Sira's "Ode to the Scribe." Jesus simply could not have read and interpreted texts in the synagogue as a carpenter in a largely agrarian context. This view appears to make the mistake of collapsing the issue of public reading and dialogue into the scribal practice of authoritative interpretation in synagogue. This chapter suggested that these scholarly assertions may be largely unfounded and not entirely representative of extant witnesses relative to ancient reading and interpretive practices.

In contrast, the Hebrew Scriptures and Second Temple literature all portray Israel to have been an increasingly "bookish" faith from its inception, with a growing concern for the biblical literacy and interpretive competency of its people. The notion of a purely alliterate Israel passing oral traditions from generation to generation before the eventual writing of Scripture seems to be without merit. Chapter 3 brings much-needed attention to the Hebrew Bible as an oral-textual

document from the start. According to ancient witnesses, Israel was never without a covenantal text, and those texts always existed in symbiosis with oral exposition and interpretation. Oral textuality created theoretical space for the existence of oraliterate learners and readers. These readers learned aurally and practiced reading aloud before handling difficult-to-decode material texts. This skill set would have been available to anyone who had the interest and time to learn to orally read texts. Similar to Jeremiah, some oraliterate readers were depicted to "read" a "scroll" from memory, as Baruch the scribe wrote it down. From Ezra's revival to the first century, Jewish parents were increasingly expected to educate their children in the home, the synagogue, and in their trades. Their Greco-Roman counterparts prized oral, public reading and attached a premium to interpretive mastery. Readers who had not attained this hermeneutical expertise were considered novice, average readers at best, even if they could read fluently.

From Ezra's period onward, there appears to have been an increasing proliferation of scribal guilds commensurate with the explosion of textual culture. While always maintaining their social privilege and elite status, synagogue rulers, indigenous "priests," scribes, and visiting Pharisees took pains to instruct the populace through the local synagogues. Synagogues were houses of learning and instruction and schools of worship and devotion. Moreover, Jerusalem elders and priests engaged in national education as the Scripture was read regularly during festivals in obedience to Torah. Jews in the first century were generally very well informed about their faith and philosophy. As is the case in every culture, some organic intellectuals, such as Apollos from Alexandria, would have distinguished themselves. In Jesus's case, he has engaged with and likely exhausted the educational environments available to him—the home, the synagogue, and the temple. He is very much the product of his Torah-education-centered culture. But was he more than that?

CHAPTER 4: AS WAS HIS CUSTOM: JESUS AS A WELCOMED READER IN THE SYNAGOGUE

The previous chapter established that there was, by Jesus's day, a vigorous culture of *tôrâ* instruction among Second Temple Jews. The likelihood that Judaism, an ever-increasing bookish culture, raised young men who could read and cantillate the Tanak in synagogue meetings is very strong. Since this was not his polemical aim there remains the issue of establishing his actual focus in the narrative. Scholars raised the issue of Luke's purpose in portraying Jesus as a reader of Scripture in synagogue. The claim that the story of Jesus reading was either fabricated by Luke or that he simply reported on a mistaken tradition will be cross-examined by the evidence.

This chapter directly engages Luke's first synagogue scene to shed light on the cause of the offense concerning Jesus's assumed position. Chapter 4 analyzes the Lucan unit, addresses alleged discrepancies between Mark, Matthew, and Luke to argue against the presumption that they are contradictory accounts, introduces Luke's high Christology, which is crucial to understanding his portrayal of Jesus, and examines Jesus's regional context—Jewish Sepphoris and devout Nazareth. The local Palestinian context reveals the motivation of the Nazarenes to reject Jesus. Finally, this chapter directly addresses the claim that Luke represented Jesus as a scribal-literate reader/interpreter of texts and instead suggests that Jesus is an acceptable and welcomed lay reader of the Bible.

Structure of the Unit

Luke shifts the Nazareth synagogue unit (Luke 4:16–30) closer to the beginning of Jesus's ministry, contrasted to Mark (6:1–6) and Matthew (13:52–58) who locate the incident in the middle of his ministry in their accounts. Some scholars have sought to address this discrepancy by prioritizing Mark as the earlier (and thus historical) account, in which case,

Luke's placement of the story is almost certainly not chronological.[1] Chapter 3 already discussed the issue of scholars selectively depriving polemical texts of their claims to historicity. Even if Luke intended to highlight Jesus's larger mission of reaching outsiders, this would not necessarily call into question the basic facticity of the contents of 4:16–30. However, notably, of the four canonical Gospels, Luke's is the only one to claim anything like chronological order (Luke 1:2).[2] Moreover, Matthew and Mark generally demonstrate more evidence of thematic "clustering."[3] Luke's consistent claim is that Jesus began his ministry in Galilee (Luke 23:5, Acts 10:37), and other Gospels affirm the same (Matt 3:13, 4:12–23; Mark 1:14).[4]

The Lucan account is more extensive, underscoring the early goodwill of the Nazarene congregation. Jesus appears as the provocateur who initiates the conflict even before it has a

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1. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 177. Marshall bases this on two salient features: (1) Mark and Matthew were written first—an insight shared by a majority of scholars. Furthermore, (2) internal evidence (4:23) supports an already effective and popular reputation in Galilee. While the first point may be conceded, the second is not at all clear. Why think that Jesus's ministry between his baptism and his Nazareth appearance would not have already been characterized as "in the power of the Spirit" (4:14)? If the sequence in John's Gospel has any usefulness, then this scene likely occurred a year after Jesus's baptism, giving him plenty of time to minister in Capernaum first. See also Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, vol. 1, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 386.

2. BDAG, s.v. καθεξῆς, 490. The word καθεξῆς, meaning "to being in sequence in time, space, or logic, in order, one after the other." Scholars debate the meaning of the Greek phrase πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς (Luke 1:3b). Extra-biblical references use the term to mean "in sequential order." This interpretation seems affirmed by Luke's description of Moses coming before Samuel, Samuel coming (in sequence) before all other prophets (Acts 3:24), and Peter explaining the Gospel events in the καθεξῆς "order" in which they occurred (Acts 11:4).

3. David Franklin Noble, "An Examination of the Structure of St. Mark's Gospel," (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1972), 19, 232–33. Noble asserts that Luke contains more "pattern irregularities," which are suggestive of a stricter chronology and less thematic clustering. Examples of narrative or discourse clustering include Matthew's opening salvo of OT citations between Ch's 1–2, compression of the parables of the Kingdom in Matthew 13:1–56 (which are dispersed in Luke), grouping sapiential sayings into more thematic blocks of material such as the "Sermon on the Mount" (versus Luke's briefer and more diffuse treatment), including five distinct discipleship discourses (Matt 5–7; 10; 13; 18; 24), also the bundling of eschatological parables with apocalyptic discourse (Matt 24, 25), and the alternating pattern of speech-acts in which Jesus's speeches and teachings are followed by direct action in relation to that teaching. For Mark, this would include the clustering of divine miracles that attract both the attention and ire of the elites (1:1–8:29) followed by the theme of the suffering Messiah (8:30–16:8).

4. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 53. Both Matthew and Mark note that Jesus ventured outside of Galilee at times; Luke only records that Jesus crossed over into the territory of the Gerasenes (8:20).

chance to surface. Table 1 below shows the similarities and differences between Synoptic Gospels.

Table 1: Comparison Between Mark 6:1–4 and Matthew 13:53–58

Mark (6:1), Matthew (13:53–58)	Luke (4:16–30)
Jesus enters the synagogue (Matt. 13:54; Mark 6:2).	Jesus enters the synagogue on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). Jesus stands to read the Isaiah Scroll (16–19). Jesus rolls up the scroll, handing it back to the attendant (20). Jesus announces the Jubilee is fulfilled in their hearing (21).
The congregation is astonished at Jesus (Mark 6:2; Matt 13:54). Others express a simmering incredulity concerning his family's origin (Mark 6:3; Matt 13:54b–55).	Some initially speak gracious words (22a). Others express a simmering incredulity concerning his family's origin (22b).
	Jesus reads/recites a proverb predictively: "Doctor, heal yourself" (23).
Jesus cites the proverb, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown" (Mark 6:4; Matt 13:57a).	Jesus cites a second proverb, "No prophet is accepted in his hometown" (24). Jesus cites Elijah and Elisha while ministering to Naaman and the Widow (25–27).
They "took offense" (Matt 13:57b).	The congregation becomes "filled with wrath" (28) and drives Jesus out of town (29). Jesus passes through and leaves Nazareth (30).
Editorial: Jesus could not do many miracles in Nazareth (Mark 6:5; Matt 13:58).	**Narrative**: Jesus returned to Capernaum of Galilee, where he performed many miracles (31).

Mark Strauss observes, "The basic components of Mk 6:1–4 are present in Luke: Jesus comes to his own town where he teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath; the people are amazed at his words and deeds but take offense because of his local origin."[5] Luke's additional material

5. Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lucan*

includes some of Jesus's reading and expository teaching, in addition to an expanded narrative on the congregation's response to his message. The two versions of the story (Mark and Luke) end differently. The Markan-Matthean accounts conclude with an editorial remark on Jesus's inability to perform miracles in that area, whereas Luke narrates that he went back to Capernaum to perform miracles.[6] The same elements are present with differing emphases. Otherwise, the two accounts are largely similar.[7]

The Passage as a Chiasmus

Most scholars agree that Luke employs a chiastic design—a compositional structure that utilizes a descending and ascending pattern to achieve literary symmetry.[8] This is usually represented as an A, B, B', A' pattern.

A He stood up (ἀνέστη) to read (16c)
  B there was handed (ἐπεδόθη) to him (17a)
    C opening (ἀνοίξας) the book (17b)
      D Isa 61:1f; 58:6 (18–19)
    C' closing (πτύξας) the book (20a)
  B' he handed it (ἀποδούς) back to the attendant (20b)
A' he sat down (ἐκάθισεν) (20c)[9]

Both Isaiah's text and Luke's historical account have undergone a degree of literary compression for the sake of Luke's readers.

Christology, *JSNT* 413 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 219.

6. John S. Kloppenborg, "On Dispensing with Q?: Goodacre on the Relation of Luke to Matthew," *NTS* 49 (2003): 210–36.

7. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts*, 219.

8. John Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, WBC 35A (Waco, TX: Word, 1989), 191.

9. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 57.

The Passage as Exposition

The expository outline of the passage reveals the scene broken into seven distinct sections. Once Jesus sits and assumes the posture of an interpreter, doubts concerning his credibility begin to emerge.

I. Jesus returns to Galilee (4:14–15)
    A. In the Spirit's Power (4:14)
    B. Praised for his teaching in synagogues (4:15)
II. Jesus returns to Nazareth (4:16–20)
    A. The place of his upbringing (4:16a)
    B. He customarily enters the synagogue on the Sabbath (4:16b)
III. Jesus takes the posture of a reader (4:17–20)
    A. He reads from Isaiah 61:1–2; 58:6 (4:17–19)
    B. He hands the scroll back to the attendant (4:20a)
IV. Jesus takes the posture of a teacher (4:20a)
    A. He sat down (4:20b)
    B. All eyes were fixed on him (4:20c)
    C. Jesus announces the fulfillment of the text (4:21)
V. Jesus encounters a mixed reception (4:22)
    A. All spoke well of him, amazed at his gracious words (4:22a)
    B. Some began to question his family of origin (4:22b)
VI. Jesus exposits the text prophetically (4:23–27)
    A. Prediction of grievances (4:23)
        1. Proverbial challenge: "Doctor, heal yourself" (4:23a–b)
        2. Proverbial demand: Do here what we have heard happened in Capernaum (4:23c–d)
    B. Sapiential wisdom: "No prophet is accepted in his hometown" (4:24)
    C. Prophetic examples (4:25–27)
        1. Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (4:25–26)
        2. Elisha and Naaman the Syrian leper (4:27)
        3. Israel and the implied apostasy of Nazareth
VII. Jesus is expelled from Nazareth (4:28–30)
    A. The congregation attempts to silence Jesus's message (4:28–29)
    B. Jesus escapes by passing through their midst (4:30)

The more Jesus teaches as he sits (presumably in Moses' seat), the more indignant the congregation becomes toward him. The issue of alleged disagreements between the Markan-Matthean accounts and Luke is addressed in the following section.

Dissimilarities Between Mark, Matthew, and Luke

Though Mark, Matthew, and Luke generally agree on what transpired in the Nazareth synagogue, some dissimilarities can be observed—namely, the story's placement in Luke's narrative.[10] Additionally, commentators have noted the change in Jesus's description from τέκτων[11] "carpenter" (Mark 6:3) to ὁ τοῦ τέκτονος υἱός "the carpenter's Son" (Matt 13:55), and finally to υἱός ἐστιν Ἰωσὴφ "the Son of Joseph" (Luke 4:22).[12] Keith perceives a form-critical development of Jesus's status to appeal to an increasingly Greek audience who would have been offended by Jesus's lack of scribal literacy. As carpenters were artisans and allegedly illiterate, Luke would have an apologetic interest in removing that element from the story.

Keith reminds the reader that Ben Sira singles out the profession of the τέκτων as ineligible for obtaining sage wisdom. The author states,

> Yet they [the artisans] are not sought out for the council of the people, nor do they attain eminence in the public assembly. They do not sit in the judge's seat, nor do they understand the courts' decisions; they cannot expound discipline or judgment, and they are not found among the rulers. But they maintain the fabric of the world, and their concern is for the exercise of their trade." (Sirach, 38:32–34, NRSV)

According to Keith, by changing Jesus from a τέκτων to a τέκτονος υἱός, Matthew begins to move him in the direction of literacy by disassociating him from the artisan class. Luke, therefore, has an interest in further distancing Jesus from carpentry by simply referring to him as υἱός Ἰωσὴφ.

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10. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 191. Nolland states, "The Nazareth scene has been brought forward by Luke from its Markan position (6:1–6) and is used to encapsulate major features of the ministry of Jesus."

11. "One who constructs" as in a "builder" or "carpenter." *Epict. Diss.* 1, 15, 2a describes a τέκτων as a wood worker; The Didache refers to a τέκτων as a stonemason. See BDAG, s.v. τέκτων, 995.

12. Chris Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite: The Origins of the Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 33.

Evaluating the Argument

Keith's view here is a rather curious assertion, as neither Matthew nor Mark use any terms describing Jesus as an illiterate. Craig Evans remarks, "It should be noted too that in the Gospel stories ... Jesus' literacy is never an issue. No evidence of apologetic tendencies on the part of the evangelists could be found, in which Jesus' literary skills are exaggerated, or any sense that Jesus' literary skills are in some way deficient. Jesus' ability to read appears to be a given, not an issue."[13] Keith's argument concerning the form-critical development of Jesus from a carpenter (Mark) to a literate sage (Luke) overlooks several salient issues.

The Idiom "Son Of"

In Semitic parlance, the idiom "son of" conveys a certain equivalency of profession or function. Jesus is the "Son of David" (Matt 21:9; Luke 20:41), thereby embodying this kingly career.[14] As David's Son and God's Son, Luke places Jesus's ministry between David's throne (Luke 1:32, 35) and God's throne (22:69).[15] Luke often utilizes the phrase "sons of" to describe contrasting domains: "the sons of this world" versus "the sons of light" (16:18); "the sons of this age" versus "the sons of God" or "sons of the resurrection" (20:34–36). Jesus's followers are "the sons of the Kingdom" while unbelievers are "the sons of evil" (Luke 6:35; Matt 13:38). As the son of his legal father, it would have been understood that Jesus shared his occupation (1:27;

13. Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013), 86.

14. Geza Vermes, "The 'Son of Man' Debate," *JSNT* 1 (1978): 28–9; C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 110–3; For other uses of the idiom "son of" as vocational equivalency see 2 Thess 2:3; cf. Dan 11:36–37; Sib. Or. 5:33–34; T. Hez. 4:6; 2 En. 29:4.

15. Joseph Plevnik, "Son of Man Seated at the Right Hand of God: Luke 22.69 in Lucan Christology," *Bib* 72 (1991): 331–47. Plevnik sees a difference in vocation between David's throne and God's own throne. However as "God's Son" and "David's Son," Jesus is assumed to take up his fathers' vocation.

3:23, 24).[16] Luke's connection of Jesus to Joseph is with a view to his legal status as David's heir and with respect to his Messianic ministry (2:3–4, 11–12, 16) and has less to do with disassociating him from the artisan class.[17] Growing up in rural Nazareth (4:16), Jesus apprenticed as a carpenter with his father (Mark 6:3; Matt 13:55), who Luke identifies as "Joseph."[18]

Luke Presupposes his Sources

Furthermore, Luke curiously provides little information concerning Jesus's parents. Though Luke mentions Joseph five times and narrates an extended conversation between Mary and the angelic messenger, he does not familiarize the reader with their backgrounds.[19] This suggests the intended readers, Theophilus and his community, have already been acquainted with these characters and their circumstances.[20] Matthew describes Joseph as a "just man" and a woodworker by trade (Matt 13:55) who was obedient to the angel's command (Matt 1:19, 24). Luke foregoes this introduction altogether. His interest is to illuminate issues for the reader that need clarity, and he presupposes that Theophilus had already been instructed in the primary

16. Philip W. Jacobs, "Joseph the Carpenter," in *BibInt* 5 (Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2016), 46, 48.

17. Jacobs, "Joseph the Carpenter," 55.

18. BDAG, s.v. τέκτων, 995. "One who constructs" as in a "builder" or "carpenter."

19. Much has been written on Luke's attention to Mary instead of Joseph. See John M. Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 16; François Bovon, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, trans. James E. Crouch (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2002), 26–30; Nolland, *Luke 19:20*, 133; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AYB 28 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 307.

20. Nolland, *Luke* 1:1–9:20, "Introduction and Provenance."

sources (Luke 1:1–4).[21] Hence, the repetition here was simply not warranted. Furthermore, Luke emphasizes that Jesus is Joseph's legal son by noting his Davidic lineage (1:27; 2:4). Jesus's legal parentage is traced intentionally through Joseph (3:23); the motivation appears to be to establish his legal right to claim David's throne.[22]

Torah Education for the Populace

Chapter 3 demonstrated that the scribal-literate class directed much of their educational efforts toward the populace. Ben Sira's (195 BCE) lament that more craftsmen did not pursue education presupposes that individuals who had the time and opportunity could seek it. Josephus insists that the Pharisaic teaching was "delivered to the people" (*Ant.* 13:29). This confirms Jesus's acknowledgement that his Jewish hearers were socially obligated to "do whatever they say" (Matt 23:2). Likewise, the Augustus decree refers to the practices of the Jews (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.6.163) of educating their people in the synagogue. The edict forbade the theft of "their holy Scripture (βίβλους), or their sacred money, whether it be out of the synagogue on the Sabbath (Σαββᾶτεῖον) or public schools (ἀνδρών)," which included their study materials. In response to Apion's accusations that the Jewish faith was a recent and, therefore, an illegal religion (*religio illicita*), Josephus insists that the education of their children held the highest value (*C. Ap.* 1.60–61).[23] Contradicting Ben Sira's earlier assertion that artisan workers (such as carpenters) could not "learn wisdom" nor become proficient in Torah, Josephus indicates, "every

21. Nolland has little confidence that scholars have identified Luke's unknown source material, see *Luke 1:1–9:20*, xxxi. With respect to his close use of Matthew and Mark, Keener suggests, "We should expect them [Synoptic authors] to adapt their sources where we cannot test them in ways comparable to where we can." see Craig S. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 499.

22. Garland, *Luke*, 474.

23. *C. Ap.* 2.175 (Thackery, LCL).

week men should desert their other occupations and assemble to listen to the Law and to obtain a thorough and accurate (ἀκριβῶς) knowledge of it (*C. Ap.* 2.175)."[24] Likewise, Philo refers to the synagogues as "schools of prudence" and every other admirable virtue (Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.127).

Ancient Attestations of Lay Reading

As for reading among laymen or non-scribal elites, evidence indicates that the earliest form of the Qumran society was characterized by the "democratization of reading."[25] All members were expected to share this social responsibility (1Qs 6:6b–8a). Philo also described the public reading of the Scripture in the Alexandrian synagogue as including participants from within the congregation. He states, "one from among them reads" (*Prob. Good Person*, 81–82). The antecedent to "them" appears to be the elderly and younger members who have already taken their seats in the congregation. Philo notes that congregational readers were followed by "one of especial proficiency," likely a scribal-literate interpreter. Degrees of reading and interpretive ability existed, in addition to various social expectations of the reader and the interpreter. Philo likewise states that "they" (referring to average devout believers) did not need to inquire persons "learned in the law" because they were not "ignorant" or "unlearned" (ἄγνοια) (*Hypoth.* 7:14). Moreover, Jews were criticized by their pagan counterparts for their meticulous and prolonged study of "sacred books" and their "ancestors' philosophy" (*Spec. Laws* 2:62–64). And lastly, we have seen numerous Greco-Roman texts describing readers of all ability levels—but distinct from professional interpretive readers. According to Quintilian, readers could recite

24. *C. Ap.* 2.175 (Thackery, LCL).

25. Charlotte Hempel, "Interpretative Authority in the Community Rule Tradition," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 10 (2003): 59–80.

texts without an aptitude to engage in the interpretive arts (*Inst.* 12.13.2).[26] Reading could be learned without learning to write well, or vice-versa, and one's ability to write well determined their aptitude for scribal practice.

Scribal-literate Tradesmen?

Scholars who embrace the new majority view of Jesus's illiteracy primarily assert that an impassable social gulf existed between mere artisan and scribal education. However, substantial evidence suggests that many of the scribal educated elite had also learned various tradecrafts. The scribes and Pharisees may have constituted what Anthony J. Saldarini has called a "retainer class" that bridged lower agrarian and ruling parties. Saldarini notes that a majority of the people in Jesus's social world were "townspeople who served the needs of the governing class as soldiers, educators, religious functionaries, entertainers and skilled artisans; it is here we will find the Pharisees and scribes."[27] Roland Deines, however, cautions against stereotyping the Pharisees into a singular distinct group. Members from various classes could espouse Pharisaic principles as both "Paul the artisan and the aristocrat Josephus can boast of close links with Pharisaism."[28] Some Pharisees and scribes could learn various trades but were still an influential social group among the ruling class.

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26. Paul Foster, "Educating Jesus," 30; cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.4–7; Leofranc Holford-Strevens, *Aulus Gellius: An Antonine Scholar and His Achievements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); As revealed in the insights of Dionysius, reading was usually developed first and not considered to be scribal expertise until the students developed writing ability. Thus, reading could be conducted without much scribal-literate instruction. In some cases, writing could also be developed as a rote skill without much attention to reading. Mikeal C. Parsons, "The Character of the Lame Man in Acts 3–4," *JBL* 124 (2005): 295–312.

27. Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 38. Contrary to Keener, Saldarini estimates the artisan class to constitute no more than 7% of the population. This percentage could increase depending on the size of the city, as artisan and merchant guilds could wield significant influence and social power, as is evidenced by Demetrius who led the silversmith guild in Ephesus (Acts 19:24–27).

28. Roland Deines, "The Social Profile of the Pharisees," in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature*, ed. Reimund Bieringer et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 124. Paul was a tentmaker by trade (1 Thess 2:9; 1 Cor 9:6),

As an example, according to Josephus, Herod commanded that 1,000 artisan priests be trained as masons and carpenters in order to construct the inner courts of the temple (*Ant.* 15.390). Although a general stratification between artisans (τεχνῖται) and members of the religious leadership has been acknowledged, some overlap existed between them within Judaism. Manual work was viewed with less contempt in a Judaic setting than it was in a Greco-Roman context.[29] This is evidenced by Paul's acknowledgment of Corinthian grievances concerning his manual labor among them (1 Cor 4:11; 9:6, 15, 18; 9:18–19; 2 Cor 11:7, 23, 27; 12:13). Yet, Luke notes his acceptance within Jewish synagogues, particularly in Thessalonica where he was both a welcomed reader and preacher (Acts 17:10, 17) and a professed manual laborer (1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7–8).[30] Ben Sira was previously observed to lament the lack of artisan education owing to the demands of manual labor. However, he also highly valued work as a principle of Torah (Sir 7:15). Likewise, the Essenes, a largely literate and devout religious community, combined their priestly and manual labor duties. Josephus states that after their evening meals, "they lay aside their [white] garments, and betake themselves to their labors again till the evening" (*J.W.* 2.131).[31] In the Mishnah, Shemaiah encouraged manual labor among the students of Torah (ʾAbot 1:10). Keener summarizes, "Jewish tradition was never monolithic on the subject of sages working, though it was more apt to present manual labor as honorable than do

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whereas Josephus was a self-admitted Aristocrat; cf. Naham Avigad, "Jerusalem Flourishing—A Craft Center for Stone, Pottery and Glass," *BAR* 9 (1983): 48–65.

29. Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: 15:1–23:35*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 2726.

30. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary,* 2726. Provided the rabbinic traditions in the Mishnah were well preserved orally until the early third century CE, then there is good reason to think, as Keener suggests, that "most sages worked."

31. Josephus, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (trans. William Whiston; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 605.

extant elite Greek sources."[32] Critical scholars have simply made too much of the artisan-elitist divide in Judaism with respect to reading in the synagogue.

Being Glorified by All (4:14–15)

Luke's focus does not appear to be on Jesus's scribal-literate affectations or pretentions. Instead, Luke introduces the Nazareth incident writing Καὶ ὑπέστρεψεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee" (4:14). Luke's use of "spirit" (πνεῦμα) is frequent compared to Mark and Matthew's use of the term.[33] Luke's apologetic interest is to show Jesus as a Spirit-anointed prophet-Son, hence his mention of Jesus reading is quite incidental. John T. Carroll states,

> This inaugural episode is laced with theological concerns that bear great import in Luke's narrative. Jesus' messianic vocation is developed with the aide of several significant associations: empowerment by the Spirit of God; fulfillment of Scripture; the prophetic role; a mission of deliverance for the marginalized, the needy, and outsiders; and resulting rejection by well-placed insiders.[34]

Jesus's predecessor, John, is "filled with the Spirit," even in the womb (Luke 1:15). The Spirit overshadows Mary during miraculous conception (1:35). John's father, Zechariah, is filled with the Spirit, resulting in prophecy (1:67). Simeon's ministry is characterized by the presence of the Spirit (2:25–27) and he prophesied that Jesus would baptize the people in the Holy Spirit and fire

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32. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary,* 2726. He states further, "As might be expected, some Tannaim also emphasized that the study of Torah was the most important toil (R. Eleazar in b. Sanh. 99b). Jewish people more generally condemned idleness. A Diaspora Jewish writer warned that one who does not learn a craft must wield a hoe—that is, engage in the strenuous and truly despised labor of digging."

33. The Gospel of Luke certainly is not the only Gospel interested in the Holy Spirit. See Blaine Charrette, *Restoring Presence: The Spirit in Matthew's Gospel* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000); George Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospels of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); M. Robert Mansfield, *Spirit and Gospel in Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987).

34. John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 110.

(3:16). Jesus's ministry is inaugurated by the anointing of the Spirit and a heavenly affirmation of his distinctiveness (3:22), resulting in Jesus being "full of the Holy Spirit" (4:1).

A Spirit-Filled Teacher (4:14a)

After prolonged temptation in the Judean wilderness by the Devil who offered him bogus "authority and glory" (Luke 4:6), Jesus returns to Galilee filled with the Spirit's power (4:14). He then reads from the prophet Isaiah, declaring that "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me" (4:18; Isa 61:1). Later, the disciples report their demon-conquering activities (4:33, 36; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2, 29, 55; 9:39, 42; 10:20), followed by Jesus's charismatic response of joy (10:21). He then promises the disciples that the Father will give them the same Spirit of power. This promise is realized in Acts both for Israel and the Gentiles (Acts 2:14–21; Joel 2:28–32; 24:49; Acts 2:30–36; 10:44–47; 11:15–16; 15:8).[35] Marshall makes the connection, "The power of the Spirit is linked especially with the apostolic witness, and hence here [Luke 4:16] the primary reference is presumably to the authority of Jesus to teach."[36] The Spirit's work in apostolic witness, preaching, and teaching of the Scripture is paramount (Acts 1:5, 8; 2:4, 17, 33; 4:8, 25, 31; 8:5; 9:20; 13:5; 15:36; 18:25; 28:30). Luke's emphasis on the Spirit's outpouring and work centers on his birth narratives and preparation for a "Spirit-bearing community" who likewise will preach, teach, and bear witness to the truth.[37] As was evidenced by Jeremiah "reading" an oracle to his scribe Baruch who "wrote down" the message, prophets could "read" in a culturally significant

35. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50,* vol. 1, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 32.

36. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 176.

37. C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1966), 153.

sense without being considered scribal-literate. Their act of reading was public proclamation of God's Word.

Charismatic itinerancy characterizes Jesus's ministry; however, Luke articulates an added dimension to his Spirit-filled activity.[38] Jesus says that the Father is the giver of this eschatological blessing (Luke 11:13). Yet, Jesus directly promises to give the Spirit after his resurrection (Acts 1:5, 8). The Holy Spirit is promised by the Father (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 2:23) and yet is bestowed directly by Jesus (3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16).[39] Nina Henrichs-Tarasenkova states, "The language that Luke employs in his narration of the Spirit's outpouring is reminiscent of YHWH's theophanies."[40] In the OT, the symbols of rushing wind (Gen 1:2; 2 Sam 22:16; 1 Kgs 19:11–12; Ezek 1:4, 27; 13:13; Job 37:10;), blazing fire (Gen 15:17; Exod 19:18; 24:17; Deut 4:11–12; Ps 29:7–9), and the Spirit's reception (Isa 34:16; 61:1–2; 63:10–14) signal Yahweh's divine presence among the people.[41] Just as Yahweh was the giver of the eschatological gift of the Spirit (Ezek 39:29), pouring him out on all people (Joel 2:28), so too does Jesus offer the Spirit to believers. At Pentecost, Peter declares, "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing" (Acts 2:33). That Jesus was appointed the Christ signals the availability of Yahweh's presence for times of refreshing (Acts

38. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 184.

39. Garland, *Luke*, 474.

40. Nina Henrichs-Tarasenkova, *Luke's Christology of Divine Identity*, LNTS 542 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2016), 174.

41. Henrichs-Tarasenkova, *Luke's Christology of Divine Identity*, 174.

3:20). Likewise, through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is present to guide and warn his disciples as "the Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7).[42]

Because of this Spirit enablement, "a report about him went out through all the surrounding country" (4:14b). The term κατά followed by the genitive (καθ' ὅλης τῆς περιχώρου) stresses the activity extending out in "various directions within an area," and thus, "throughout" the whole region.[43] Marshall suggests the "region or περίχωρος (3:3) will be the area within Galilee around the town (Capernaum, 4:23) where Jesus was at work."[44] Jesus's ministry of teaching, accompanied by miraculous signs and wonders inspired this regional report.[45]

Matthew and Mark also describe Jesus as having experienced stratospheric success almost immediately (Matt 9:26; Mark 5:27).[46] Moreover, Luke briefly states that his ministry was established first in Galilee before his return to Nazareth. Luke summarizes καὶ αὐτὸς ἐδίδασκεν ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν, "And he taught in their synagogues." The term ἐδίδασκεν (imperfect active indicative, 3rd person singular of διδάσκω) can be rendered as a progressive or ingressive action.[47] If progressive, it means "was teaching" (CSB, NIV), and if ingressive, it

42. Henrichs-Tarasenkova, *Luke's Christology of Divine Identity*, 14–5; cf. H. Douglas Buckwalter, *The Character and Purpose of Luke's Christology*, SNTSMS 89 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Summarizing Buckwalter's position, Tarasenkova explains, "Buckwalter stresses the fact that in Acts Jesus is the only other being, besides YHWH himself, who is said to give the Spirit."

43. Thompson, *Luke*, 72.

44. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 177.

45. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 187.

46. See Barbara Shellard. *New Light on Luke: Its Purpose, Sources and Literary Context*, JSNTSup 215 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 18. No doubt both Mark and Matthew adopt literary compression in their opening chapters. However, given the fact that Jesus ministered for only three and half years, it seems plausible that his popularity coincided almost immediately with his public baptism.

47. Thompson, *Luke*, 72

means “began” or “commenced” to teach (NRSV, NASB), making the ESV rendering “he taught” less appealing. Mark’s phrase ἤρξατο διδάσκειν ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ seems to support the idea of an ingressive action: “he began to teach in the synagogue” (Mark 6:2). This exact phrase is used elsewhere in Mark to describe Jesus’s teaching ministry both in the synagogue and outside of it (4:1; 6:34; 8:31).[48] He commenced teaching in their worship houses and openly in various environments.

R.T. France views both texts (Mark and Luke) as an indication that Jesus’s sermon was cut short. Though he “began to teach” or “commenced teaching,” his sermon was interrupted and never quite finished.[49] While Mark uses the infinitive and Luke uses the indicative of the term διδάσκω, they seem to carry the same force. Jesus initiated the teaching in the synagogue. The term “teaching,” while often referring to formal or informal instruction, can also mean to “give direction,” as is the case with officials who engage with innuendo and rumor (Matt 28:15).[50] In the synagogue setting, the instruction is formal and follows established social protocols. Jesus’s reading in the synagogue (Luke 4:16–18) likely took up the middle portion of the service, as the reading of prophetic texts did not conclude the meeting (Meg. 3:1–5, 10; 31a–b).[51] Bock states, “A synagogue service had various elements: recitation of the Shema (Deut. 6:4–9), prayers

48. Robert Stein, “Mark,” in *BECNT* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 280. A similar phrase “began to speak” occurs in 10:32; 12:1; 13:5.

49. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 242.

50. BDAG, s.v. διδάσκω, 241.

51. Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, vol. 7b (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 111. Meg. 3:1–4 reads “He who reads the scroll may stand or sit; if one read it, of if two shall read it, they have fulfilled their duty. In the place where the custom is to recite a benediction one should recite it, but where it is not customary to recite a benediction he does not recite it. On the second day of the week, and on the fifth day, and on the Sabbath day at the afternoon service three persons read; they must not reduce the number nor add to it; nor do they conclude with a reading from the Prophets. He that begins the reading from the Torah and he that concludes it recites a benediction, the one at the start and the other at the conclusion.”

(including some set prayers like the Tephillah and the Shemoneh Esreh [Eighteen Benedictions]), a reading from the Law, a reading from the Prophets, instruction on the passages, and a benediction."[52] Readers began with "Moses" each Sabbath (Acts 15:21), the Torah reading preceding the haftarah, or Prophets (Acts 13:15, 17). Nothing that Luke describes here is inconsistent with what is known about synagogue services in the Second Temple period from Josephus, Philo, or the Mishnah. That Jesus was a welcome reader and teacher of the prophets is historically likely.[53] The congregation initially welcomes him as a reader on Sabbath, having heard the report that Galileans in the surrounding area are glorifying him for his teaching. This requires a direct inspection by those who knew him best in Nazareth.

A Glorified Teacher (4:15b)

Again, the argument from Crossan and Keith was that Luke provided a polemical text in defense of Jesus as a scribal-literate reader. Yet Luke's focus appears to be otherwise. The result of Jesus's Spirit-anointed ministry of teaching in power is that Jesus "is glorified by all." The present passive participle δοξαζόμενος derived from δοξάζω means "being glorified" and introduces an unfolding Lucan Christology. The various forms of δοξάζω often appear in contexts that speak exclusively of God's glory. Jesus's miraculous ministry inspired fear and awe in the hearts of the crowds who glorified God (Mark 2:12 δοξάζειν; Matt 9:8 ἐδόξασαν; 15:31; Luke 5:26 ἐδόξαζον; 7:16 ἐδόξαζον; 13:13 ἐδόξαζεν).[54]

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52. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 403.

53. The miraculous nature of Jesus's teaching ministry elevated him to the status of a prophet in the eyes of his countrymen All the Synoptics attest that the crowds viewed him as "one of the prophets" (Matt 16:14; 21:11; Mark 6:4, 15; 11:32; Luke 7:16). This point will be further discussed in Ch. 6 of this dissertation when Jesus actively proclaims himself as the fulfillment of the Isaian oracle about a royal prophet who inaugurates God's eschatological Jubilee.

54. Christine Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second-Temple Period*, JSOTSup 291 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 83. Some attention has been paid to the phrase δοξαζόμενος ὑπὸ πάντων, meaning "being

Fitzmyer downplays the idea that the Galileans were transferring God's own glory to Jesus.[55] Likewise Nolland, for example, insists that despite Luke's use of δοξάζω, "we should not think in terms of a divine prerogative being conferred on Jesus."[56] However, the statement in 4:15b can hardly be understood apart from Luke's overall portrait of Christ. Thompson maintains, "Every other occurrence of δοξάζω in Luke-Acts refers to glorifying God (2:20; 5:25–26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47; Acts 4:21; 11:18; 13:48; 21:20; though cf. 3:13)."[57] To what extent are all the people glorifying Jesus? David Garland states, "The glory that ultimately counts is not the fickle hero worship bestowed by humans. It is the glory that comes from the giving of his life, which is tied to the eternal glory that is to come (9:26; 21:27; 24:26)."[58] The attention of Galileans brings him glory and public fame, but the statement in 4:15b foreshadows the glory that will be revealed in Christ. Jesus predicts that he will return in "glory" (Luke 9:26). He then reveals himself in a luminous, transfigured state with Moses and Elijah (9:32). Luke describes him riding into Jerusalem as Israel's king, inspiring glorious praise (19:38). At his trial, Jesus assures the high priest that they will witness the Son of Man come in a cloud with power

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glorified by all," and its relationship to the Messianic vision of the pseudepigraphical work, the Testament of Levi (T. Levi 17:1–3), which appears in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (4QLevi[a]) and reads, "In the second Jubilee the Anointed One shall be conceived in sorrow of the beloved one, and his priesthood shall be prized and shall be glorified by all." This is the same phrase in Greek that Luke uses in 4:15b when referring to Jesus who lived in Galilee being "glorified by all." While Luke likely did not cite this T. Levi text directly, both he and his sources were influenced by prevalent messianic traditions in his time. This is likely another example of an author "breathing the worldview air" of his culture rather than direct borrowing. See John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 19.

55. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel*, 524. Fitzmyer, for example, ignores the subject of Jesus's glory altogether; cf. Morris, *Luke*, 139. Morris does not comment on the glorification but later insists that the healed paralytic "glorified God" not Jesus.

56. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 187.

57. Thompson, *Luke*, 73.

58. Garland, "Luke," 194–5.

and "great glory"—reminiscent of the exalted Son of Man in Daniel 7 (Luke 21:27). After his resurrection, he reminds his disciples that the Christ was meant to suffer before entering "his glory" (24:26). Stephen witnesses the glory of God's throne to which Jesus has now acceded (Acts 7:55; cf. Acts 1:9).[59]

Thus, Luke's statement of Christ δοξαζόμενος ὑπὸ πάντων (Luke 4:15b) captures a historical reaction and yet foreshadows Lucan divine-Son Christology. The Galileans' praise of Jesus was more significant than they realized. In their present, they are not yet privy to all that Luke's readers know. Nevertheless, they become instrumental in the unveiling of Christ's glory. Luke's apologetic interest appears to be to frame the synagogue scene with high Christological claims.

He Came to Nazareth (Luke 4:16a)

Jewish Sepphoris and Judas the Galilean

After generally being glorified by all the people, Luke adds, Καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς Ναζαρά, meaning "And he came to Nazareth" (4:16a). Nazareth was a neighboring community five miles away from the town of Sepphoris.[60] Described as "the ornament of all Galilee" by Josephus (*Ant.* 1:27) and located at the junction of two significant roads in antiquity, Sepphoris was a Jewish city with Roman features.[61] It was built on a hilltop (286 meters above sea level) and was central

59. Raymond Abba, "The Divine Name Yahweh," *JBL* 80 (December 1961): 320–8; cf. J. Gordon McConville, "God's Name and God's Glory," *TynBul* 30 (1979): 149–63. Estimates of its population range from 8,000–30,000. See Richard A. Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1996), 49–65.

60. Ken Dark, "Has Jesus' Nazareth House Been Found?" *BAR* 41 (2015): 54–63, here 61.

61. Mark Chancey and Eric M. Meyers, "How Jewish was Sepphoris in Jesus' Time?" *BAR* 26 (2000): 18–33, here 23–4. Sepphoris was an urban center with administrative units, entertainment structures, and average-sized domiciles for the region.

to Galilee, overlooking the Beit Netofa Valley.[62] Many artifacts were found at Sepphoris, indicating that it was a Jewish town. The evidence includes Jewish stoneware instead of the typical Greek pottery, the lack of pig bones, a Jewish ostracon translated into Greek denoting Jewish officeholders, earlier Jewish coinage devoid of the image of the Roman emperor, and the numerous *mikva'ot*—ritual baptism tanks.[63] Evidence of pagan and Roman presence was practically nonexistent for the first century before the invasion of the Romans and the temple's destruction in 70 CE. According to Ken Dark, the "evidence suggests that Jesus' boyhood was spent in a conservative Jewish community that had little contact with Hellenistic or Roman culture."[64] During Herod's renovation of the city, enough stonework projects were underway to require stonemasons and artisans of all kinds. There was also the need to construct many doors, shutters, steps, and mud and wattle roofing.[65] Local Jewish artisans would have been particularly adept at meeting these ongoing construction needs within the Herodian economy.[66] Men in the artisan class constituted an estimated ten percent of the population of Roman Palestine and were generally considered distinct from the agrarian class.[67] These men fulfilled the construction

62. Eric M. Meyers, Ehud Netzer, and Carol L. Meyers, "Sepphoris: 'Ornament of Galilee,'" *BAR* 49 (1986): 4; Richard A. Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1996), 49.

63. Chancey and Meyers, "How Jewish was Sepphoris?" 23–24.

64. Dark, "Has Jesus' Nazareth House Been Found?" 63.

65. Michael Woods and Mary B. Woods, *Ancient Construction: From Tents to Towers* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publishing, 2000), 21–2. Mud and wattle roofing was, by far, the primary roofing for ancient Jewish homes, contrasted to the often-haphazard construction of Greek tile roofing.

66. Chancey and Meyers, "How Jewish was Sepphoris?" 23–24; cf. Carol L Meyers et al., "Sepphoris in Galilee: Crosscurrents of Cultures," ed. Rebecca Martin Nagy (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996); Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee: The Population of Galilee and New Testament Studies*, SNTS 134 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 82.

67. Craig S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus*, 21; cf. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society,* 3. Saldarini categorizes the Pharisees in the artisan class since they had various trade skills. He also disagrees with Crossan and asserts that the Pharisees are evidence of an urban middle class.

needs of this Jewish region, and Jesus would have had many opportunities for exposure to the broader Judaic culture as a carpenter near Sepphoris.

After the Romans divided Palestine into five distinct regions, Sepphoris became the administrative center and the capital city of Galilee (*J.W.* 1.170; *Ant.* 14.91). Herod the Great took up residence there in order to fortify his hold on regional power (*J.W.* 1.304; *Ant.* 14.414). After Herod's death, the rebel Judas of Galilee took up arms against Rome, sparked by the Quirinius census designed to tax Jewish estates and commerce in the region. Josephus describes him, "But a certain Judas, a Gaulanite, from a city named Gamala, who had enlisted the aid of Saddok, a Pharisee, threw himself into the cause of rebellion. They said that the assessment carried with it a status amounting to downright slavery, no less, and appealed to the nation to make a bid for independence" (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1.4 [Feldman]).[68] A fierce nationalist, Judas took over the royal palace in Sepphoris, making it his base of operations and armed his militia with the cache of weapons left by Herod (*Ant.* 18.1.7–10).[69] Josephus records that the Romans killed Judas, burned the city, enslaved its residents, and executed thousands of Judas's sympathizers (*J.W.* 2.68; *Ant.* 17.289). Moreover, the whole rebellion deteriorated resulting in brutal infighting among Galilean factions. He describes Judas's philosophy as agreeing with the Pharisees on all points, with the addition of "an inviolable attachment to liberty" (*Ant.* 18.1.23).[70] He calls the revolutionary philosophy an "infection" that spread to every corner of the region (*Ant*. 18.1.6). The result was an incalculable loss of loved ones, friends, family, and honored

68. Elsewhere, Josephus will refer to him as simply "Judas the Galilean."

69. Judas' sons followed Theudas the magician and inflamed the country, eventually leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

70. He records the phenomenon of social banditry in this region, mentioning several historical "bandits" who agitated Rome at the time. Josephus *J.W.* 1.10.5–7; 1.204–11; *Ant.* 14.9.2–4; 159–74; Herod attempted to eradicate the land of brigands (1.16.2; 1.304).

leaders, all of which eventually led to the temple's destruction (Josephus, *J.W.* 18.1.8).[71] In all likelihood, the impact of this revolution on the inhabitants in the Galilean region was significant. Jesus could not have been anything like Crossan's "cynic sage" because no such influence appears to have existed in his region.[72]

Devout Nazareth

John's Gospel captures the disciples' incredulity toward a prospective Messiah from Nazareth. Who could believe that anything good could originate from such a town (John 1:46)? Nazareth archeology suggests a population of approximately 500 in Jesus's day and no evidence of pagan temples or gymnasiums have been found. Evans remarks, "In all likelihood, not a single non-Jew lived in Nazareth at this time."[73] Archeological evidence from the area is "sparse but intriguing."[74] This settlement excelled in the production of wine and olive oil, barley, wheat, and the raising of sheep and goats. Due to the shallowness of the soil detected in recent excavations,

71. Josephus, *J.W.* 18.1.8. The revolution apparently continued under the leadership of Judas's sons, James and Simon, who were later crucified by Tiberius Julius Alexander.

72. Strictly speaking, Crossan asserted that Jesus was a "Jewish peasant sage." See John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography: A Startling Account of What we Can Know About Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), prologue; John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); Crossan, "Open Healing and Open Eating: Jesus as a Jewish Cynic," *BR* 36 (1991): 6–18.

73. Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013), 3. Evans states, "Nazareth is located in the Nazareth Mountains in lower Galilee, about 500 meters above sea level. The name 'Nazareth' appears inscribed on a stone tablet that lists the priestly courses (1 Chron. 24:15–16). The second line reads: 'The eighth course [is] Happizzez of Nazareth.' The tablet was found in the ruins of a third- or fourth-century synagogue in Caesarea Maritima." cf. B. Bagatti, *Excavations in Nazareth: Vol. 1, From the Beginning till the XII Century* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1969).

74. Dark, "Has Jesus' Nazareth House Been Found?" 61; cf. Evans, *Jesus and His World*, 138. Evans notes, "The famous 'Nazareth Inscription,' an edict of Caesar forbidding vandalizing or tampering with tombs, including the unlawful removal of a corpse. The inscription is now housed in the Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France."

the primary "crop" was likely wine grapes as vineyards were common in the area.[75] Despite the unremarkable nature of the area, Gospel authors often refer to him as "Jesus of Nazareth" (Matt 21:11; Mark 1:24; Luke 18:37; John 1:45; Acts 2:22; also Matt 4:13; Mark 1:9; Luke 2:39).[76] Epigraphic evidence suggests that the local residents who settled there named the town *Naṣaret* in Hebrew, or "Little-Netzer," meaning "offshoot of David."[77] Garland notes, "The clan members ... presumably regarded themselves as descendants of David and gave the place an intentionally messianic name."[78] Evans observes that the existence of several major highways "cautions against the assumption that Jesus and his fellow Galileans were placebound and unacquainted with the larger world."[79] Thus, it is very unlikely that Jesus would have been rejected as a possible Messiah due to his artisan background. The townsfolk live in a region where prospective Messiah's were believed to come from that very region, evidenced by their general approval of Judas' rebellion and the town's own patriotic namesake as the "little David."

The archeological remains of Sepphoris and Nazareth support the insight that Jesus lived and worked in a religiously conservative region. Both areas had little to no Gentile presence or influence. Jesus and his family likely found employment and conducted commerce in Sepphoris.

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75. Stephen Pfann, Ross Voss, and Yehudah Rapuano, "Surveys and Excavations at the Nazareth Village Farm (1997–2002)," *BAIAS* 25 (2007): 19–79, here 21.

76. E.P Sanders and Jürgen K. Zangenberg, "Pure Stone: Archaeological Evidence for Jewish Purity Practices in Late Second Temple Judaism (Miqwa'ot and Stone Vessels)," in *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Ancient Judaism*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 537–72; Pfann, Voss, and Rapuano, "Surveys and Excavations," 23, 46. See also Dark, "Has Jesus' Nazareth House Been Found?" 61; Roland Deines, "The Pharisees Between 'Judaisms' and 'Common Judaism,'" in *Justification and Variegated Nomism, Vol. 1: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D.A. Carson et al., WUNT 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 443–504; Martin Hengel and Roland Deines, "'E.P. Sanders' 'Common Judaism', Jesus and the Pharisees: Review Article of Jewish Law from the Jesus to the Mishnah and Judaism: Practice and Belief by E.P. Sanders," *JTS* 46 (1995): 1–70.

77. Garland, *Luke*, 202.

78. Garland, *Luke*, 202.

79. Evans, *Jesus and His World*, 141.

Some men from Nazareth were also plausibly caught up in Judas the Galilean's insurgency, seeing that it was a revolution of piety and nationalism, fueled by anti-Roman/Gentile sentiment. Later, when Jesus stands to read in the synagogue, everything is heard against the backdrop of profound personal loss at the hands of the Romans. Galilee's residents had known the hope and disappointment of messianic revolution. This fact becomes significant as the exposition of Luke 4:16–30 unfolds. Jesus's inclusion of Gentiles (Luke 4:25–27) in the eschatological plan of God will be met with a certain degree of reflexive ethnocentrism.

As Was His Custom (4:16b)

A Sabbath Observant Reader

Luke states that Jesus entered the synagogue κατὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς αὐτῷ translated, "according to his custom" and infers that Jesus traditionally entered the synagogue for the hearing and reading of the Scripture on the Sabbath. The term εἰωθὸς is articular and marks a definite pattern emphasizing the maintenance of behavior or tradition (Matt 27:15; Mark 10:1).[80] The word αὐτῷ is a dative of reference or possession, hence the rendering "as was *his* custom" (ESV and NIV).[81] That he usually did this in his hometown is debated. However, Morris states, "From Acts it is plain that it was not uncommon for distinguished visitors to be invited to preach. The synagogue was used for instruction as well as for worship; indeed, teaching may be held to be its primary function."[82] Referring to synagogue services, Luke seems to be under the impression that the synagogue meetings were ancestral, "For generations Moses has been preached in every town

80. BDAG, s.v. εἰωθὸς, 295; Thompson, *Luke*, 73. Jesus has already been established in Mark's Gospel as a customary teacher, "and as was his custom he taught all of them" καὶ ὡς εἰώθει πάλιν ἐδίδασκεν αὐτούς.

81. Thompson, *Luke*, 73.

82. Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 125.

and has been read aloud on every Sabbath" (Acts 15:21). By the time Jesus reaches Nazareth, however, he has already been ministering in the Spirit's power. This has given him access to local synagogues—presumably as a prospective prophet.[83]

This is one of six passages that mention the Sabbath in Luke's Gospel.[84] After the Nazareth incident, Jesus continues to teach in the synagogues, beginning with Capernaum (4:31–37; 13:10–17). His activity becomes increasingly subversive, especially as it relates to his authority with Torah law.[85] He declares himself "Lord of the Sabbath" (6:1–5), authorized to do "good" on the Sabbath (6:6–11). This declaration sparks a firestorm of controversy, provoking a debate over healing the sick (13:10–7; 14:1–6). Jesus questions the logic of religious leaders who allowed the rescuing of a donkey yet refused to assist people on the Sabbath (14:3). He also warns against the synagogue as a place of ostentatious religion (20:46; Matt 6:2, 5) and prophesies that believers will be arrested and "delivered up to the synagogues"—the equivalent to imprisonment (21:12; Matt 10:17). That Luke is establishing his "custom" counterbalances this otherwise provocative narrative thread.[86] Contrary to the assertion that Luke casts Jesus as a welcome scribal-literate authority, Luke intends to show him in conflict with the elites. Despite this escalating tension between Jesus and the scribal and Pharisaic class, Luke portrays him as a Torah-observant Jew who regularly observes the Sabbath. Bock states, "This point is especially important, because Jesus' controversy with the Jewish religious leadership may have left him

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83. This study will detail the case for Jesus functioning prophetically in Chapter 6.

84. Thompson, *Luke*, 73. For other references of Jesus teaching as a welcomed synagogue reader, see Matt 4:23; 9:35; 12:9; Mark 1:21; 39; Luke 8:40; 9:11; John 4:45.

85. Craig A. Evans, "'Have You Not Read ...?' Jesus' Subversive Interpretation of Scripture" in *Jesus Research: An International Perspective*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Petr Pokomy (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 182–98.

86. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 404.

with a reputation of being a religiously insensitive rebel."[87] His message greatly challenges the religious establishment of the time, and it is his identity as Christ and the global horizons of his mission that threatens local religious authorities who govern that institution.

Jesus Exposed: A Scribal Literate Pretender?

It is here that Keith asserts a discrepancy (Mark 6:1ff; Matt 13:52ff). He states, "Whereas the Markan and Matthean Jesus never again enters a synagogue after his rejection, the Lucan Jesus teaches in a synagogue immediately in the next pericope (Luke 4:31, 33) and continuously in his gospel. As was mentioned earlier, Luke describes synagogue teaching as Jesus's custom."[88] According to Keith, the purpose of the Nazareth encounter in Mark and Matthew is to expose Jesus as a fraudulent scribal-literate reader. Everyone else in Galilee may have mistaken him for an elitist teacher, which dubiously gave him access to their synagogues; however, the townsfolk in Nazareth knew better. On Keith's view, Matthew and Mark reflect a collective memory that reveals the truth about Jesus. Christ was occasionally mistaken as a scribal-literate Jew giving him access to the synagogues. In Luke, however, the purpose of the Nazareth scene is to help *establish that he is a scribal literate* who handles texts. Therefore, for Keith, "In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is not a member of the manual-labor class but rather a legitimate scribal-literate

87. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 401.

88. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite*, 92.

authority."[89] Keith's approach is historically plausible; however, does it present the best historical explanation? Several factors may call this into question.[90]

Christ's Duplicity in Matthew and Mark?

The issue of how an illiterate artisan who was unable to read could have misled so many, especially those who were in a position to falsify his credentials as a scholar, must be accounted for. Keith clarifies that Jesus was perceived as a scribal-literate teacher by some groups. While Christ may not have intentionally fostered this perception, it is unlikely that he was entirely unaware of this oversight.[91] But surely in order for Jesus to have taught regularly in Galilean synagogues (prior to the Nazareth incident), the local synagogue rulers would have granted him access. How could the local scribal-literate elite, through whom Jesus must have gained entrance and approval, have failed to discern him as an imposter? One would think that Jesus's very first attempt to handle and read Scripture would have been enough for each congregation and their rulers to quickly discover their mistake.

Second, Keith's view presents a curious interpretation, as one wonders why Mark and

89. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite,* 91. Others have taken issue with this view. See Hughson T. Ong, "Jesus' Bilingual Proficiency," in *Sociolinguistic Analysis of the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 88–112, fn. 56. Ong states, "I disagree with the opinion that Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3 indicate that Jesus was unlearned because he was a carpenter's son, since for all we know those who heard him in the synagogue (Matt. 13:54; Mark 6:2) did not know him well or only met him for the first time. I would even argue the same for the case in John 7:15. The Jews not only may not have known Jesus, but they also may just have assumed that Jesus was unlearned. Unless they actually had witnessed Jesus growing up from childhood to adulthood, they could not have possibly known the education of Jesus. The population of the 204 settlements and villages in Galilee was estimated to be about 630,000, so how would it be possible for everyone to know each other's name and family, much more their education, unless they lived in the same neighborhood or village?"

90. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary,* 2726. Keener highlights the possibility of Luke citing from a source that predates Mark, in which case it is *Mark* who adds the word τέκτων to the original source.

91. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 176–77. He states, "For the sake of clarity, I state explicitly that this argument does not require that Jesus *intended* to create multiple perceptions of his scribal-literate status, although I consider it rather unlikely that he was entirely unaware of the effects of his activities." Which of course, would have made him complicit in the ruse, nonetheless.

Matthew would have any interest in casting aspersions on Jesus's character. If Keith's interpretation is correct, then this would be the only instance in the Gospels where the Synoptic authors portray Christ with negative intentions. If Jesus has allowed congregants and local Pharisees, scribes, and synagogue rulers to believe he is a scribal-literate (Mark and Matthew) to dubiously gain access to teaching in the synagogues—then the Nazarenes have every right to "out" him—he is a fraud. The implication of Keith's view is that Mark and Matthew record Christ's duplicity—a surprising claim given the Synoptic authors' assertions of his essential holiness (Mark 1:24; Luke 1:35) and the inability of his opponents to contrive even one legitimate accusation of sin at his trial (Luke 22:66–70; Matt 26:60).[92]

Lastly, why is Jesus not charged at his trial with faking scribal literacy? If Keith's assertion is true, and if important, then this would have been a legitimate area of vulnerability for Jesus. Yet, all Gospels are silent on the matter. No one raises the issue because Jesus's reading ability simply is not an issue for anyone who heard him teach and saw him handle Scripture.

Christ's Rejection in the Synagogue

Keith gives the impression that Jesus's ongoing teaching in the synagogues (Luke's Gospel) is evidence that he was a welcome scribal leader, thereby signaling his legitimacy.[93] However, Luke's portrait is far from this reality, because Jesus is increasingly unwelcome in

92. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AYB 28 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 303. That Jesus would claim blamelessness is not surprising, and Luke begins by describing Jesus's family, Elizabeth and Zechariah as ἦσαν δὲ δίκαιοι ἀμφότεροι ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ, πορευόμενοι, literally translates to "they were both righteous in the sight of God living blamelessly" (Luke 1:6). Later at his trial, the Sanhedrin could not even find legitimate witnesses against Christ (Matt 26:59–60).

93. Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite*, 95.

these settings.[94] In fact, Luke more often portrays Jesus as an unwelcomed outsider.[95] The Synoptic authors regularly depict the scribal elite accusing him of being a "friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Luke 5:30; 7:34; cf. Matt 11:19;), stressing his artisan and low-class associations. Scholars have long noted that Jesus's willingness to fellowship with the disenfranchised and the downtrodden is especially characteristic of Luke's Gospel.[96]

As shown above, each Lucan synagogue encounter after Nazareth portrays Jesus embroiled in controversies, with synagogue officials making claims that would otherwise cause him to be expelled from the local worship houses. Jack Kingsbury states, "Jesus' conflict with Israel (the religious authorities and the people) is to bring the nation to receive him as God's supreme agent of salvation, the one in whom God's scriptural promises to Israel attain to their fulfillment. Virtually from the outset of his ministry, Jesus causes division in Israel."[97] Christ's assumed authority demonstrates that he is no mere "scribe-gone-rogue" but has from the outset of his ministry presumed to occupy a position of authority well beyond both his station in life as an artisan, and exceeding the social power of the scribal-elite teachers.

Larger Crowds Necessitate Larger Venues

The commensurate growth in crowd size and venue size seems to offer a more plausible

94. Kingsbury, *Conflict in Luke*, 84.

95. Dennis E. Smith, "Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke," *JBL* 106 (1987): 613–38.

96. See Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 624 in which the "downtrodden of life: the poor, the hungry, the weeping and the persecuted" are contrasted in Luke with the powerful, socially advantaged. See Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 93. Talbert notes Jesus especially ministered to women as they feature prominently in his ministry. Nolland also suggests that Luke intended the Messianic community to be "a disapproved-of minority, or more-or-less socially disenfranchised," Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 296.

97. Kingsbury, *Conflict in Luke*, 35.

explanation for his increasing departure from the synagogues.[98] Matthew describes large crowds following Jesus immediately as a result of his popular synagogue teaching, "And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.... And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan" (Matt 4:23–25; see also Mark 2:13; Luke 5:15). A direct causal relationship can be observed here—he teaches with miraculous power in the region's synagogues, which necessitates him leaving the assembly houses for larger venues. The very next passage describes Jesus teaching in the open air on hillsides (Matt 5–7; cf. Luke 6:17–49), then in homes with a large crowd pressing in on him (Matt 9:1; Mark 2:4; 3:9), by the lake with great crowds on the shore (Matt 13:12), and in the temple portico before the masses of festival attendees (Matt 26:55; Mark 12:35). As his popularity grew, Jesus taught in venues that could accommodate increasingly larger gatherings (Luke 9:37).

Jesus Continues to Teach in the Temple

Jesus teaches freely in the temple courts on multiple occasions in Mark and Matthew right up to the end. His last discourse is delivered adjacent to the temple complex (Mark 13; Matt 24–25). At his trial, he cited the fact that "Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did

98. Lidia D. Matassa, *Invention of the First Century Synagogue: Ancient Near East Monographs*, ed. Jason M. Silverman and J. Murray Watson (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2018), 3, 148. Matassa argues that "the physical institution of the early synagogue into a multipurpose communal assembly space which was used for everything from commercial trading to a threshing floor, from school to law court and, of course, to a locus of religious activity in some form or another." Most synagogues or spaces that could be used as assembly houses were limited in their seating capacity. It has been estimated that the Masada ruins, for example, likely had a seating capacity of only 250 but served a community of over 900.

not seize me" (Matt 26:55). The temple was the most sacred space in all of Judaism.[99] If he was no longer welcome in the Galilean and Judean synagogues in Mark and Matthew (because Nazareth had exposed him as a fraudulent teacher), then how could he have been allowed to teach openly and freely in the temple itself without being equally exposed? Moreover, when Jesus is accosted for teaching in the temple in Luke's Gospel, the very issue in question is "by what authority do you do these things, or who is it who gave you this authority?" (Luke 20:1). This question immediately follows his *prophetic* act of cleansing the temple (Luke 19:45–46), which motivated the religious leaders to conspire to kill him (Luke 19:47; cf. Matt 21:23). Their assumption is that he does not possess the right to "do these things" with respect to the prophetic and symbolic act of cleansing the temple—not that he lacks scribal-literate authority to teach in the temple courts.

Subversion of Ancestral Laws

For the sake of argument, one can concede that Jesus stopped teaching in synagogues after a certain point in his ministry. In addition to crowd size, this may also have more to do with his incendiary rhetoric and the controversy surrounding his subversion of their hallowed traditions through his supernatural ministry.[100] Each of the canonical Gospels record the escalating tensions between Jesus and the religious establishment. At least in the Synoptics, the scribes, Pharisees, priests, synagogue rulers, and local elders never raise an issue with his

99. Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 16. This, of course, would not be true for the Qumran Jews in the desert. They affirmed the presence of new eschatological temple, instituted by the Spirit, in their "true and pure Israel."

100. Craig Evans, "'Have You Not Read ...?' Jesus' Subversive Interpretation of Scripture" in *Jesus Research: An International Perspective*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Petr Pokomy (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 182–98.

education or ability to read.[101] Their issue is with his miraculous ministry through which he appears to be undermining their ancestral laws. The subversion of their social authority comes via the Gospel authors' high Christology which always seems to be at the heart of the controversy between Christ and the elite.

Luke's Midway Point: A Literary Answer

Finally, Luke himself downplays Jesus's teaching in the synagogues after his last conflict with a synagogue ruler (Luke 13:10–14). This midway point is traditionally about where the Nazareth sermon is placed in Mark and Matthew. If Luke has indeed moved the scene forward for programmatic reasons (and the Markan-Matthean placement is preferred), then practically, it does not change much. As in the case in the Markan-Matthean account, Jesus no longer teaches in synagogues after about the midway point of Luke.[102] Moreover, after 13:10–14, his rhetoric decidedly turns against the synagogue (20:46; 21:12) and is no longer in favor of it.

Summary Conclusion of Chapter 4

In his opening chapters, Luke seems to set high expectations. After a series of angelic and divine confirmations pertaining to Jesus's identity and mission (Luke 1:26–56; 2:8–21, 22–38; 41–51; 3:1–21), and after a successful confrontation with the Devil who offered him counterfeit "glory and authority" (4:1–12), Jesus returns to Galilee. His teaching ministry is infused with the

101. Craig A. Evans, "Jewish Scripture and the Literacy of Jesus," in *From Biblical Criticism to Biblical Faith: Essays in Honor of Lee Martin McDonald*, ed. William H. Brackney and Craig A. Evans (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007), 43. Even though Luke includes novel material in this chapter, he also echoes various themes in Matthew 13, such as the parable of the mustard seed (Luke 13:18–21; Matt 31–32). As was mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study, even in John's Gospel where certain questions regarding his educational background. As Craig Evans has shown, Jesus's ἰδιῶται status means "outsider to the guild" not "uneducated" or "illiterate." As Paul applies this term to himself with respect to certain schools of philosophy.

102. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, 1214.

enabling presence of God, resulting in him "being glorified by all" (4:14–15). Based on 1:5–4:1–12, the reader has every reason to expect that Jesus will have an auspicious messianic career. However, Luke's readers know better—the Christ will have to suffer many trials before entering his glory (Luke 24:26). Jesus suffers the first of many rejections in the town of his youth, the place where he had first learned Torah. It is the home where he had been largely insulated from the indiscretions of pagan life—a place marked by profound loss due to Gentile cruelty and Roman injustice. Jesus's message, therefore, will strike a discordant note among friends.

The study began with an inquiry into what accounts for his authority to teach and what caused the furious response to Jesus in the Nazarene synagogue. Given the review of tertiary and primary sources in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, some answers proposed in scholarly literature regarding Jesus's scribal-literate pretensions seem less plausible. Dunn is correct. Luke's "reading Jesus" (4:16–30) is an entirely credible depiction of synagogue practice in the first century. Judaism likely had plenty of local, lay readers who were less than scribal-literates and possessed more than mere signature or craftsman's literacy. However, Keith is also correct in that as a member of the artisan class, Jesus was not expected to interpret the text with scribal or Pharisaic authority. In the next two chapters, it will become increasingly clearer that indeed, he does not.

CHAPTER 5: THE YEAR OF FAVOR AND THE DAY OF VENGEANCE: A RECEIVED READING OF THE ISAIAN JUBILEE

While Chapter 4 established Jesus as a legitimate lay reader of Isaiah's prophecy and turned our attention to Luke's Christological focus, this chapter examines Jesus's chosen text, Isaiah 61:1–2, in its own historical and literary setting. The research primarily addresses Isaiah's passage in Hebrew, noting variations from Luke's Septuagintal text in Luke 4:18–19. This chapter argues that Jesus read at least Isaiah 61:1–11 and possibly both "Divine Warrior" panels (Isa 52:1–21; 63), which frame the Jubilean promise (Isa 61:1–2) as a day of judgment. This interpretation is based on three arguments: (1) Luke's tendency to compress longer speeches, conversations, and narratives through metalepsis, often involving a dual metonymy. This literary characteristic of Luke's Gospel bodes well for a longer section having been read or explicitly suggested by Christ. (2) An exposition of Isaiah's text reveals a reversal of fortunes—salvation and Jubilee for Israel and wrath and servitude for their Gentile rivals. In Isaiah's text, the two are concurrent and conceptually indivisible. (3) The central themes of Isaiah 61 become interpretive trajectories into Second Temple literature. Many Second Temple texts reflect and amplify the themes of God's favor for faithful Jews and his wrathful vengeance on the nations. All of this will argue for the likelihood of a received tradition among the Palestinian Jews in Nazareth. This will set the scene for Jesus's jarring exposition in Chapter 6 of this study.

Jesus's Use of the Isaian Text (61:1–2; 58:6)

Before engaging with the passage exegetically, it is necessary to first establish how much of Isaiah's text Jesus utilizes in the Nazareth synagogue. There are solid reasons to conclude that Jesus reads Isa 61:1–11 in its entirety, and possibly portions of the Servant of Yahweh section.

Establishing the Text

Scholars generally agree that the cited passages (Isa 61:1–2; 58:6) in Luke 4:18–19 are Septuagintal, with only a few notable differences.[1] Luke employs the word κηρύξαι, meaning "to preach" in place of the LXX's καλέσαι, signifying "to call."[2] Chapter 3 of this dissertation drew attention to the close relationship between orally "calling out" and the act of "reading aloud."[3] Luke likely employed a term that could capture both καλέσαι (LXX) and κηρύξαι (Luke 4), meaning that Jesus's "reading" was an act of oral proclamation.

Luke excludes "to heal the brokenhearted" (Isa 61:1) and conveys that sentiment with the phrase "to set free the oppressed" (58:6).[4] Though Luke omits Isa 61:2b when referring to Yahweh's vengeance, the idea seems strongly implied in Jesus's ministry elsewhere (4:24–27). Bock concludes, "None of these changes alter Isaiah's basic sense."[5] That Luke redacted the reading is not particularly problematic in terms of its historicity. Nolland states, "The LXX text form and the evident redactional activity in no way preclude an actual reading of Isa 61 in the

1. John Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, WBC 35A (Waco, TX: Word, 1989), 193.

2. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 404.

3. Rebecca Haigh, "Oral Aspects: A Performative Approach to 1QM," in *DSD* 26 (2019): 189–219; William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1987), ix; Robert D. Miller II, *Oral Tradition in Ancient Israel*, BPC 4 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 99; Susan Niditch, "Hebrew Bible and Oral Literature: Misconceptions and New Directions," in *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres*, ed. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote, WUNT 260 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 3–18; David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablets of the Heart: The Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4; Marvin Miller, *Performances of Ancient Jewish Letters: From Elephantine to MMT* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Academic, 2015), 76.

4. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 404. As for the text-critical issue of Luke's omission of "to heal the brokenhearted" (Isa 61:1), Bock suggests that its absence could be compensated for by the phrase "to set free those who are oppressed" (Isa 58:6)—a targumic rendering that necessitates that Jesus read only Isaiah 61.

5. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 405.

Nazareth synagogue."[6] Whatever the case may be, the LXX does not alter the essential force of Isaiah's Hebrew version. There are essentially three options for Jesus's reading of Isaiah.

Option 1: Jesus's Metonymous Reading of Isaiah 61:1–2

It is certainly possible that Jesus merely cited the two verses Luke includes in his narrative, excluding Isaiah 61:2b, "the day of vengeance of our God." (Luke 4:18–19). However, the passage may be utilized as a metonym, in which case Jesus reads only two stanzas to evoke the fuller prophetic oracle(s) in the minds of the Nazarenes. This ancient form of "referencing" is prevalent in the canonical Gospels and the epistles as a literary tool.[7] Chapter 4 observed that Luke appears to structure the literary unit (4:16–21) in a chiastic pattern, a construction also evident in his use of the Isaian passage (61:1–2; 58:6). The chiastic pattern is as follows,

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me (Isa 61)
> to preach (εὐαγγελίσασθαι) good news to the poor (Isa 61)
> to proclaim release (ἄφεσιν) to the captives (Isa 61)
> and sight to the blind (Isa 61)
> **[to set at liberty (ἀφέσει) the oppressed (Isa 58:6)]**[8]
> to preach (κηρύξαι) the acceptable year of the Lord (Isa 61).[9]

Either Jesus or Luke may have imported 58:6 to complete the chiastic pattern for the sake of balance and symmetry.[10] But the stated/quoted passages strongly insinuate the fuller oracle of

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6. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 193. More will be said about the use of passages in Second Temple literature (11QMelch) in this chapter. That Jesus used the LXX or an Aramaic targum has also been debated. Nolland remarks, "The Isaianic text quoted in vv 18–19 is clearly Septuagintal. (*i*) It agrees with the LXX against the Hebrew in reading Κυρίου, 'Lord,' instead of יהוה אדני, *ʾădōnāy* YHWH ('Lord Yahweh'), and τυφλοῖς, 'blind,' instead of אסורים, *ăsûrîm*."

7. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 14, 261–62.

8. Emphasis in bold is mine.

9. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 58.

10. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, vol. 1, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 405. Bock questions the chiastic structure and observes that "within the Isaiah passage, however, it fails because the dual

Isaiah 61.

Option 2: Luke's Metaleptic Use of Isaiah

Richard Hays affirms Luke's repeated use of the rhetorical device of metalepsis, which explains the missing 61:2b passage, "In view of all we have seen of the Evangelists' effective us of metalepsis as a literary technique, perhaps we should not be quite so quick to suppose that the unquoted material from Isaiah 61:2 is dissonant with Luke's theological views or his narrative programs."[11] Metalepsis is a literary trope comprised of two Greek words—μετά meaning "behind" and λείπω meaning "to leave."[12] As an ancient referencing tool, this device involves dual metonymy—an intertextual reference is imbedded in the passage. The goal of the interpreter is to "recover the unstated or suppressed correspondences between the two texts."[13] Luke's messenger and prophet (Isa 61:1–11) implies the servant of the Lord section of Isaiah (Isa 52:1–58:14). Moreover, Luke's readers are expected to connect Jesus's liberating vocation to both the Isaianic Jubilee (end of exile) and "its older prototype, the exodus."[14] If this is the case, then Luke intends his readers to perceive Isaiah's anointed messenger as the eschatological prophet in the tradition of Moses. Yahweh's Servant is a messianic deliverer who accedes to David's throne

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references to the Spirit's anointing would have to be put together in a single line."

11. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 226. This is a favorite device of Luke and other instances will be noted below. For a significant response to Hays' theory, see Stanley E. Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology," in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, JSNTSup 148 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 79–96. For a positive assessment, see Andreas J. Köstenberger "Hearing the Old Testament in the New: A Response," in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); 255–94.

12. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 14, 261–62.

13. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 198.

14. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 226.

and delivers good news to the people (Isa 52:1–58:14). Metonymous referencing may include other Servant of Yahweh texts, including Isaiah 42:1–9, 49:1–6, and 63:1 This option is highly likely in that rabbinic Judaism of a later era tended to connect these sections of Isaiah by virtue of their thematic similarities.[15] In any case, Jesus opts for a passage that was undoubtedly well-known and would have evoked the congregation's own collective memory of the larger unit.[16]

Option 3: Isaiah 58:6 as a Literary Interpolation

The question as to whether Luke or Jesus inserted 58:6 has been much debated. Marshall states, "Most scholars argue that such an insertion could not have been made in the actual course of a synagogue reading, and that hence the addition is due to Christian exegetical activity, possibly in order to introduce the concept of forgiveness."[17] It is possible that Luke, and not Jesus, inserted Isaiah 58 for his own reasons. Irrespective of whether Jesus interpolated the passage or read it in full, scholars are generally agreed that his employment of this literary structure as an oral teaching mode in the synagogue is doubtful.[18]

However, three lines of evidence would seem to challenge the prevailing assumption that Jesus did not originally invoke Isa 58: (1) Jesus's behavior in the passage is already unusual in that he is a lay reader who exposits the text self-referentially. That Jesus introduced a curious

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15. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 405. In rabbinic literature, the two passages are treated together due to their similarities. See Marc H. Tanenbaum, "Holy Year 1975 and Its Origins in the Jewish Jubilee Year," *Jubilaeum* 7: 63–79; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary*, OTL, trans. David M. G. Stalker (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 145–48.

16. Lidija Gunjević, *Jubilee in the Bible: Using the Theology of Jürgen Molmann to Find a New Hermeneutic* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 129–38; cf. Bradley C. Gregory, "The Postexilic Exile in Third Isaiah: Isaiah 61:1–3 in Light of Second Temple Hermeneutics," *JBL* 126 (2007): 475–96.

17. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 182.

18. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*. 182.

element into the liturgy should not come as a surprise, given his repeated penchant for the extraordinary and his pattern of unusual conduct. (2) On that note, Jesus's retrospective interpolation of Isaiah 58:6 is probably not that unusual in the first place. The commonly held view of Luke inserting the passage is based on a modern and uncritical definition of "reading" as a mere oculiterate act of decoding a physical text. Though possible, it is unlikely that Jesus started with Isaiah 61 and then read backward in the scroll to Isaiah 58 as a face-value reading of Luke's text implies. However, Chapter 3 provided a framework to understand reading as an oral act of recitation and paraphrasing from memory. Even if Jesus possessed oculiterate skills, he could have orally performed the text or portions of other texts in hand.[19] Readers often interpolated or paraphrased related passages as an interpretive act. The Synoptic authors tend to record Jesus as an oral reader of the Scripture who recited passages from memory. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7) and its counterpart, the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6), Jesus does not open or read a scroll and instead cites or alludes to several OT texts.[20] In the Synoptic Gospels, his citations are sometimes nearly verbatim quotes (Matt 21:42; Luke 22:37); however, at other times, his allusions are approximations and paraphrases (Matt 22:29; Luke 5:14). His oral

19. A term first proposed in Lucretia Yaghjian, "Ancient Reading," in *The Social Sciences and the New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 206–30. cf. David F. Smith, "Can we Hear What They Heard? The Effect of Orality Upon a Markan Reading-event," (PhD diss., Durham University, 2002); William David Shiell, "Reading Acts: The Lector and the Early Christian Audience," (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2003), 25. Shiell states, "The oculiterate reader ... could perform a written text and was able to decode written letters but was not able to compose in the language." By contrast, scribal-literate reading was a technical level of reading performed by the professional scribes; Michal B. Dinkler, "Interpreting Pedagogical Acts: Acts 8.26–40 and Narrative Reflexivity as Pedagogy," *NTS* 63 (2017): 411–27; Pieter F. Craffert and Pieter J.J. Botha. "Why Jesus Could Walk on the Sea but he Could not Read and Write: Reflections on Historicity and Interpretation in Historical Jesus Research," *Neot* 39 (2005): 5–35.

20. Craig Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 21–2; cf. Richard Thomas France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2000); G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

impressions of the Scripture though were conservative in comparison with Josephus' and Philo's allusions (Mark 7:4; Matt 15:2, 23:4).[21] (3) For the sake of space and pacing, Luke often compresses details, stories, teachings, or periods of time in his Gospel. The conflation of the two passages together may imply that Jesus read the longer section or included similar passages in the reading, especially given the thematic similarities between the servant of Yahweh texts. Thus, the Luke 4:18–19 passage is likely representative of a longer section Jesus read, which would include Isaiah 58. Or, at the very least, Jesus's reading of Isaiah 61 could have included passages like Isaiah 58 as oral interpolations owing to their thematic similarities and for the sake of clarity.

Examples of Narrative Compression in Luke's Gospel

Abridged Resurrection "Proofs"

A few examples of compression in Luke's Gospel lend weight to the idea that Luke is here condensing a longer reading and speech given by Jesus. When describing Jesus's post-resurrection appearance on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:24–44), Luke implies that Jesus explained much more from the Scripture than is represented in chapter 24. Similarly, Luke confirms that between Jesus's resurrection and ascension, "He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). The reader is not privy to the "many proofs" and the repeated discourses concerning the kingdom of God.

21. Craig S. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 213. Josephus and Philo both take more liberties with the OT text than does Jesus.

Paraphrased Questions from the Scripture

Most of the questions asked of Christ are also paraphrases of biblical texts recited from memory by Jesus's interlocutors. A pertinent example is when the Sadducees, who are among the most literate sects within Judaism, question Jesus on the law of levirate remarriage:

> Διδάσκαλε, Μωϋσῆς ἔγραψεν ἡμῖν, ἐάν τινος ἀδελφὸς ἀποθάνῃ ἔχων γυναῖκα, καὶ οὗτος ἄτεκνος ᾖ, ἵνα λάβῃ ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ ἐξαναστήσῃ σπέρμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ.
>
> Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother (Luke 20:28).[22]

However, the Levitical law cited from Deuteronomy 25:5 (LXX) reads:

> δὲ Ἐὰν$_1$ ἀδελφοὶ κατοικῶσιν ἐπὶ$_5$ τὸ αὐτό καὶ εἷς αὐτῶν ἀποθάνῃ δὲ μὴ ἦν αὐτῷ σπέρμα, ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ τεθνηκότος οὐκ ἔσται ἔξω, μὴ ἀνδρὶ ἐγγίζοντι ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτῆς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς εἰσελεύσεται πρὸς αὐτὴν καὶ λήμψεται αὐτὴν ἑαυτῷ γυναῖκα, καὶ συνοικήσει αὐτῇ.[23]
>
> But if brothers dwell together and one of them dies, but he does not have seed, the wife of the one deceased shall not be outside, lest a man come near. The brother of her husband shall go into her, and he shall take her for himself as a wife, and he shall live with her (Deut 25:5).[24]

The variance between the original OT citation and the paraphrased version of the Sadducees may reflect the Gospel author's own facility with the text and his predilection for paraphrasing. Keener observes, "By virtue of their trade, ancient historians depended on sources, whether oral

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22. Luke's claim that they denied the resurrection is corroborated by Josephus (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.14; 16–17; *J.W.* 2.165). Regarding levirate marriage in rabbinic literature, see Sipre Deut. 237, 288; Meg. 4; Yebam. 12:6; b. Ketub. 46a. The Mosaic law is merciful by contrast as the rabbinic view presented that a woman who lost many husbands was dangerous and likely cursed.

23. Ken M. Penner et al., eds., *The Lexham English Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), Deut 25:5. כִּֽי־יֵשְׁבוּ אַחִים יַחְדָּו וּמֵת אַחַד מֵהֶם וּבֵן אֵין־לוֹ לֹא־תִהְיֶה אֵשֶׁת־הַמֵּת הַחוּצָה לְאִישׁ זָר יְבָמָהּ יָבֹא* עָלֶיהָ וּלְקָחָהּ לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וְיִבְּמָהּ׃ translated in the ESV as "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go into her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her."

24. *The Lexham English Septuagint*, Deut 25:5. Jesus's answer reflects a common Jewish interpretation of bodily resurrection and universal brotherhood among men and women, cf. 2 Bar. 51:10; 1 En. 104:4, 6; 1QS^b 4:24–28; 1QH 3:21; 6:13.

interviews or earlier texts. When their sources were written, they usually adapted or at least paraphrased them to make them their own."[25] However, the text may also accurately reflect the type of reading or teaching observed by rabbis in Jesus's day, which Luke reflects in his usage of Scripture. The questions posed to Jesus were probably summarized from memory.

Paraphrased Conversations

Both Matthew and Luke were more modest than Josephus in their use of Scripture.[26] Generally, oral readings of texts may include the following: (1) conflating similar passages into one, (2) displacement of narratives to different contexts, (3) compressing time for melodramatic emphasis, (4) simplifying stories by omitting extraneous details, or (5) paraphrasing texts for the sake of space.[27] Comparing the Gospels with Plutarch's *Lives*, Michael Licona concludes, "It is safe to assume that nearly every conversation narrated in the ancient literature, if historical, is a summary of content recalled by the author and/or his sources."[28] That is, ancient historians tended to compress details for the sake of space and readability, offering the "gist" wherever possible.[29]

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25. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability*, 213.

26. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability*, 213; See also Naomi G. Cohen, "Josephus and Scripture: Is Josephus' Treatment of the Scriptural Narrative Similar Throughout the 'Antiquities,'" *JQR* 54 (1964): 311–32. As an example, Josephus routinely uses the Jeremiah 7 passage expansively and metaphorically and applies it as actual history to his own time. See Tucker S. Ferda, "Jeremiah 7 and Flavius Josephus on the First Jewish War," *JSJ* 44 (2013): 158–173.

27. Michael R. Licona, *Why Are There Differences in the Gospels? What We Can Learn from Ancient Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 117; cf. Plutarch, *Lives, Volume IX: Demetrius and Antony, Pyrrhus and Gaius Marius,* trans. Bernadotte Perrin, LCL 101 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920).

28. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability*, 469.

29. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability*, 469.

Paraphrased Speeches

Many scholars have noted the differences between the Matthean and Lucan methods of scriptural citations. While Matthew usually includes various citation formulae such as "This happened to fulfill" or "to fulfill the prophet" (Matt 1:22; 2:15; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9), Luke typically cites Scripture by putting the text in the mouths of those giving speeches (Luke 1:20, 45; 4:21; 21:22; 22:35; 24:44). The various speeches in Luke-Acts appear to be abridged. However, the discourses do not merely reflect Luke's own polemical aims. F.F. Bruce established that "Each speech suits the speaker, the audience, and the circumstances of delivery."[30] Bruce argues that the speeches are "Thucydidean."

Thucydides notes the difficulty in recollecting the exact wording of the speeches delivered before or during the Peloponnesian War. Nevertheless, he felt that he had accurately "put into the mouth of each speaker sentiments proper to the occasion," and that his discourses are abbreviated and characterized by "the general purport of what was actually said" (*Thuc. P.W.* 1.22.1 [C.F. Smith, LCL]).[31] The Lucan "speech" is a primary literary vehicle to capture the ipsissima vox (actual voice) of the speakers rather than the ipsissima verba (exact words). Paul Feinberg affirms that, "When a New Testament writer cites the sayings of Jesus, it need not be the case that Jesus said those exact words."[32] Again, the Synoptic Gospels tended to collapse

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30. F.F. Bruce, "The Speeches in Acts–Thirty Years After," in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L.L. Morris on his 60th Birthday*, ed. Robert Banks (Exeter: Paternoster, 1974), 53–68; Stanley E. Porter, "Thucydides 1.22.1 and Speeches in Acts: Is There a Thucydidean View?" *NovT* 32 (1990): 121–42; Osvaldo Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts: Poetics, Theology and Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 16–36. Luke records Peter delivering nine speeches, Paul gives eight, and outsiders give seven speeches. Padilla accepts Acts (and Luke) in their final forms as they have come to the Church, seeking Luke's theological message through speech-acts; Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994).

31. Thucydides, *P.W.* 1.22.1, (C.F. Smith, LCL).

32. Paul Feinberg, "The Meaning of Inerrancy" in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 270. That the Gospel authors often paraphrased Jesus (first from his original Aramaic into Greek, then performing a certain amount of literary compression) of course does not preclude the possibility that, at times,

narrative details together for space concerns. Nolland states, "The account of the synagogue service is foreshortened to eliminate everything that would keep Jesus from center-stage, and that would detract from a sense of his total command of the situation."[33] This literary abridgement of the speech could also apply to Jesus's chosen text (Isa 61; 58). This interpretive option is a strong candidate.

To summarize, given Luke's overall pattern of abridging and paraphrasing in his storytelling, especially as it relates to conversations, questions, and speeches, the conclusion that Jesus read or recited much more of the Isaian text than Luke includes in his narrative is reasonable. As Bock states, "Jesus likely used both passages in the actual setting."[34] Thus, he probably read portions of Isaiah that included or evoked much of the Servant of Yahweh material (Isa 52:1–58:14) that he conflates with the anointed messenger of 61:1–11. Luke, in turn, flattens this out with a chiastic structure that provides literary symmetry for maximal readability.

The exposition of Isaiah's Jubilee passage below reveals that his anointed messenger is the fulcrum of a larger "Servant of Yahweh" section. The prevailing view among scholars is that Jesus left the vengeance language out of his sermon. A brief excursus into Isaiah's Jubilean oracle helps to shed light on the fact that the vengeance theme is exegetically and historically inextricable from Isaiah's original passage.

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they captured the ipsissima verba of Jesus, especially considering the near identical wording of some texts. That said, many more instances of ipsissima vox can be cited. See Darrell Bock, "The Words of Jesus in the Gospels: Live, Jive, or Memorex," in *Jesus under Fire*, ed. M. J. Wilkins and J. P. Moreland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 77–80; Also, Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987*),* 117–27.

33. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 195–96.

34. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 405.

The Scroll of the Prophet Isaiah was Given to Him (Luke 4:17–19)

Isaiah's prophecies were delivered during the Assyrian and Babylonian reigns in the ANE.[35] The book identifies its internal structure: Chapters 1–39 concern "the former things" (Isa 42:9) and Chapters 40–66 primarily concern "the latter things." The fulcrum of this latter section constitutes the prophecy of God's anointed messenger (Isa 61:1–11). This eschatological Jubilee for the nation sets up Isaiah's vision of a new heaven and earth (65:17–66:22).

Isaiah's Theme

The two passages appear in what is traditionally called the "Servant of Yahweh" unit in which Yahweh's gracious restoration is promised to Israel. God intends to exalt Judah and Israel and free the oppressed nation from foreign dominance.[36] Isaiah's prophecies (740–686 BCE) announce judgment on Israel and Judah but also suggest a sense of hope for a unified and reestablished nation. A future where the people of God need never fear the wrath or invasion of foreign powers again is envisioned (Isa 60:10–22).[37] Yahweh's Servant is the one who accomplishes this grand design (Isa 42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–7; 52:13–53:12). Chapter 61 contains a hopeful vision set into motion at the inauguration of a Spirit-anointed human agent. But just who

35. John de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah: Textual Criticism and the Translator* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 142. Isaiah's own life story (whatever little we know of it) is largely contained in Isaiah's book, but the kings he served under are attested by 2 Kgs 15–21 and 2 Chronicles 26–33. Isaiah's prophecies have, as their backdrop, the changing of regional kingdoms including: (1) the fall of Damascus and Galilee to Tiglath-Pileser (BCE 732), (2) fall of Judah to Sennacherib (705–681), (3) Fall of Samaria to Sargon II (722–705), (4) Invasion of Judah by the Assyrians (701 BCE).

36. Christopher R. Bruno, "Jesus Is Our Jubilee ... But How? The OT Background and Lucan Fulfillment of the Ethics of Jubilee," *JETS* 53 (2010): 81.

37. They will instead exhibit their favor, tribute, and honor to Israel as God's chosen people. See Carol J. Dempsey, "From Desolation to Delight: The Transformative Vision of Isaiah 60–62," in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 225.

is the messenger of 61:1, what is his occupation, and what is the consequence of his ministry among Israel and the nations?

Exposition of Isaiah 61:1–11

Isaiah 58:1 begins with a command to the prophet to "declare" a message to Israel, whereas 61:1 announces a Spirit-anointed herald who declares good news (61:1). The "unacceptable day" of fasting to Yahweh (58:5) seems to be naturally answered with an "acceptable year" of Yahweh's favor (Isa 61:2). Yahweh has chosen this fast to "loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke" (58:6). Since the people failed to live up to this obligation, Yahweh answers by sending a servant, a messenger who embodies Yahweh's world-righting salvation and liberation (61:1–4).

Chapter 61:1–11 can be broken into five units: 61:1–3, 4–5, 6–7, 8–9, and 10–11.[38] At least two "speakers" feature structurally in the chapter: the self-designated anointed messenger and Yahweh himself.[39] Oswalt asserts that "Zion" refers to "the people" (61:10–11), and the anointed prophet speaks in solidarity with the nation. Arriving at the correct interpretation of the anointed messenger is vitally important.[40]

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38. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, WBC 25 (Nashville: Nelson, 2005), 872.

39. For more discussion on the number of speakers involved in the text, see John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, TNICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 574. Some have argued that there were as many as four speakers: the prophet (61:1–3), the administrator (4–7), Yahweh (8–9), and Zion (10–11). Oswalt insists that we should not multiply speakers beyond necessity, "the prophet seems plainly here to speak as Zion, voicing her praise to God for what he has done for her through the Servant/Messiah."

40. Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lucan Christology*, JSNTSup 110 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 226–27.

An Anointed Messenger (Isa 61:1–3)

In the "year of favor," Yahweh will reverse his wrathful "strike" with merciful healing and restoration of the people of Israel and Judah (Isa 60:10). This pledge is fulfilled through the prophet's Spirit-empowered ministry of proclamation of good news (61:1) of the kingdom. The anchoring phrase to the oracle is רוּחַ אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, meaning "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me" (Isa 61:1). OT figures could be anointed for various purposes and tasks: (1) as priests in mediation of Israel's tabernacle-temple cult (Exod 28:41; 30:30; 40:13, 15), (2) on rare occasions as prophets (1 Kgs 19:16; Ps 105:15) and most often as kings (Judg 9:8, 1 Sam 9:16; 10:1; 15:1, 17; 16:12; 1 Kgs 1:39).[41] Oswalt perceives this as "the Servant/Messiah's announcement of his role (61:1–3)."[42] The messenger is the Davidic-servant-king of Isaiah. Watts views this anointed figure as having clear ties to the servant songs and that servant's kingly anointing. He observes, "Many commentators have noted the way this chapter picks up themes from chaps. 40–55. It ties the vision thematically with the structure of the previous acts. Vv 1–3 are similar to the so-called Servant Songs.... The restoration of fortunes in v 3 is reminiscent of 34:17, 45:13, and 49:6."[43] The oracle presents the hope of a future messianic figure who embodies the calling of Yahweh's Servant.

The phrase רוּחַ אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, meaning "the Spirit of Adonai Yahweh"[44] is introduced in Isa 11:2, where the context is the anointing of a king.[45] This theme carries through into the Servant

41. Andrew Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom: A Thematic-Theological Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 163.

42. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 562.

43. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 872.

44. BHS, *SESB*, 61:1.

45. Watts, *Isaiah*, 872.

Songs beginning with Isa 41. The table below highlights the similarities between Yahweh's Servant and his anointed messenger.

Table 2: The Servant and the Messenger

Vocation and Commission	The Servant (42–58)	The Messenger (61:1–3)
Spirit anointing	41:1; 48:16 רָצְתָה נַפְשִׁי	61:1 רוּחַ אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה
Ministry for the disheartened	42:3 כֵּהֶה	61:3 כֵּהֶה
Freeing captives	42:7; 49:9 לְהוֹצִיא מִמַּסְגֵּר אַסִּיר	61:1 לְהוֹצִיא מִמַּסְגֵּר אַסִּיר
Opening blind eyes	42:10 לִפְקֹחַ עֵינַיִם עִוְרוֹת	61:3 τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν[46] LXX "sight to the blind"
Result: praise to Yahweh in a "new song to sing—his praise"	42:10; 44:23; 51:11; 55:12 שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר	61:3; 11 תְּהִלָּה praise instead of despair; praise springing up before all nations
Year of Yahweh's favor	49:8 בְּעֵת רָצוֹן ministry during Jubilee	61:2 שְׁנַת־רָצוֹן ministry signals Jubilee
Proclamation	48:3, 5, 14, 20 שׁמע, נגד	61:1 בשׂר the two terms are not the same but conceptual equivalents
Results: righteousness of the people	53:11 יַצְמִיחַ צְדָקָה he shall "justify the righteous	61:3 אֵילֵי הַצֶּדֶק God's people are a "righteous mighty tree" planted by the messenger

Abernethy clarifies, "Since the Davidic king (11:2), the servant (42:1; 48:16) and the agent in 61:1–3 have the 'Spirit of the Lord,' the claim is that this is the same individual."[47] At the very

46. Watts, *Isaiah*, 870. Watts notes that 1QIsa in Qumran literature splits the difference between the Masorah and the LXX. The MT פקח קוח appears as one word, פקחקוח–a redundant form emphasizing to "open" and "release." That it was understood to mean "open the eyes" to the light may well be reflected in the LXX's interpolation of τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν. Furthermore, the Targum likewise sees the imperatival meaning of פקחקוח as "come to the light."

47. Andrew Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah*, 160. Though he acknowledges the semantic correlations between the anointed agent and previous servant depictions seems undeniable, Abernethy remains unconvinced that they are necessarily the same individual.

least, Isaiah continues the anointed prophet oracle (Isa 61) in a kingly passage (Chapter 62:1–3). Motyer comments on Chapter 62, "The Anointed One expresses his determination that Zion may so come to possess the blessings of righteousness and salvation that it may be plain for all to see; and to possess, too, a new name and royal dignity."[48] This new "Jacob" (Isa 41:8, 21; 44:1–5, 21) is a future Davidide who lays claim to Israel and Judah's throne while also suffering greatly in place of his own people (Isa 52:13–53:13). Likewise, he is anointed to announce and carry out their end-times deliverance (Isa 61:1–2).[49] Isaiah 61:1–3 supports a fusion or a synthetic view of the servant-king-messenger (vv.1–3).

Proclamation often occurs in the context of Yahweh summoning or "appointing" someone, יהוה קָרָא (Isa 41:9 42:6 49:1 51:2 54:6; cf. Num 1:16; 26:9).[50] The messenger of Yahweh in Isa 61 is dispatched to perform Yahweh's work of לִשְׁבוּיִם דְּרוֹר, ensuring "liberty for the deported." Here again, his function is that of proclamation. This message is good news for those in captivity and also appears to be the means of releasing those in bondage.

The account is again punctuated with קרא (reading/preaching), emphasizing the proclamatory nature of the messenger. This messenger is an anointed "reader/preacher." To reiterate a point from Chapter 3 of this study, קרא is the same word used in the Hebrew Bible for

48. J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 505. Some commentators observe three distinct figures in Isaiah's "messenger" oracles, while others combine messianic, prophetic, and priestly offices.

49. Jacob Neusner, ed., *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period: 450 B.C.E to 600 CE* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 425. Jacob Neusner holds that a Davidic king figure is not in "Second Isaiah" (40–55), stating that this section "does not envision a restoration of the Davidic dynasty and calls Cyrus, king of Persia, Yahweh's anointed one (45:1). But the Davidic motif between all these passages seems unmistakable given the semantic parallels.

50. *HALOT*, s.v. קָרָא, 1129.

"reading" and stresses the oral nature of the messenger's calling.[51] It is worth reiterating that when the term קרא does not involve material texts, it always refers to the subject orally "calling out" or "crying out" to someone (Ps 99:6; Jud 8:1; 1 Sam 28:25). The anointed reader/preacher announces the שְׁנַת־רָצוֹן לַיהוָֹה, translated "favorable year of Yahweh," which coincides with וְיוֹם נָקָם "the day of vengeance." Yahweh's acceptable and prolonged "year" is contrasted with his swift "day" of retribution on his enemies. Watts states that this imagery is used "for the Year of Jubilee (cf. Lev. 25; 27), which calls for a general emancipation of slaves every fiftieth year. The prophets use it as a symbol for the release from the problems of exile (cf. Jer. 34:8, 15, 17)."[52] Watts also observes that a literal Jubilee was never enacted in Israel; however, "it is a familiar and very effective metaphor for the freedom that God is providing for his people through his chosen instrument."[53] The Torah statute has become a rich metaphor for spiritual and national deliverance from Gentile oppression.[54] Later, when Jesus "reads" the passage he does so as the anointed messenger who "proclaims-reads" (ἀναγινώσκω) Yahweh's year of favor for his people.

However, vengeance toward God's enemies is also part of this good news. The palmist cried out against the immoral systems established by foreigners who follow false gods (Ps 58:1–9). He rejoiced in God's salvation that included his wrath on the wicked (Ps 58:10–11). This, too,

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51. *HALOT*, s.v. קָרָא, 1128. קָרָא appears elsewhere in contexts that describe a public oral address stressing both the "calling out" of the message and its collective reception. The essential meaning of קָרָא is "to draw attention to oneself by loudness of the voice."51 Examples include the LORD God who "called out" (קָרָא) to Adam (Genesis 3:9), the angel who "called out" (קָרָא) to Abraham from heaven (Gen 22:11), God instructing Gideon to "declare aloud" (קָרָא) to the troops of Israel (Judg 7:3), and Moses who "called" (קָרָא), an assembly to "call out/read" (קָרָא) the covenant to the Israelites (Exod 24:7).

52. Watts, *Isaiah*, 873.

53. Watts, *Isaiah*, 873.

54. Christopher R. Bruno, "Jesus Is Our Jubilee ... But How? The OT Background And Lucan Fulfillment Of The Ethics of Jubilee," *JETS* 53 (Mar 20120): 93. Bruno notes that the reference to Jubilee here in Isaiah is clear; however, they are not as explicit as Jer 34 and Ezek 46 where the imagery is inescapable.

was the hope of all the righteous and faithful remnants. The prophets utilize poetic devices to communicate this same urgency and hope for Yahweh's vengeful destruction of their rivals. Seth Erlandsson notes, "The day of vengeance and the year of redemption or grace are presented as two aspects of the same thing. The one aims at those who remain in opposition to the saving God; the other refers to those who subordinate themselves to His rule and take their refuge in His grace."[55] When reading Isaiah 61, the offer of salvation implies assured judgment on the wicked. In a metonymous reading of the text, Luke's inclusion of 61:2a (year of Yahweh's favor) implies 61:2b (vengeance) in the same way that their original deliverance (the exodus) entailed God's wrath upon Egypt. Yahweh's eschatological Jubilee includes his fury on the nation's oppressors and the Jewish leaders who have colluded with them. This is the message that brings "comfort to all who mourn" (61:2c).

God is the subject of this retribution. It is not the day when Israel or Judah will take vengeance against their enemies, but this is וְיוֹם נָקָם לֵאלֹהֵינוּ, "the day of our God's vengeance." Elsewhere, Yahweh's enemies within Zion are the ones who are depicted as the recipients of this wrath (נָקָם) of God (Isa 34:8; cf. 1:24). Watts maintains, "Isaiah's message is that YHWH's retribution against any of his enemies, from within Israel or without, works together with his comforting acceptance of his 'servants' to create the kind of situation in which a relation between YHWH and his people is possible (cf. 63:4)."[56] God will judge unfaithful leaders and their devotees, whether those leaders are inside or outside of the nation. Isaiah states that this is the "good news" that comforts Zion.

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55. Seth Erlandsson, "The Wrath of God," *TynBul* 23 (1972), 116. See also N.T. Wright, "1 Corinthians 1.18: A Sermon at the Sung Eucharist with the Blessing of Oils and Renewal of Ordination Vows," Durham (2007): n.p.

56. Watts, *Isaiah*, 873.

Jerusalem's Fortunes Reversed (61:4–6)

In keeping with the metaphor of Jubilean land restitution (cf. Lev 25:10), the newly freed captives will return to reclaim and rebuild their ancient ruins (61:4). Reconstruction of Jerusalem is a recurrent theme in Isaiah (44:28; 45:13; 49:8; 60:10). The borders of the restored land will not be able to contain all those who return in joy (49:19). The Jubilean theme of "land restitution" is present in the text; however, its application is unlike its literal referent (Lev 25; 27) and dissimilar to the manner in which the imagery is applied in Jeremiah 34:8–17 and Ezekiel 46:17–18. Bruno observes, "In Isaiah 61, however, the proclamation of liberty is part of a more general proclamation of Israel's restoration. As Sloan has demonstrated, the proclamation of Isaiah 61 probably reflects YHWH's kingly ascension in the day of Israel's restoration."[57] The imagery of Jubilee here expands the original referent to include a new "age" characterized by global justice. A significant feature of this Jubilee is restoration to the land and of the temple.[58]

The nations previously employed by Yahweh to judge Israel and Judah are no longer their oppressors. What now? The prophet foresees a time when the זָרִים "strangers" and נֵכָר "foreigners" will become subservient to Zion (61:5), as the people become a nation of priests (61:6). While this oracle envisions a reversal of fortunes for God's people, it does not envision a time when Israel will turn into the new tyrants who oppress outsiders. Instead, the foreigners who previously oppressed them will be shepherds who וְרָעוּ צֹאנְכֶם "feed your livestock," their

57. Bruno "Jesus Our Jubilee," 93.

58. Bruno "Jesus Our Jubilee," 93.

אִכָּרֶיכֶם[59] "plowmen" and their כַּרְמֵם "vinedressers.[60] The text emphasizes the permanent domestication of the once fierce international powers. The empires are now properly tamed in judgment and will get along with God's restored nation from this point onward.

This claim is, however, a far cry from what is envisioned in the NT, namely that God has now accepted the Gentiles by their faith in Jesus the Messiah rather than through covenantal compliance to the Torah law (Acts 9:15; 10:45; 11:1, 18; 13:46–48; 14:27; 15:3, 17; 28:28). The realization of this "mystery" of Gentile inclusion into God's holy family, though articulated in detail by Peter (Acts 9:15; 10:45; 11:1, 18; 13:46–48; 14:27; 15:3) and Paul (Rom 11:12–25; 16:25; Eph 1:9; 2:1–18; 3:1–11; Col 1:26–27) was arguably first announced by Jesus in the Nazarene synagogue. All of this is the direct fulfillment of Isaiah 56:1–8 which envisions a day when the foreigners who have joined themselves to Yahweh (Isa 56:3) will be given an everlasting name better than "sons and daughters" (56:4–6), bringing acceptable sacrifices to the temple which becomes a "house of prayer for all nations" (56:8). Arguably, Isaiah 61 projects no such inclusion of foreigners.

A Renowned Posterity (61:8–9)

His covenant is וּבְרִית עוֹלָם "an everlasting covenant" stressing its eschatological nature. It is to be an enduring and perpetual covenant that Yahweh אֶכְרֹות "makes." However, God has already made a covenant pact with them. Why make another? God's people will be renowned among the peoples of earth. The lasting nature of the covenant extends to their descendants who

59. *HALOT*, s.v. אִכָּרֶיכֶם, 47.

60. Oswalt, *The Book*, 571; cf. Watts, *Isaiah*, 874. Again, Watts views the prediction as more of a temporal fulfillment, "The developments of this new age will create a labor shortage, especially for skilled builders and experienced farmers. The need will be met by people from neighboring districts (cf. chap. 60)." However, Isaiah's language here seems more descriptive of a fully realized messianic age (see Oswalt and Motyer).

shall be "known among the nations" and "in the midst of the peoples" (9a)—presumably the peoples of the world. The phrase כָּל־רֹאֵיהֶם יַכִּירוּם, meaning "all who see them will acknowledge them" (9b) is a status statement. Israel's standing will be reversed from "poor Israel, held captive and inconsolable in grief" (vv.1–4) to an exalted nation who rejoices in Yahweh's salvation. The foreign powers will נכר "recognize"[61] the renewed status of the Jews as בֻּרַךְ יְהוָה "the blessed of Yahweh." Israel's new covenant will last for generations to come. Their renown and fame will, in turn, bless the nations and bring glory to the LORD.

Clothed in Rejoicing and Salvation (61:10)

The anointed messenger returns in the text to voice his praise and rejoice over all that Yahweh has accomplished in and through his ministry (61:10a).[62] He had announced the good news of exchanging their flagging spirits with the garments of praise (61:3c), and now (with them), he is clothed in the "garments of salvation" and the "robe of righteousness" (61:10c). He had announced the reversal of mourning (61:3a) and now appears wearing the "turban" as a groom in a festive wedding with his bejeweled bride (61:10b). The new covenant salvation evokes images of marital fidelity and purity.[63]

This section answers the dilemma of 59:16–17. Yahweh saw that "there was no man" to save Israel, and he became "appalled that there was no man who intercedes" (59:16). In

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61. נכר meaning to acknowledge (Gen. 27:23 42:7; 20:41; Isa 61:9; Job 2:12; 4:16; Ruth 3:14; Ezra 3:13). cited by *HALOT*, s.v. נכר, 699.

62. Motyer seems right in saying that "The single voice which speaks in the first, second and fourth stanzas (61:10; 62:1, 6) of this poem is that of the Anointed One." Motyer, *The Prophecy*, 504. He further notes, "Note how *aḏōnāy yahweh* (1, 11) sounds like an inclusio around the poem. If verses 5–9 were not there the resulting formation would read very well as a unit. To divide a poem like this, using the separated pieces cleverly within their new contexts, is exactly what Isaiah did at 5:24." Watts likewise affirms the Deuteronomic historian theory (DtrH) and interprets this speaker as the king of Persia who agrees and rejoices over God's sovereign decision, emphasizing his need for a stabilized regime in Palestine and Jerusalem. Watts, *Isaiah*, 875.

63. Motyer, *The Prophecy*, 505.

response, he puts on the armor of יְשׁוּעָה "salvation" and clothes himself in garments of צְדָקָה "righteousness" (59:17). Now, in chapter 61, Yahweh does have a "man"—an anointed servant who is clothed in יְשׁוּעָה "salvation" and צְדָקָה "righteousness" (61:10).[64]

The Judged Nations Rejoice (61:10–11)

Though the grass withers, the Word of the LORD stands forever (Isa 40:7–8). Oswalt states "that the joyous scene he has just described is an absolute certainty."[65] The entire oracle directly impacts foreigners (61:2, 6, 9, 11). Those international forces who oppressed Israel will be humbled (Isa 29:5) to see how God restores and exalts new Israel.[66] Those resident aliens or "sympathetic wanders" (Isa 56:8) who join themselves with the LORD will rejoice at the virtue that God has forged in his people through their trials. The thrust of this oracle has been to cause the praises of Yahweh to תַּצְמִיחַ "spring forth"[67] among the nations, but only after he has taken out his wrath upon them.

Second Temple Trajectories

The themes of Isaiah 61 left an indelible impression on Israel's wisdom sages in the Second Temple era (516 BCE–70 CE). The promises of Isaiah's eschatological Jubilee for Israel become interpretive trajectories into the literature of this period. The LXX has already been mentioned above as a Second Temple source, reflecting the presence of the general theme of

64. Motyer, *The Prophecy*, 505.

65. Oswalt, *The Book*, 575.

66. George A.F. Knight, *The New Israel: A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 56–66* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 58.

67. *HALOT*, s.v. תַּצְמִיחַ,1034 "with acc., to make plants sprout." See Gen 2:9 3:18; Deut 29:22; Ps 104:14. This word can serve as a metaphor for causing "mountains to spring forth" (Ps 147:8); a horn to grow quickly (Jer 33:15); of David as a fast growing "shoot" (Ps 132:17).

deliverance and judgment in the Masorah. Others passages are from the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QIsa 59:15–63:6), the Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521), Jubilees, 11QMelch Col. II:1–6, and the Targum of Isaiah 61 (Tg. Isa. 61:1). Generally, Qumran literature portrays salvation for Israel alongside his vengeance for the nations.[68] Total obliteration is sometimes envisioned by Second Temple authors (4 Ezra 12.33; 13.38; 2 Bar. 40.1; Apoc. Ab. 31.2; 1QM), though occasionally Gentiles are portrayed as servile and compliant, having been defeated by Yahweh's Messiah (Pss. Sol. 17.30–31; Jub. 32.19; Sir 36:11–17).[69]

1QIsa 59:15–63:6

In the Qumran copy of Isaiah 61, the unit begins with Yahweh וילבש בגדי נקם "dressing in garments of vengeance" for his enemies and ends with the restoration of Zion, the temple, and the city (Col. 49, Isaiah 59:17–61:4).[70] Matthew Lynch refers to this section as "The most sustained portrait of Zion's eschatological renewal set right in the structure center of Trito-Isaiah."[71] The pericope is framed by "two distinctive warrior scenes (59:15–21b; 63:1–6), which form an *inclusio* around and are textually joined to chaps. 60–62."[72] These middle chapters appear between two warrior panels:

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68. 4Q174 Frags. 1–3, 21; 2:19. The only hope for Israel is a faithful response to the preaching of the anointed prophet in the hopes *that* ושב אלוהיכה מחרון אפו הגדול, translated "God relents from the fury of his wrath."

69. Terence L. Donaldson, "Proselytes or 'Righteous Gentiles'? The Status of Gentiles in Eschatological Pilgrimage Patterns of Thought," *JSP* 7 (1990): 3–27, here 8.

70. The pericope begins in Is 59:17 and resolves with Yahweh's voice affirming the plan. See García Martínez Florentino and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (transcriptions)" (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 4; cf. E.Y. Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah* Scroll *(1QIsa^{a})*, STDJ 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1974); D.W. Parry, E. Qimron, *The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^{a})*: *A New Edition,* STDJ 32 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

71. Matthew J. Lynch, "Zion's Warrior and the Nations: Isaiah 59:15b–63:6 in Isaiah's Zion Traditions," *The CBQ* 70 (2008): 244–263, here 244.

72. Lynch, "Zion's Warrior and the Nations," 245.

Yahweh Warrior Panel 1 (1QIsa 59:15–21b)
Vindication of Zion Inner Panel (1QIsa 60–62)
Yahweh Warrior Panel 2 (1QIsa 63:1–6)

The outer two panels depict Yahweh getting dressed for war on the surrounding nations, followed by the vindication of Zion. The last panel articulates God's wrath in a picture of his battle garments becoming soiled in the blood of the nations. Lynch remarks, "I suggest that the treatment of the nations by the Divine Warrior and then the nations' response are best explained as a function of Israel's Zion traditions, which include a familiar pattern of divine war *followed by* a victorious return of YHWH to his mountain, followed by the praise convergence of the nations."[73] Zion is Yahweh's holy, royal mountain (2 Kgs 19:31; Ps 2:6; 48:1, 2; 74:2; 87:1) from which he does battle with the idolatrous tribes of the world who have opposed Israel (Isa 2:3; 4:5; 8:18; 18:7; 24:23; 31:4; 52:7). The idea that the LORD will take his wrath out on his enemies and wrongdoers is a source of comfort to Judah and Israel. Wayne Pitard states, "God's vengeance will restore the balance which has been upset by wickedness. God is asked to, or announces that he will, bring about a just punishment for the guilty and compensation for the victim (cf. Ps 94:1–2; Jer 51:34–37; Isa 35:4; Ps 79:10)."[74] In short, the Qumran community copied Isaiah's prophecy in blocks of material that depicted Israel's salvation between two divine warrior passages.

73. Lynch, "Zion's Warrior and the Nations," 247. Emphasis Lynch's.

74. Wayne T. Pitard, "Vengeance," in *ABD*, 787. This theme clearly continues in the NT (Matt 5:38–48; Luke 17:3–4; 23:34; Rom 12:17–21; 2 Thess 1:5–10; Rev 6:10; 19:2). Moreover, though Luke does not quote Isa 61:2b when referring to God's vengeance, he does not shy away from the topic either (Luke 3:7; 21:22–23; Acts 24:25).

Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521)

The Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521; 75–50 BCE) seemingly provides a background for Jesus's announcement of his anointed prophetic ministry in Nazareth and his subsequent response to John the Baptist.[75] Evans states that this document "has generated interest among NT interpreters because of its reference to a Messiah to whom 'heaven and earth will listen.'"[76] The scroll contains seventeen or so fragments with 2 Col. II listed below,

Table 3. 4Q521 Frag. 2 Col. II. 1–13.

Frag. 2 Col. II Hebrew	Frag. 2 Col. II English
1 [כי הש]מים והארץ ישמעו למשיחו	1 heaven and earth listen to his **anointed one**,
2 [וכל א]שר בם לוא יסוג ממצות קדושים	2 the holy ones will not turn away from him
3 התאמצו מבקשי אדני בעבדתו	3 Seekers strengthen themselves in service
4 הלוא בזאת תמצאו את אדני כל המיחלים בלבם	4 All those who hope in heart will see the Lord
5 כי אדני חסידים יבקר וצדיקים בשם יקרא	5 Yahweh considers the pious and calls **only the righteous**
6 ועל ענוים רוחו תרחף ואמונים יחליף בכחו	6 his Spirit upon the **poor,** renewing the faithful's strength
7 כי יכבד את חסידים על כסא מלכות עד	7 The pious are honored upon the throne of an eternal kingdom
8 מתיר אסורים פוקח עורים זוקף כ[פופי . […]	8 **freeing prisoners, giving sight to the blind, straightening out the twisted**
9 ול[ע]לם אדבק [במי]חלים ובחסדו. [...]	9 God clings forever to those who hope, and in his mercy
10 ופר[י ...]יש לוא יתאחר	10 and the fruit of ... will not be delayed
11 ונכ[ב]דות שלוא היו יעשה אדני כאשר ד[בר]	11 And the Lord will perform marvelous acts such as have not existed, just as he said
12 [כי] ירפא חללים ומתים יחיה ענוים יבשר	12 [for] he will **heal the badly wounded** and will make the **dead live**, he will **proclaim good news to the poor**
13 ו[...] ... ש[...]ושים ינהל ורעבים יעשר[77]	

75. Craig A. Evans, "Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521)," *DNTB* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 695; cf. Émile Puech, "Une Apocalypse Messianique (4Q521)," translated "A Messianic Apocalypse," *RevQ* 15 (1992): 475–522; John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 117–22.

76. Evans, "Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521)," 696.

77. Martínez and Tigchelaar, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (transcriptions)," 1044.

> 13 and [...] ... [...] he will lead the [...] ... and enrich the hungry[78]

This eschatological Jubilee is framed as the coming of God's "anointed one" (2:1) to deliver the faithful remnant who seek the LORD, have faith in him, and are pious and righteous (2:3–7). It is vv. 8–13 that echoes Isaiah 61:1–7. Evans remarks, "Lines 7–8 and 11–12 allude to several passages from Isaiah, such as Isaiah 35:5–6 ('the eyes of the blind shall be opened'), Isaiah 61:1 ('anointed ... to preach good news to the poor'), Isaiah 26:19 ('your dead shall live, their bodies shall rise') and possibly Isaiah 53:5 ('he was wounded ... and with his stripes we are healed')."[79] Émile Peuch understood this passage as referring to a royal-Messiah who would inherit David's throne.[80] Whether this messianic figure is a priest-prophet or two separate figures (a priest and a prophet) is unclear from the passage. John J. Collins maintains that the למשיחו "anointed one" is the Elijianic prophet, or the Messiah as the eschatological Elijah, who raises the dead, heals, and brings judgment upon the wicked.[81] Because 4Q521 has such a direct allusion to Isa 61:1–7, Evans concludes, "It is therefore very probable that many Jews of Jesus' time understood Isaiah 61 as not only eschatological but also messianic."[82] However, this apocalyptic blessing is for righteous Israel. God will send a future "Elijah" to heal them and judge the unfaithful and the apostate. The term "anointed one" appears many times in the Qumran literature as a comforting message of judgment on non-Israelites. Jesus exposits the Isaian Jubilee (Isa 61) with a similar

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78. Bold emphasis added. Ellipsis marks designate fragmentary texts where words are missing. Martínez and Tigchelaar, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (transcriptions)," 1045.

79. Evans, "Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521)," 696.

80. Émile Puech, "A Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521)," 497.

81. John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 89.

82. Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 330; cf. James H. Charlesworth, ed., *OTP*. For specific references to the covenant with Isaac and through him the Patriarchs, see Jubilees 16:3, 13, 17, 18, 31; 174–16; 19:14; 20:2; 21:2; 23:1–3; 24:28). The author takes this theme all the way back to Adam himself (3:1–31).

Elijianic motif (Luke 4:25–27), except in his approach, Yahweh reverses the fortunes of the Gentiles.

Jubilees

Moses' legislative Jubilee (Lev 25:8–17) and Isaiah's messianic kingdom (Isaiah 61:1–11) are idealized in the book of Jubilees.[83] Daniel Machiela affirms that the language and structure of Jubilees resembles the Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH) of Genesis and Exodus, stating however, that "many other scriptural texts influenced the contents and idiom of Jubilees, such as Deuteronomy and various prophetic books (e.g., Isaiah and Jeremiah)."[84] The book trades heavily on "biblicizing jargon," mimicking the language of Torah and conveying concepts from the prophetic books.[85] Terence L. Donaldson remarks, "many within Second Temple Judaism would agree with the author of Jubilees that Israel alone was chosen for salvation and that the Gentile nations were destined 'to be destroyed and annihilated from the earth' (Jub. 15.26–32)."[86] Jewish communities antecedent to Christianity "eschatologized the Jubilee concept (Jubilees, Enoch, Qumran Lit., etc.)."[87] O.S. Wintermute states, "The matter of vital importance

83. *EJ*, s.v. "Jubilees," 301. Singer maintains that the Jubilees is a "Midrashic commentary on the Book of Genesis and on part of the Book of Exodus, in the form of an apocalypse, containing the views, legends, and religious practices of the most rigid Pharisaic (or Hasidæan) school of the time of John Hyrcanus."

84. Daniel A. Machiela, "The Hebrew of the Book of Jubilees at Qumran," in *Hebrew Texts and Language of the Second Temple Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 156.

85. For Semantic similarities, see Machiela, "The Hebrew of the Book of Jubilees at Qumran," 156–58. This would include books such as 1 En. and the ALD; cf. Jan Joosten, "Pseudo-Classicisms in Late Biblical Hebrew, in *Ben-Sira*, and in Qumran Hebrew," in S*irach, Scrolls, and Sages: Proceedings of a Second International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Ben-Sira, & the Mishnah, Held at Leiden University, 15–17 December 1997*, ed. T. Muraoka and J. F. Elwolde, STDJ 33 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 146–59.

86. Donaldson, "Proselytes or 'Righteous Gentiles,'" 1.

87. Sanders, James A. "Jubilee in the Bible," *BTB* 50 (February 2020): 4–6; cf. Todd R. Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypses in the Book of Jubilees*, vol. 34 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 45–46. Jub. draws specifically on Isaiah's prophecy of Jewish longevity (Isa 65) and conceptually, on Jewish liberation and a realized "day of favor" from Isa 61.

about which the author of Jubilees wishes to instruct his contemporaries is the necessity of strictly obeying the Law in the critical age in which they are living. The writer anticipates an age of increasing blessings in his own time, resulting from renewed loyalty to the Law."[88] In the book, Yahweh is an ethical deity who takes retribution on his own people for their indiscretions and metes out revenge upon foreigners. The author of Jubilees declares,

> And great wrath from the Lord will be upon the sons of Israel because they have left his covenant and have turned aside from his words. And they have provoked and blasphemed inasmuch as they have not done the ordinance of this law because they have made themselves like the Gentiles to be removed and be uprooted from the land. And there is therefore for them no forgiveness or pardon so that they might be pardoned and forgiven from all of the sins of this eternal error. (Jub. 15:34)[89]

Any judgment God has for unfaithful Israel is assumed to be equivalent to a standing judgment on Gentiles for whom "there is not forgiveness or pardon" because they are guilty of an "eternal error" (15:34). Wintermute observes, "His [author of Jubilees] view of God's intent for Israel vis-à-vis the other nations, however, falls short of Second Isaiah's 'light of the nations' (Isa 42:6) or Jonah's mission to Nineveh, siding instead with the Chronicler in calling for a rejection of all things Gentile."[90] Individual Jews are encouraged to follow the patriarchs who embody the life and commitment preached in the Torah. All peoples, conversely, will be the objects of God's wrath (Jub. 24:30–33), which is described as a "devouring, burning fire" (36:6) and "wrath and punishment" resulting in "burning unquenchable fire" (41:25–26) for all who partake in wickedness.[91] For the nations, Yahweh will execute "great vengeance upon them on account of Israel" (48:5). Egypt exemplifies this eschatological wrath, "Cruel judgments came on the land

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88. O.S. Wintermute, "Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction," in *OTP* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 38.

89. Wintermute, "Jubilees, 25:1" 87.

91. Wintermute, "Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction," 48.

of Egypt so that you might execute vengeance upon it for Israel" (48:7–8). Arguably, every instance of salvation for repentant Israel is set against the backdrop of irreversible judgment upon foreigners (10:32; 24:28–33; 29:11; 30:4–6; 34:1–9; 38:1–10; 48:12). The idea of "vengeance upon sinners" on the day of Yahweh's salvation is consistent with Isaiah 61:2b and panels 1 and 2 of Israel's "God of war" (1QIsa 59:15–21b 1QIsa 63:1–6).

11QMelch Col. II:1–6 (11Q13)

Perhaps the most significant text on Jubilee is the Melchizedek Scroll (11Q13), 11QMelch Col. II:1–6, originally published in 1956. The fourteen small scroll fragments from Qumran cave 11 are so named after their chief figure and date to 150 BCE.[92] The entirety of the text is eschatological in its portrayal of the "latter days" in which Yahweh will save the true "sons of light" through the ministry of the anointed Melchizedek.[93]

Table 4 11Q13 Col. 11:1–6: Jubilary Themes

11QMelch lines 1–8 Hebrew	11QMelch lines 1–8 English
2 [...]ל ואשר אמר בשנת היובל [הזואת תשובו איש אל אחוזתו ועליו אמר וז]ה 3 [דבר השמטה] שמוט כול בעל משה יד אשר ישה[ברעהו לוא יגוש את רעהו ואת אחיו כיא קרא]שמטה 4 לא[ל פשרו]לאחרית הימים על השבויים ואשר[...]אשר 5 מוריהמה החבאו וסתר[ו] ומנחלת מלכי צדק כי[א ...] ... והמה נחל[ת מלכי צ]דק אשר	2 And as for what he said: (Lev 25:13) "In [this] year of **Jubilee**, [you shall return, each one, to his respective property," concerning it he said: (Deut 15:2) "Th]is 3[the manner of the release:] every creditor shall release what he lent [to his neighbor. He shall not coerce his neighbor or his brother, for it has been proclaimed] a release 4 for G[od. Its interpretation] for the **last days** refers to the **captives**, who [...] and whose

92. George J. Brooke, "Melchizedek (11QMelch)," in *ABD,* 687. Brooke notes, "Because the fragments include extracts from various biblical books, notably Lev 25:10–13; Ps 82:1–2; and Isa 52:7 and because in lines 12 and 17 the interpretation of the biblical texts is introduced with a formula including the word *pēšer*, 11QMelch is generically akin to the thematic exegetical documents from Qumran such as 4QFlorilegium and 4QCatena a: indeed 11QMelch 25 and 4QFlor 1:15–16 both cite Isa 8:11 as a supplementary text (cf. 1QSa 1:2–3; CD 8:16 = 19:29)."

93. Brooke, "Melchizedek (11QMelch)," 687.

6 ישיבמה אליהמה וקרא להמה דרור לעזוב להמה[משא]כול עוונותיהמה ו[כן יהי]ה הדבר הזה	5 **teachers** have been hidden and kept secret, and from the inheritance of **Melchizedek**, fo[r ...] ... and they are the inherita[nce of Melchize]dek, who
7 בשבוע היובל הראישון אחר תש[עת ה]יובלים וי[ום הכפ]ורים ה[וא]ה ס[וף]ה[יו]בל העשירי	6 will make them return. And **liberty** will be **proclaimed** for them, to **free them from [the debt of] all their iniquities.** And this [wil]l [happen]
8 לכפר בו על כול בני [אור ו]אנש[י]גורל מל[כי]צדק[...].ם עלי[המ]ה התת[...]לפ[י]כ[ול עש]ותמה כיא	7 in the first week of the Jubilee which follows the ni[ne] Jubilees. And the **d[ay of aton]ement** is the e[nd of] the tenth [ju]bilee
9 הואה הקץ לשנת הרצון למלכי צדק ולצב[איו ע]ם קדושי אל לממשלת משפט כאשר כתוב[94]	8 in which **atonement** shall be made for all the **sons of [light** and] for the men [of] the lot of Mel[chi]zedek. [...] ... over [the]m ... [...] accor[ding to] a[ll] their [wor]ks, for
	9 it is the time for the 'year of grace' of Melchizedek, and of [his] arm[ies, the nat]ion of the holy ones of God, of the rule of judgment."[95]

The text engages a variety of Jubilean texts (Lev 25; Deut 15:2; Isa 52:7; 61:1–3; and Pss 7:8–9; 82:1–2). Garland observes, "It provides first-century evidence of an eschatological interpretation of the Jubilee motif that is related to a Messiah figure."[96] Similarly, Donald Blosser comments that the scroll "is an eschatological midrash which presents Melchizedek as the heavenly messenger, bringing deliverance on the day of Atonement at the conclusion of the 10th Jubilean cycle."[97] As such, it appears to present a priestly, kingly, and prophetic Jubilean deliverer. In this text, the calling to save and deliver had now been assigned to the "redeemer," the priest after Melchizedek.[98] Here, we see two significant transitions: (1) A shift in understanding Jubilee as a

94. Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (translations)" (Leiden: Brill, 1997–1998), 1206.

95. Emphasis mine, Martínez and Tigchelaar, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (transcriptions)," 1207. M. de Jonge, A.S. van der Woude, "11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament," *NTS* (1965–1966): 301–326; Paul J. Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresa* (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981) 3–23, 49–74.

96 David E. Garland, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 200.

97. Blosser, "Jesus and the Jubilee," 92.

98. Blosser, "Jesus and the Jubilee," 93.

personal vocation of the Messiah, and (2) Jubilee as personal salvation through the atonement for sins through a kingly-priestly intermediary.[99]

The text envisions that Yahweh will deliver salvation partially through vengeance and judgment (11QMelch Col. II:10). The Melchizedekian Messiah will "carry out the vengeance of God's judgments" against the followers of Belial (II:12, 13), freeing the faithful remnant from "the hand of Belial" (II:25). The author clarifies that this deliverance "is the day of peace about which he said through Isaiah the prophet" (II:6).[100] God's good news is for the faithful remnant of Jews and is delivered through a Melchizedekian priestly figure who frees them from the supernatural forces that animate their Gentile rivals against them. This prophet is connected to the "prophet like Moses" by the phrase "anointed by the Spirit" that appears in line 18, a concept echoed by Jesus in Luke 4:18.[101] Evans concludes, "In this Dead Sea Scroll, portions of Isa 61:1–2, the very passage with which Jesus began his Nazareth sermon (cf. Luke 4:18–19), are cited and linked with Isa 52:7 in order to expound upon the meaning of Lev 25:13, a passage understood to promise the coming of an eschatological era of Jubilee."[102] The "good news" announced to Israel is of their salvation and God's retribution upon Belial and the "followers of Belial" who have oppressed them.

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99. Christopher R. Bruno, "Jesus is Our Jubilee ... But How? The OT Background and Lucan Fulfillment of the Ethics of Jubilee," *JETS* 53 (2010), 81–101, here 97.

100. 11QMelch Col. II:6; Martínez and Tigchelaar, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition," 1207–9.

101. Blosser, "Jesus and the Jubilee," 93.

102. Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 329–30.

Targum Isaiah 61 (Tg. Isa. 61:1)

Scholars generally agree that the Targum of Isaiah dates between the first and second centuries CE.[103] The Targum is a translation or "popular paraphrase" intended to be read together with the Hebrew text.[104] "Targum" is a transliteration of the Aramaic term, meaning "translation," just as "meturgeman" means "one who translates."[105] Later, the term became synonymous with *amora* (Sanh. 7b).[106] The Targum translates the Hebrew, "The prophet said, 'A spirit [of prophecy] before the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has [exalted me] to announce good news to the poor'" (Tg. Isa. 61:1, with brackets demarcating the interpolated words not in Hebrew). Evans observes, "Not only are the words 'the prophet' and 'a spirit of prophecy' added to the text, but also 'anointed' has been replaced with 'exalted,'"[107] the emphasis being on the prophetic nature of the Isaian Servant of the LORD. Israel expected a prophet-Messiah who would come and raise the nation back to life, heal and deliver them, and reign over the Gentiles with justice and faithfulness.[108]

The nations are characterized as "aliens" who "shall stand and feed your flocks, the sons of Gentiles shall be your plowmen and vinedressers" while faithful Israel "shall be called the

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103. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies*, 195.

104. Bruce Chilton, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah Targum*, JSNTSup 23 (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1982), 4.

105. Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara, eds., *The Aramaic Bible: The Isaiah Targum*, trans. Bruce D. Chilton, vol. 11 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), xiii.

106. The *Amoraim* is a term that describes the formal teachers in Palestinian and Babylonian Judaism between R. Judah I (219 CE) and the completion of the Babylonian Talmud (500 CE). The translators were lay readers who operated mainly in Palestine. See Isidore Singer, ed., *JE*, 527.

107. Craig A. Evans, "Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521)," *DNTB* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 696.

108. See also y. Ketub. 12:3; m. Soṭah 9:15; 1QS 9:11 for prophet-Messiah themes in which the anointed one was said to bring the dead back to life.

priests of the LORD, men shall speak of you as those who minister before our God; you shall eat the possessions of the Gentiles, and in their glory, you shall be indulged" (Tg. Isa. 61:5–6).[109] Again the "Gentiles will be ashamed who were boasting in their lot" (Tg. Isa. 61:7), for Yahweh is God who "loves vengeance" (61:8).[110] Finally, Israel's "sons shall be exalted among the nations, and their sons' sons in the midst of the kingdoms; all who see them will acknowledge them, that they are the seed whom the LORD has blessed."[111] The language in this interpretive Targum seemingly amplifies God's favor upon Israel in "exaltation" and "glory" and his judgment of the nations' servitude, plundering, and public shame.

Summary Conclusion of Chapter 5

Given Luke's tendency to abbreviate longer blocks of material, especially regarding conversations and speeches, one can infer that Jesus included at least all of Isaiah 61 in his reading. The strong semantic and thematic similarities between the larger Servant of Yahweh section (Isa 42; 52:1–63), particularly the flanking "Divine Warrior" texts (Isa 52:1–21; 63:1–6), lends itself to a metaleptic understanding of the passage. For a first century reader to invoke the Jubilean text in a public synagogue reading would imply other passages that affirm a synthesis of Isaian messianic themes.

An exposition of Jesus's chosen text in Isaiah 61:1–11 underscores the promise of a reversal of fortunes for Judah and Israel. Yahweh's new kingdom age will be inaugurated by the Spirit-enabled ministry of an end-times servant-king-messenger (61:1–2). He carries out the

109. Cathcart, Maher, and McNamara, *The Isaiah Targum*, Is 61:5–6.

110. Cathcart, Maher, and McNamara, *The Isaiah Targum*, Is 61:7–8.

111. Cathcart, Maher, and McNamara, *The Isaiah Targum*, Is 61:9.

LORD's judgment as a "reader/preacher" who proclaims the year of his world-righting salvation. When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people (61:2–3), they will be reconstituted in their land and rebuild their temple and city (61:4). Their relationship with the nations will be one characterized by domestic peace and spiritual mediation (61:5, 6), but only after God carries out his day of vengeance on his enemies. God pledges to form a new, long-term covenant with them (61:8). As a result, the peoples of the earth will serve Israel as they acknowledge his blessing upon Zion (61:5, 9–10).

Second Temple literature largely sustains this hermeneutical tradition, amplifying themes of judgment and wrath as eschatological realities. The year of Yahweh's favor is concurrent with the day of his vengeance on the surrounding nations. This is evidenced by the Qumran documents 1QIsa 59:15–63:6, which frame Isaiah 61–62 between two divine war panels (56:1–21b; 63:1–6). The good news of Israel's salvation entails deliverance from their geopolitical enemies. Likewise, the eschatological Jubilee (Jubilees) necessitates the LORD's indefatigable judgments upon non-Jews (10:32; 24:28–33; 29:11; 30:4–6; 34:1–9; 38:1–10; 48:12). In 11QMelch Col. 2:1–6, the Melchizedekian Messiah will "carry out the vengeance of God's judgments" against the "the hand of Belial" (II:25) and the "followers of Belial" (II:12, 13), freeing the faithful remnant from tyranny. The author identifies this explicitly as "the day of peace about which he said through Isaiah the prophet" (Col. II:6). Finally, the early second-century CE Targum (Tg. Isa. 61:5–6) provided additional commentary on Isaiah's Jubilean text. God's judgment of apostate Israel is akin to his vengeance on the Gentile "aliens" on whom God announces an irreversible judgment for "Yahweh loves judgment" (Tg. Isa. 61:7, 8). Isaiah's seventh-century prophecy, along with Second Temple and Mishnaic literature, establish the existence of a received tradition for first-century Jews. In the next chapter, Jesus will appear to

reclaim Isaiah's vision of Yahweh's light to the Gentiles (49:1–7; 56:1–8) in a shocking reversal.

CHAPTER 6: JESUS'S SUBVERSIVE READING OF THE ISAIAN JUBILEE

Chapter 5 provided an exposition of Isaiah 61 and surveyed Second Temple interpretive trajectories that shaped Jewish expectations in Jesus's day. The study now considers Jesus's explanation of the Isaian passage with respect to his assumed authority. This chapter examines three potential reasons for the Nazarene's offense taken at Jesus: (1) Jesus's posture could have been jarring to his Nazarene peers as he "sat down" to teach. (2) Jesus's message is incendiary because it appears to subvert a well-established reading of Isaiah 61. The chapter will assess his fulfillment hermeneutic, highlighting an interaction with certain Second Temple hermeneutical methods. Jesus's interpretive approach is unconventional though not without historical precedent. (3) Jesus's authority far exceeds that of local scribal-literate teachers. Given his artisan background, what kind of cultural authority does he appear to be aiming for in Luke's text? Is it, as Keith and others have maintained, a reach for mere scribal-literate authority or is it something more?

An Overview of Jesus as the Prophetic Antitype

Scholars generally agree that prophetic characteristics permeate the entire narrative of 4:16–30.[1] Mark Strauss observes that the Lucan unit portrays Jesus as a prophetic figure based on five apparent facts: (1) Jesus reads from the prophetic texts, and he fulfills Isaiah 61 in the Nazarene's hearing. (2) The text predicts an anointed messenger who will proclaim the favorable year of Yahweh through charismatic empowerment. (3) The Second Temple literature typically uses the term "anointed ones" in reference to the prophets collectively (CD 2.12; 6.1; cf. 1QM

1. Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lucan Christology*, JSNTSup 110 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 227.

11.7). (4) Jesus's exposition of the unit (22b–30) elaborates on his rejection with prophetic proverbs and narrative allusions from the Former Prophets. (5) This prophetic theme is commensurate with Luke's overall portrayal of Christ.[2]

Christ is most often referred to by the crowds as διδάσκαλος (teacher) or ῥαββί (honored master), though the Gospels use these terms variously. That Jesus is a Torah teacher, or a legal expert, is unlikely. The Gospel authors indicate that people recognized his non-scribal approach almost immediately (Matt 7:28–29; Mark 1:22; cf. Luke 9:18–22).[3] Instead of his role as a scribal-literate instructor, Luke appears to be more interested in Jesus as a prophet who combines both eschatological prophecy and sagacious/sapiential insight.[4]

David E. Aune concludes that four conditions prevailed among first-century Palestinians regarding their prophetic expectations: (1) The concept of the ideal "prophet" had captured their imaginations in a "widespread eschatological fantasy."[5] (2) The motive behind this longing for a resurgence of prophetic ministry was the desire to replace the bleak realities of their present with a romanticized prophetic past. (3) Eschatological prophets were not expected to arise within the existing socioreligious structures. The new prophet would be an outlier—not a member of the political or social upper classes (hence the region's immediate interest in John the Baptist). (4) There existed a readiness to confer the appropriate social credentials upon legitimate prophets.[6] Ancient prophets held great influence in the eyes of Jesus's countrymen. Though scribal culture

2. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts*, 227.

3. Craig S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 187.

4. David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 144.

5. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 144.

6. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 154.

enjoyed ascendency in the first century due to their proximity with texts, the common people anticipated "Jeremiah *redivivus*"[7] or "Elijah *redivivus*" (Mark 6:15; 8:28; Matt 16:14; 17:3–4; Luke 1:17; 9:8, 30); however, no one expected "Baruch *redivivus*."[8] Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" They report that the people all agree that "one of the ancient prophets has arisen" (Luke 9:18-19).[9] This widespread expectation is conspicuous when John the Baptist arrives on the scene. Luke comments, "Now the people were waiting expectantly, and all of them were questioning in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah" (Luke 3:15, CSB). The passage alludes to the existing expectation that a prophet would return in their time to announce the Messiah's imminent arrival or to claim that vocation for himself. John the Baptist,

7. *Redivivus* means "resurrected" or "returned." Jacob Neusner notes that Josephus claimed to be Jeremiah *redivivus*, but in the context, only meant "revived," in a paradigmatic sense. See Neusner "Prophetic-Rabbinic Judaism: Jeremiah Redivivus," in *In the Aftermath of Catastrophe: Founding Judaism 70–640* (Montreal, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 119; cf. William L. Holladay, "The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding." *JBL* 83 (1964): 153–64; cf. Tucker S. Ferda, "Jeremiah 7 and Flavius Josephus on the First Jewish War," *JSJ* 44 (2013): 158–73. One could also include "Elijah," "David," or even "Melchizedek" *redivivus*, which is reflected in the Galilean speculation about Jesus (Matt 16). In Judah's visionary experience, Jeremiah is the one who hands the sword of protection to the Jews from heaven. See also Liv. Pro. 2:2–7, in which the buried prophet often performs miracles for his nation. The author of the *Life of Jeremiah* clearly had a dual heritage of Greek and Jewish upbringing and training, which contributed to Jeremiah's power to vanquish evil of serpents. While it is not exactly clear how much of this the average Jew in Palestine would have been aware of, it does at least establish a Jeremiah miracle mythology in certain Jewish quarters.

8. Indeed, Jewish reactions to Jesus's teaching demonstrates that the residents of Galilee and Judea likely had their "fill" of scribes. The people were "ever seeing and never understanding," and "ever hearing and never perceiving" until Christ assumed power and authority. Luke often speaks in Acts of the ancient προφήται "prophets," including king David who prophetically spoke by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:30). David is then the archetype for a royal-prophetic "son."

9. See first Mark 6:45–8:26 and Matthew 14:22–16:12; Matthew's version is slightly different in two respects: (1) he includes the response ἕτεροι δὲ Ἰερεμίαν ἢ ἕνα τῶν προφητῶν, indicating the people's belief in a Second Temple tradition of "Jeremiah" returning as a miraculous prophet (2 Macc 15:13–16). (2) Matthew records Peter's response to be the more expansive Σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος, translated "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Luke customarily elaborates on Jesus's identity in Chapter 9. Jesus is the Messiah (9:20), God's chosen Son and suffering servant (9:22, 44), the Son of Man who judges the eternal destinies of all (9:26), the transfigured Son beloved by the Father (9:35), the teacher with the authority to vanquish evil (9:42), the Sovereign LORD who demands absolute allegiance and devotion (9:57–62). Thus, Luke's narration "shows" what Matthew "tells."

of course, denies that he is the Messiah; however, all Gospel authors agree that he fulfills Isaiah's forerunner prophecy (Isa 40:3–5).

The Office of Prophet Ceases

Rabbis from the Tannaitic and Amoraic era primarily held that Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were the last of the biblical prophets (e.g., b. Sanh. 11a).[10] Aune remarks, "In early Judaism the designation 'prophet' was ordinarily reserved for the Israelite prophets of the distant past and for a variety of prophetlike figures who were expected to appear immediately before the end of the age."[11] By contrast to the rabbinic era, sages from the Second Temple period did not largely hold that the phenomenon of inspired prophecy had entirely ceased.[12] Samuel Adams proposes that "The prophetic office did not continue after the Babylonian exile in the manner of earlier periods. The destruction of the temple, loss of monarchy and sovereignty, the influence of new cultural propellants, and the development of alternative literary genres led to shifting attitudes concerning prophets."[13] This was in keeping with the OT prophets who seemed to anticipate the temporary cessation of their ministry (Zech 13:3–6; See also 1 Macc 4:44–46; 14:41).

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10. Samuel L. Adams, "Sage as Prophet? Allusion and Reconfiguration in Ben Sira and Other Second Temple Wisdom Texts," in *Tracing Sapiential Traditions in Ancient Judaism*, (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 89. Also in b. Yoma 9b; see also the same idea in t. Soṭah 13:2.

11. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 153.

12. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 103.

13. Adams, "Sage as Prophet?" 89.

The Function of Prophecy Continues

Though the prophetic office ceased functioning during this period, scholars generally agree that "prophecy" allegedly continued between 515 BCE–100 CE as an inspired phenomenon.[14] The Second Temple literature abounds with examples of its continuance.[15] Ben Sira claimed, "I will again pour out teaching like prophecy, and leave it to all future generations."[16] Josephus acknowledged Spirit-inspired prophecy among the Pharisees of Herod's era (Josephus *Ant.* 17.2.4.43). Concerning the Zealots, particularly Judas (*J.W.* 1.3.78–80; *Ant.* 13.311–313) and Menahem (*Ant.* 15.373–379), his accounts detail their various predictions.[17] Josephus viewed John Hyrcanus as an inspired seer, able to foretell the future because "God was with him" (*Ant.* 13.299–300; *J.W.* 1.68–69), and even the Samaritans (ironically) practiced prophecy (*Ant.* 18.85–87).[18]

Moreover, the Qumran community considered their leader, the Teacher of Righteous, to be an inspired interpreter of the OT prophets (1QpHab 7:1–5). Aune remarks, "The Teacher of Righteousness is never explicitly called a "prophet" (*nby*') in any of the literature from Qumran, but he appears to have been regarded as such by the community."[19] The Teacher of Righteous

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14. Nathan Drazin, *History of Jewish Education*: *From 515 B.C.E to 220 CE* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1940), 7. What constitutes the "Second Temple" period of literature has been debated. This literature may include work, such as Revelation, which was possibly written after the destruction of the temple. Because Mishnaic literature does not become extant until the early third century, separating the sages from the rabbis relative to their insights on prophecy is the best approach.

15. J.R.C. Cousland, "Prophets and Prophecy," *DNTB* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 833. cf. George J. Brooke, "Prophecy and Prophets in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Looking Backwards and Forwards," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak LHBOTS 427 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2006), 151–65.

16. Sir 24:33, NRSV.

17. Cousland, "Prophets and Prophecy," *DNTB*, 834. For the prophetic activities of other zealots, see *J.W.* 6.286.

18. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 132–3; cf. Cousland, "Prophets and Prophecy," *DNTB*, 834.

19. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 132–3.

claimed to possess the Holy Spirit's inspiration, affording him unique interpretive insight into the Scriptures. Cousland likewise states, "The Habakkuk Commentary depicts him as the one to whom 'God revealed all the mysteries of his servants the prophets.'"[20] Distinguishing between true and false prophecy was also a concern of the Essene community (4Q375; 4Q339).[21]

Likewise, the assumption of inspired activity appears in the writings of Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE–50 CE). Philo merged the platonic notion of "ecstatic" prophecy with the Jewish concept of "inspired" interpretation and prediction (Philo *Rer. Div. Her.* 259). He described prophecy as a process of "divine possession," wherein "the mind is evicted at the arrival of the divine Spirit" (*Heir* 265, LCL [Colson]). Philo seems to claim this ability for himself (*Migration* 35).[22] Cousland remarks, "Philo's Greek terminology here echoes Plato and testifies to his indebtedness to a Platonic understanding of mantic inspiration."[23] In his writings, he warned against false prophets who could mimic the ecstatic affectation of true prophets but would ultimately lead Israel into false idol worship (Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.315).[24]

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20. Cousland, "Prophets and Prophecy," *DNTB*, 833. See also the Damascus Document (CD 1:12–13) in which the Teacher of Righteousness is the one who sees what God is going to do about the "congregation of traitors" in the "last generation." The Teacher of Righteousness, thus, has a spiritually inspired hermeneutic and authority for his sectarian community.

21. Cousland, "Prophets and Prophecy," *DNTB*, 833; For an assessment of just how "Essenic" the inhabitants of Qumran were, see Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways Between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 189.

22. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 147. Aune cites him, "I have approached my work empty and suddenly become full, the ideas falling in a shower from above and being sown invisibly, so that under the influence of the divine possession [*hypo katochēs entheou*] I have been filled with corybantic frenzy [*korybantian*] and been unconscious of anything, place, persons present, myself, words spoken, lines written. For I obtained language, ideas, an enjoyment of light, keenest vision, pellucid distinctness of objects, such as might be received through the eyes as the result of clearest shewing."

23. Cousland, "Prophets and Prophecy," *DNTB*, 834.

24. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 256–257. Luke also draws a contrast between the work of false prophets and that of legitimate prophets of Israel, Jesus inhabiting the latter category. Marshall states, "The second half of the saying is identical with 6:23b. with the substitution of ψευδοπροφήτης (Matt 7:15; 24:11, 24 par. Mk. 13:22; Acts 13:6; et al.). The reference is to false prophets in OT times (2 Pet. 2:1) who led the people astray and enjoyed a good reputation among them (Is. 28:7; 30:10; Mi. 2:11; Je. 5:31; 14:14–16; 23:17)."

In the Second Temple period, ancient prophets had departed from the scene. Nevertheless, from the vantage point of developing Jewish literature, the OT prophetic functions of revelation, inspired interpretation, and predictions were kept alive in the form of Jewish apocalypse, wisdom literature, philosophical (Philo), and historical (Josephus) exegesis.[25]

Jesus as a Rejected and Exalted Prophet

Jesus enters a world that has high expectations for a prophet and a Messiah.[26] Generally speaking, Luke portrays Jesus as the rejected prophet (Luke 4:25–27), a "great prophet" (Luke 7:16), the "anointed" Isaian prophet (Luke 4:18; Acts 4:26–27), the "ancient prophet" *redivivus* (Luke 9:8), the suffering prophet and son (Luke 14:17), the resurrected "prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people" (24:18–20), and the new and greater Moses (Acts 3:23; 7:27). Jesus's suffering and rejection is the crux of this messianic-prophetic role—he is the last in a long line of scorned prophets. Two Lucan units exemplify this theme with respect to Jesus's Nazareth sermon: (1) his arrival in Jerusalem as its ostensible prophet-king (Luke 13:31–35; 19:28–44); (2) the Parable of the Vineyard in which he depicts himself as God's beloved prophet-son (20:9–18). While Luke frames Jesus's ministry in prophetic terms, he also intended his audience to see that Christ functioned with a dual occupation of Israel's final prophet and Yahweh's son-king.

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25. Hindy Najman, "The Inheritance of Prophecy in Apocalypse," in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature,* ed. John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 36–51.

26 Like Luke, the Synoptic authors repeatedly depict Jesus as the Messiah fulfilling a prophetic role (Matt 5:12, 17; 12:39; 13:57; 16:4; 21:46; 23:31–32, 34, 37; Mark 6:4, 14–15; 8:28; John 4:19, 44; 6:14, 7:40, 52; 9:17; Acts 3:22–23; 7:37). See also Luke 1:70; 3:4; 4:17, 27; 9:8, 19; 10:24; 13:28, 34; 16:16, 29, 31; 18:31; 24:25, 27, 44; Acts 2:16; 3:18, 21, 24; 7:42, 48; 8:28, 30, 34; 10:43; 13:15, 20, 27, 40; 15:15; 24:14; 26:22, 27; 28:23, 25. Luke also describes Jesus's followers as a community of prophets (6:23; 10:24; 11:47, 49, 50; 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:10), see Beers, *The Followers of Jesus*, 114.

God's Prophet-King (Luke 13:31-35; 19:28–44)

In two parallel passages describing Jesus's royal entry (Matt 21), Luke describes him prophesying over the city of Jerusalem twice (Luke 13:31-35; 19:28–44).[27] Jesus identifies himself saying, "it is not possible for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem" (13:33b).[28] Thereafter, Jesus laments over the city in a fashion reminiscent of Jeremiah (13:34). After declaring that their "house" has been "forsaken" or left desolate (13:35a; 19:41), Jesus prophesies that they will not see him again until they say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (13:35b). In the parallel chapter about his triumphal entry as Israel's King, Jesus enters the city fulfilling his own prophecy as "He who comes in the name of the LORD" (19:38–39). Again, reminiscent of Jeremiah the prophet, Jesus weeps over the city (19:41–42; cf. 13:33) and then predicts Jerusalem's destruction (19:41–44; cf. 13:34). He arrives as Israel's rightful king, the inheritor of David's throne. As David's Son and Israel's Prophet, he affirms the aphorism that all true prophets perish in Jerusalem.

This Lucan theme informs how one reads Jesus's synagogue sermon. Several features of Jesus's chosen text (Isa 61:1–11) in Luke 4:18–19 may highlight the prophet's implied royal character: (1) In the OT, the two features of "anointing" and "Spirit empowerment" (61:1) occur together *only in conjunction with the kingly office* of Israel (1 Sam 16:12–13; 2 Sam 23:1–2; cf. Pss. Sol. 17:32, 37; 18:5, 7).[29] It is no mistake that Jesus has just come from his baptismal

27. Matthew conflates these two passages into one triumphal entry unit, whereas Luke presents them as an initial entry to Jerusalem to prophesy its destruction and his future triumphal entry as "one who comes in the name of the LORD." The second passage (Luke 19:28–44) exactly fulfills the first.

28. See 1 Kgs 18:4, 13; 19:10; Jer 26:20; Neh 9:26. The metaphor of sheltering under God's "wings" is used variously in the Scripture and Jewish literature (Ruth 2:12; Pss 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4; Isa 31:5; 2 Esd 1:30; 2 Bar. 41:3–4). Like an exasperated hen, Jesus too has longed to gather Israel under the "wings" of his protective care (13:34).

29. Some debate this. See cf. Pieter De Vries, "Structural Analysis of Isaiah 61 with a Special Focus on Verses 1–3," in *Old Testament Essays* 26 (January 2013): 298–314. De Vries argues against the Masoretic divisions

anointing (Luke 3:21–22) in which the Father has pronounced him the "beloved Son," who is now returning to the region in the Spirit's power. (2) The declaration of the captives' manumission and the announcement of sabbath/Jubilee release is particular to the royal office (Jer 34:8–22). Strauss remarks, "During the monarchical period, it was the king who served as Yahweh's agent to 'establish judgment and righteousness' (עשׂה משׁפט וצדקה; 2 Sam 8:15–18, David; 1 Kgs 10:9, Solomon; cf. 1 Kgs 3:28; 6:12)."[30] (3) The structure of Isaiah 61 bears a notable resemblance to ANE royal accession speeches in which the ANE son-kings become the apotheosis of the divine monarchy.[31] Walter Houston suggests that the passage (Isa 61:1–3) evokes the memory of David's deathbed speech in 2 Sam 23:1–7.[32] As Chapter 5 of this dissertation concluded, the Isaian messenger (61:1–2) is also the Isaian royal and suffering servant of Yahweh. Strauss concludes, "Luke presents the events leading up to the Nazareth sermon as the prelude to a *royal-messianic* ministry, it seems likely that he has interpreted the

(tricola) of the text and instead applies a poetic bicola formula. His division of the Isaian text suggests that the hymn is divided into fifty cola, corresponding to the number of Levitical Jubilar years. This structure supports a priestly message rather than a royal one. However, Watts argues רוח אדני יהוה, "the spirit of my Lord YHWH" coincides with Isaiah 11:2 where the Davidic reign is unambiguous. See John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, WBC 25 (Nashville: Nelson, 2005), 872. Mark Strauss also makes a stronger case for the presence of a royal theme in Isaiah 61:1–11. See Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts,* 230. Chapter 5 of this dissertation also made a semantic and contextual case for the Davidic Servant as the Anointed Messenger of Isa 61:1–2.

30. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts,* 231. Strauss further notes that the Prophet's theme of Davidic-messianic justice and righteousness in the land is reflected in Second Temple literature (Isa 9:6; 11:1–5; Jer 23:5–6; 33:15; Ezek 21:27), Psalms of Solomon (Pss. Sol. 17.22, 26, 29, 32, 37, 40), Pesher on Isaiah (4Q161–165), Rule of the Blessings (1Q28b 5.24–26), Testament of Judah (T. Jud. 24.1, 6), 1 Enoch (1 En. 61.8–9; 62.1–12).

31. For ANE ascension speeches, see James B. Pritchard *Ancient Near Easter Texts Relating to the Old Testament with Supplement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); cf. Robert B. Sloan, *The Favorable Year of the Lord: A Study of Jubilary Theology in the Gospel of Luke* (Austin: Schola Press, 1977).

32. Walter J. Houston, "'Today, In Your Very Hearing': Some Comments on the Christological Use of the Old Testament," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 45.

sermon as Jesus' inaugural kingly address."[33] In Luke's Gospel, Jesus claims this dual vocation of Israel's prophet and Yahweh's Son-king.

God's Prophet-Son (Luke 20:9–17)

Another passage is critical to understanding Luke's portrayal of Christ as God's final, eschatological prophet. In his parable of the "Wicked Tenants," Jesus teaches that the prophetic office terminates with his arrival. Luke 20:1–44 consists of five controversies pertaining to the nature and source of Jesus's authority, after his controversial cleansing of the temple (Luke 19:46–47).[34] The first challenge concerns the demand for Jesus to justify doing "these things" (Luke 20:1–2; Matt 21:23; Mark 11:28).[35] Jesus then poses an unsolvable riddle to the chief priests, scribes, and elders, answering their question with a question— "was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?" (20:3–4). Anticipating that he has set a trap for them, they confess that they do not know the source of John's baptismal authority (20:5). Jesus responds, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things" (20:8). But then he does divulge the source of his authority to prophetically cleanse the corrupt temple.

Turning away from the religious leaders, he resumes teaching the crowd while the temple leaders eavesdrop on his exposition. The parable is the key to understanding who Jesus is and where his authority comes from,

> And he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But

33 Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts,* 233.

34. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, 1582.

35. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, 1584. "these things" can refer to Jesus's cleansing of the temple, or more generally to his teaching and miracles. Since Luke frames this section with Jesus teaching and healing in the temple (Luke 19:45–21:38), it likely refers to both. His actions in the temple are all suspect for those who govern the temple's affairs.

> the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved Son; perhaps they will respect him.' But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' [15] And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him." (Luke 20:9–15).

He concludes the parable with a question that everyone knows the answer to, "What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others" (Luke 20:16; Matt 21:43). Nolland remarks that Jesus links the wicked tenants to past generations who "have characteristically rejected the prophets sent to them (6:23; 11:47, 49–50; 13:33–34; 20:9–19; Acts 7:52; 28:25)."[36] This imagery of Yahweh's vineyard echoes Isa 65:17–25, a prophecy that the "vineyard" would be granted to a remnant along with outsiders "who did not seek me" (Isa 65:1; cf. Isa 5:1–5). Similar to the Nazarene's reaction, the Jerusalem crowd is scandalized at the implication of Christ's message, responding Μὴ γένοιτο, "Surely not!" (Luke 20:16). Richard Longenecker summarizes, "In Mark 12:10–11; Matt 21:42; Luke 20:17, Jesus concludes his allusion to the well-known parable of the vineyard (Isa 5:1–7) and his not-so-veiled rebuke of the people's rejection of the son with the quotation of Ps 118:22–23."[37] The "vineyard" motif is generally an analogy of peace and restoration (Isa 16:10; 27:2; 36:17; 37:30; 65:21) and, at times, a picture of Yahweh's judgment of Zion (Isa 1:8; 5:1–10; Jer 12:10).[38]

Jesus's retelling of the parable is an allegory. The vineyard represents the divine trust of election and the covenant with God's people, Israel, and her leaders (Jesus's audience in

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36. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 200.

37. Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver, BCE: Regent College Publishing, 1999), 54.

38. Not only does Isaiah employ the vineyard as a rich metaphor for Israel, but the vineyard symbolizes the eschatological Kingdom of the New Heavens and the New Earth (Isa 65:17–25).

context). The owner of the vineyard is the God of Israel. The servants authorized to settle accounts and reap the fruit of their labor are Israel's prophets and spokesmen, such as John the Baptist, who were the forerunners of the Messiah.[39] Jesus is the beloved prophet-son who uniquely fulfills and exceeds that ancestral office, taking the full and final measure of their abuse.[40] Finally, this beloved son-prophet is the "stone" the builders rejected that has now become the cornerstone of the whole edifice (Luke 20:17; see Ps 118:22–23). All who fall on the stone will be broken to pieces, and all on whom the stone falls will be crushed (20:18). He subverts the religious leaders' reading of the Isa 5:1–7 passage in this provocative retelling of a familiar parable.[41]

This biblical-theological context supports the royal-prophetic interpretation of Luke 4:16–30 and the Isaiah 61 oracle. Both prophetic and royal elements are present in the synagogue sermon. He inaugurates his ministry in the town of his youth by reading a passage that encompasses the functions of God's chosen anointed herald. This beloved Son will suffer rejection and eventually death at the hands of his own people. He is also God's regal Son-prophet who is anointed to decree the manumission of captives. As God's final prophet and royal Son, his rejection becomes the key to understanding his identity. Jesus follows the reading and declaration with an interpretive method that gives Luke's readers a window into his uniqueness as Israel's one true "reader" and teacher.

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39. Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 222. Talbert suggests this "religious bureaucracy" has moved from stewardship to ownership, hence Jesus's unmistakable use of terms such as "heir" and "beloved Son."

40. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 453–54.

41. Craig Evans, "'Have You Not Read. . .?' Jesus' Subversive Interpretation of Scripture" in *Jesus Research: An International Perspective*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Petr Pokomy (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 195.

God's Prophet-Sage (Luke 4:20)

After reading Isaiah, Jesus rolls up the scroll, handing it back to the ὑπηρέτης "attendant" (4:20). The term ὑπηρέτης is normally equivalent to חזן meaning "overseer" or "officer" (see Matt 5:25).[42] After reading, ἐκάθισεν, "he sat down." This phrase could refer to him sitting down to reoccupy his place in the congregation as lay readers were expected to do, in which case there would be no reason nor opportunity for "all eyes" to be continuously fixed on him. But as was shown in Philo, these congregationally appointed readers deferred from their more proficient, educated teachers to explain the text (*Every Good Person*, 81–82). Marshall states, however, that the seat "here no doubt refers to taking up the posture of a teacher."[43] In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus reminds the Jewish authorities that he ἐκαθεζόμην "sat teaching" daily in the temple courts (Matt 26:55). Bock states, "Teaching in a sitting position was customary (Luke 5:3; Matt. 5:1; 23:2; 26:55; Mark 4:1)."[44] Sitting down may imply that Jesus sat in the seat of Moses, indicating his authority to speak on matters of religious observance or interpretation.

Archeological excavations of various synagogues have revealed the existence of these "seats of authority" for teaching. Evans notes, "Special ornate stone seats, complete with Hebrew inscriptions—usually phrases from the Bible—have been found in the ruins of old synagogues at Chorazin, Delos, Dura Europos and Hammath-Tiberias, and may be examples of what Jesus mentioned in his criticism of the scribes and Pharisees."[45] The idiom ἐπὶ τῆς Μωϋσέως καθέδρας

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42. *JE*, 284; cf. Matthew 5:25 seems to confirm that *hazzan* was a court officer in the synagogue could execute judgment and condemn someone for committing a crime. Here in Luke, the term is used consistent with its Talmudic use of a synagogue handler of scrolls, an archivist and curator (Soṭah 6. 7, 8; Suk. 4. 4). cf. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 411. Bock agrees stating, "In all probability he is the *hazzan* of the synagogue,"

43. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 184.

44. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 411.

45. Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013), 60. See also Eric M. Meyers, "Synagogue: Diaspora Synagogues," in *ABD*, 261. Meyers notes, "The

καθίζω, meaning "to sit in the seat of Moses,"[46] conferred upon a teacher the halakhic authority to prescribe regulatory laws and the midrashic authority to exposit deeper interpretive insights.[47] Jesus himself affirmed that this teaching authority is reserved for "the scribes and Pharisees" who sit in "Moses' seat" (Matt 23:2; Luke 11:43; 14:7; 20:46). The physical "chair" is indicative of cultural authority to offer, in midrashic fashion, regulatory, or interpretive understandings regarding Jewish tradition.

As a customary reader of the Prophets, Jesus was expected to resume his place within the congregation after reading the day's text. Instead, he likely took the seat of authority reserved for the privileged leaders of his day. This explains how it is that καὶ πάντων οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ ἦσαν ἀτενίζοντες αὐτῷ, translated, "and all the eyes in the synagogue were fixed upon him" (4:20). The present participle ἀτενίζοντες (of ἀτενίζω), meaning "to look intently" is very common in Luke and rare in the rest of the NT.[48] Second Temple authors employed the term negatively in contexts, often conveying the idea of staring or glaring with ominous intensity (3 Macc 2:26; T. Ab. B:8; T. Reu. 4:2; Jos. Asen. 8:8; Apoc. Mos. 33). In Luke-Acts, the term can be used to refer to both concentration in a positive light (Acts 3:4; 13:9) and "staring" with

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Delos structure is a main hall (16.9 x 14.4 m) later divided into two rooms by a wall with three entrances. Room A had benches along the walls with a marble throne 'seat of Moses' on the W wall. Several rooms and portico are on the S and E of the main hall." For an interesting trajectory from rabbinic to Christian usage, see the *The Clementine Homilies* 1.3 (*ANF* 8:223); *Epistle of Clement to James* (17.1). Various texts depict the "enthronement" of the bishop in the "seat of Christ" ostensibly adopting the rabbinic conception of the "seat" (καθέδρα) of authority.

46. L&N, 476.

47. Isidore Renov, "The Seat of Moses." *IEJ* 5 (1955): 262–67. cf. Marc Bregman, "Early Jewish Preaching," in *TDBAM*, ed. Tom Thatcher et al. (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 110; M. Avi-Yonah, "Archaeological Sources," in *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*, ed. Shmuel Safrai, M. Stern, and M. de Jonge, CRINT 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 53.

48. Alan J. Thompson, *Luke* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 74. Thompson states, "The pres. ptc. ἀτενίζοντες (nom. pl. masc. of pres. act. ptc. of ἀτενίζω, 'look intently'; used twelve out of fourteen times in the NT by Luke [ten in Acts]) with the impf. ἦσαν is an impf. periph. cstr."

severity or harsh intent (Luke 22:56; Acts 6:15). In mixed crowds, the term can describe both positive and negative "looks" simultaneously. The congregants (Luke 4:20) are a mix of the captivated and the perplexed. This mixed reaction can likely be attributed to the exciting and promising reputation that had preceded him from his ministry in Capernaum and by the apparent audacity of a mere craftsman assuming the position of high social authority.

Fulfilled in Your Hearing: Jesus's Fulfillment Hermeneutic (4:21)

After reading Isaiah 61:1–2 and 58:6, Jesus announces, Σήμερον πεπλήρωται ἡ γραφὴ αὕτη ἐν τοῖς ὠσὶν ὑμῶν, meaning "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" or literally "fulfilled in your ears" (4:21). This reinforced the findings of Chapter 3 in that synagogue education was mostly aural-oral reception and performance. The congregation is transfixed by τοῖς λόγοις τῆς χάριτος τοῖς ἐκπορευομένοις ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, meaning "the gracious words proceeding out of his mouth." Jesus now interprets the Isaian text.

But, what does Jesus mean when he declares the Scripture fulfilled in their hearing? What kind of fulfillment hermeneutic did he employ? The passage cannot merely be a "promise-fulfillment" text as Talbert argues, because the text already involves too much intertextuality. Messianic imagery from David and Solomon (2 Sam 7:10–14; cf. Ps 2; 89) and Yahweh's Servant (Isa 40–53; 60; 63) already suffuse the Isaian Jubilar text.[49] Bock confirms that Luke's usage of Isaiah 61 and 58 is "typological and prophetic. Jesus typologically supersedes the Isaianic prophetic anointing and pattern of Isaiah 61."[50] This assessment may be too strong, as

49. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 267.

50. Darrell Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology*, JSNTSup 12 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 110, 274–75.

typology characteristically deals with narratives, events, people, or institutions and not predictive prophecies. Still, Mark Gignilliat agrees, "Isaiah 61 is richly textured with intertextual associations with the rest of the prophetic book."[51] Similar to Bock and Brevard Childs, Gignilliat cautions, "Jesus' reading of Isaiah 61 is not necessarily best understood within the mortar-shot approach to prophecy and fulfillment where Isaiah 61 shoots straight to Jesus Christ."[52] In its context, Isaiah 61 is already figural as the royal son (Isa 7–9) and themes from the "servant songs" (Isa 40–55) feature prominently in the text.

Undoubtedly, the scribes and Pharisees had continually modeled the interpretive approaches they expected their congregants to emulate in everyday life. Philo established that devout believers learned interpretive techniques from their erudite and esteemed instructors. And Jesus is ready and capable of deploying those interpretive methods. Nevertheless, his approach shows similarities and dissimilarities to the religious leaders.[53] On the one hand, his use of Scripture is not unlike that of the sages, as he often exhibits various Judaic traits and mannerisms indigenous to his culture: posture, Hebraisms, didactic questions, oral readings of Scripture, and the like.[54] On the other hand, Jesus's interpretive approach is distinctively self-referential and self-authenticating. The text is about him, and he alone has the authority to interpret it for this

51. Mark Gignilliat, "Theological Exegesis as 'Exegetical Showing: A Case of Isaiah's Figural Potentiality," *IJST* 12 (2010), 217–232, here 221.

52. Gignilliat, "Theological Exegesis," 229.

53. Max Wilcox, "Semitic Influence on the New Testament," *DNTB*, 1095; cf. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 18. Sanders insisted that any good hypothesis on Jesus must account for two factors: the first being to "situate Jesus believably in Judaism" and the second being "why the movement initiated by him broke with Judaism." Jesus's teaching is thoroughly Judaic but not so much that he can be stereotyped and thus void of uniqueness; cf. Robert H. Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 1–2.

54. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 455. cf. Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 54.

new eschatological epoch. Chapter 3 previously outlined various hermeneutical techniques that emerged in Second Temple literature, some of which can be eliminated in the Nazareth context: halakic regulations, haggadic moralizing, midrashic spiritualizing, peshatic literalism, and apocalyptic symbolism all seem to be ruled out.[55] However, two interpretive approaches stand out and have been give too little attention in this context.

Pesher Exegesis

To elaborate on a hermeneutical method surveyed in Chapter 3 of this study, pesher (פֵּשֶׁר) is an Aramaic loan word meaning "solution." Whereas Midrash emphasized "that *has relevance* to this," by contrast pesher was a "that *is* this" hermeneutic.[56] Richard Longenecker states, "The Dead Sea sectarians considered themselves to be the divinely elected community of the final generation of the present age, living in the days of travail before the eschatological consummation."[57] Rather than viewing specific prophecies as having original historical application with contemporary relevance in their context (midrashic), the Essenes instead interpreted those prophecies to be uniquely fulfilled in their time. As God's eschatological community awaiting the sudden in-breaking of the kingdom of God, ancient Scriptures are now

55. Geza Vermes, "The Qumran Interpretation of Scripture in Its Historical Setting," *ALUOS* 6 (1966–1968), 95. Geza Vermes suggests that there was a "fundamental unity of exegetical tradition" among the Second Temple interpreters. Halakah (הלך) refers to "the way, the road" (Deut 11:19; 1 Sam 9:9; Isa 33:15). Halakhic (הלך) interpretation of the Scripture is evident in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 1:25; 3:9). The issue with halakic teaching is its regulatory and thus binding function on the adherent. Peshat **(**פְּשָׁת**)** as an interpretive method refers to the literal meaning of the Scripture or "the flattened out" sense; cf. Michael Fishbane, "Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran," in *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud*, vol. 1 Mikra, 339–336; Charlotte Hempel, "Interpretative Authority in the Community Rule Tradition," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 10 (2003): 59–80; Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity,* 340.

56. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 54; cf. Jonathan Lunde, ed., "An Introduction to Central Questions in the New Testament Use of the Old Testament," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 27–8.

57. Richard N. Longenecker, "Can We Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament?" in *TynBul* 21 (1970): 3–38, here 7; cf. F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 16.

unfolding in their contemporary context.[58] David Flusser provides examples from the Pesher on Nahum (4Q169).[59] The Essenes identified the Pharisees as the tribe of "Ephraim," the Sadducees as "Manasseh," and the Essenes as the "House of Judah."[60] Likewise, the Isaiah 61:1–2 passage is interpreted in 11QMelch Col. II:1–6 (11Q13) as referring to a priestly Messiah who makes atonement for the peoples' sins at the end of the tenth Jubilee cycle. The OT substrate provides the shape of the future, fulfilled in the current events in God's favored last days community led by his chosen servant. Similarly, Jesus does not follow a midrashic hermeneutic in Luke 4:16–30, announcing "that situation is similar to this one;" instead, he indicates that the prophecy they just read from Isaiah is now unfolding before them.

Moreover, the Second Temple pesher interpreter cites but often alters the biblical texts by means of paraphrase or interpolation.[61] An analysis of 11Q13 highlights that the author integrated several passages involving various Jubilean themes (Lev 25:9, 13; Deut 15:2; Ps 82:1–2; Dan 9:26–27; Isa 52:7; 61:1–3). As such, the "predictive" element involves a model prophecy rich with intertextual application rather than a straightforward prediction-fulfillment.[62] Brooke

58. Lunde, "An Introduction to Central Questions," 27–8; cf. Flint, "Habakkuk Commentary," 438. This method lends itself to apocalypticism where, for example, "Babylon" can now be reinterpreted as "Rome" (Rev 17:5).

59. David Flusser, "Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes in Pesher Nahum," in *Studies in Jewish History and the Hebrew Language: Gedaliah Alon Memorial Volume*, ed. Menahem Dormann, et al. (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hame'uhad, 1970): 133–68.

60. Flusser, "Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes in Pesher Nahum," 39. He states, "From these typological exegeses we can see that in fact there were three groups at this time and Josephus's structure is not an apologetic convention."

61. Timothy H. Lim, "Eschatological Orientation and the Alteration of Scripture in the Habakkuk Pesher," *JNES* 49 (1990): 185–94. Lim draws attention to the following passages: 1QpHab 2:5; 9:6; 4Q255 1:1–4Q256 II, III; 4Q161; 4Q174 1:2 (cf. 2 Sam 7:10), verse 3 (cf. Exod 15:17–18), verse 7 (2 Sam 7:11), verse 10 (cf. 2 Sam 7:12–14), verse 12 (cf. Amos 9:11), verse 15 (cf. Isa 8:11), and verse 18 (cf. Ps 2:1); cf. Menahem Kister, "A Common Heritage: Biblical Interpretation at Qumran and its Implications," in *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 101–11;

62. Pieter B Hartog, "Pesher as Commentary," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Study of the Humanities* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 92–116.

supplies another example with 4Q174. In this Qumran text, the Psalms are interpreted by a pesher introductory formula, "the meaning of the matter is this." The pesher interpretation also includes the additional quotations of other scriptural passages (Isaiah 8:11 and Ezekiel 37:23) which complete and provide the solution to the original.[63] These texts were included on the basis of "catchphrases." Similarly in Luke's Gospel, he uses the LXX ἄφεσις (Luke 4:18) to connect Isaiah 61:1–2 to 58:6. Most commentators stress Jesus's usage of Hillel's interpretive device of *gezerah shawah* which conjoined two OT texts based on semantic similarities.[64] Jesus's citation may fit that, but his larger hermeneutic is more significant than merely patching similar passages together.[65] Jesus reads Isaiah 61:1–2 and intercalates Isaiah 58:6 as an intertextual and explanatory link.

Finally, the pesher interpreter engages in an inspired new revelation for God's faithful remnant. In fact, the Qumran leader unlocks mysteries that even the prophets themselves allegedly did not understand.[66] Brooke observes that inspired insight was given to the "Teacher of Righteousness. He is the one 'to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of his servants the prophets' (1QpHab 7:4–5)."[67] Likewise, Luke depicts Jesus offering a "new reading" of an old text—an interpretation that may have seemed novel to Jesus's hearers. Much

63. Brooke, "Pesharim," *DNTB*, 779.

64. Longnecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 54–5. cf. Talbert, *Luke*, 58. Talbert observes, "The word *aphesis* in normal Christian use means 'forgiveness,' and the evangelist elsewhere certainly employs the term in this way (1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18."

65. David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Shnabel, "Luke," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 289. The emphasis is on forgiveness and liberty (Luke 1:77; 3:3; 24:47) rather than on the literality of Torah jurisprudence concerning land rest, slave manumission, and the like (Lev 25).

66. Brooke, "Pesharim," *DNTB*, 779.

67. Brooke, "Pesharim," *DNTB*, 779.

of what Jesus does in Luke 4:16 matches an eschatological pesher approach with one glaring difference. While the Qumran community anticipated the arrival of the Messiah as they lived in the eschatological consummation of prophecy, they did not ever, as far as is known, claim that the messiah, or messiahs had actually arrived. By contrast, the church claimed from its beginning that Jesus was the Messiah.[68]

Sapiential Prophecy

A second interpretive element that is present in the text needs further attention. In the synagogue scene in Luke 4, Jesus utilizes wisdom sayings to prophetically reveal and predict the Nazarenes' response and his mission (Luke 4:23–24).[69] Moses's statutes and precepts constitute the foundation of all Jewish wisdom (Deut 4:6). Hebrew Scripture emerged at the intersection between the living voice (laws, oracles, prophecies) and the sages who shaped and arranged those living voices into literary volumes.[70]

Two features essentially characterize sapiential prophecy. First, though the "prophecy" is predictive, it is not particularly eschatological. The saying is often employed to explain or predict an immediate outcome.[71] Second, Aune suggests that sapiential prophecy is also connected "with

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68. F.F. Bruce, "Biblical Exposition at Qumran," in *Gospel Perspectives: Studies in Midrash and Historiography*, ed. R.T. France and David Wenham, vol. III (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1983), 97. Bruce affirms that Luke is here using pesher to explain Jesus's ultimate fulfillment of the "mysteries" that the Prophets did not see.

69. Gerald T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 151.

70. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, WBC 24, rev. ed. (Nashville: Nelson, 2005), xliv. Watts states that wise sages and prophets "had much in common. Both were counselors to kings. Both based their work on divine revelation. When wisdom and prophecy became literary, the relation became particularly close. Both depended on scribes. The hands and the methods of the scribes are on the Wisdom books as well as the prophetic books. Both interpret old traditions. Both are highly reflective in developing their thought. Their work marks the beginning of 'theology' in Israel."

71. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity,* 144; cf. Jesper Høgenhaven, "Psalms as Prophecy: Qumran Evidence for the Reading of Psalms as Prophetic Text and the Formation of the Canon," in *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple Period* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 229–51.

the faculty of wisdom, which is the peculiar specialty of the holy man, sage, or 'philosopher.'"[72] Jesus's employment of wisdom texts to interpret an eschatological prophecy seems to fit this category well. In fact, both Mark and Matthew record that the synagogue congregation noted the exceptional quality of Jesus's sapiential teaching, "What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?" (Mark 6:1b). Matthew combines these questions into one "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?" (Matt 13:54). The crowd defines his sagacious teaching to be equal to his miraculous ministry. Keener remarks, "But while Jesus does debate the law with legal experts in our sources, the dominant ethos of his teaching seems to focus less on legal and scribal matters than it combines the role of wisdom teacher with ... that of prophet."[73] Luke further narrates the congregation's astonishment by elaborating on the various wisdom sayings he employed among them. He is both the end-times prophet and their supreme sage-prophet who sits and teaches definitively from the seat of authority.[74] As such, he assumes the posture of Mosaic authority—God's archetype of prophecy and wisdom. While the kings and queens came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, now one greater than Solomon has come (Luke 11:31; Matt 12:42). As Israel's true

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72. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity,* 144. Concerning Philo's description of his prophetic proficiency, Aune observes that "The faculty of inner sight was of central importance for Philo's conception of prophecy." Others have noted the presence of sapiential prophecy in the poetics (4Q184, 4Q525). cf. Shem T. Miller, *Innovation and Convention: An Analysis of Parallelism in Stichographic, Hymnic, and Sapiential Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2012), 36. A growing interest in Wisdom-prophetic speech was evidenced in the period just before the first century.

73. Craig S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 187.

74. One should distinguish between Jesus as a prophet-sage according to the Scripture and a "cynic-sage" who operated with sapiential wisdom as per Crossan and Mack. See John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); Crossan, "Open Healing and Open Eating: Jesus as a Jewish Cynic," *BR* 36 (1991): 6–18; cf. Burton L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q & Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); For a mediating view of Jesus as a charismatic sage, see Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973), and Vermes, *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); For the definitive case for Jesus as a prophetic-eschatological sage, see E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

prophet and wise sage, Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees with honoring those who "killed the prophets" (Luke 11:47–48). The fact that they built their ancestors' tombs was self-incriminating. Jesus concludes with a series of woes directed at the scribal elite using sapiential-prophetic reasoning, "The Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute'" (Luke 11:49). He contrasts scribal-literate sagacity with God's own wisdom, pitting the two against each other. Jesus represents the latter, not the former. He sits in "Moses's seat," not as a scribe or Pharisee, but as the rightful successor to Moses's authority. As God's wise prophet, he predicts and reveals the state of the Nazarene's minds in the unfolding drama.

Is This Not Joseph's Son? Gracious Words and Emerging Doubts (4:22)

In response to his reading-proclamation, all present in the Nazareth synagogue initially ἐμαρτύρουν αὐτῷ translated, "testified concerning him" (4:22a). Luke uses αὐτῷ as a dative of disadvantage to foreshadow a festering skepticism that follows the congregation's initial glowing appraisal of his reading.[75] The "gracious words" can hardly refer to a sermon yet unpreached and likely allude to the reading of the text itself, given the Nazarene's expectation of a favorable interpretation and fulfillment. Chapter 5 established the Jews' expectations. Legitimate claimants to the Isaian Jubilee would have to announce God's favor on Israel and his vengeance on their Gentile counterparts. Before Jesus can affirm their conventional reading on the Isaian unit,

75. Thompson, *Luke*, 75. Bock, Bovon, and Thompson prefer to see this as a dative of advantage due to the "gracious words." But some scholars have questioned this translation of the Greek phrase ἐμαρτύρουν αὐτῷ, opting instead for a more neutral "all testified concerning him." Marshall notes that the overall character of the passage is a negative response. Given the predictive nature of the entire scene, the dat. of disadvantage seems to fit best. cf. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 186; Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*; Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, trans. C.M. Thomas; *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27*, trans. D.S. Deer, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28–24:53*, trans. J. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2002, 2013, 2012).

questions immediately begin to surface as to his artisan status, “And they said, ‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’” (4:22b).

The offense ensues as he takes Moses’s seat and the assembly realizes he is an unauthorized teacher. Marshall notes, “The words move from surprise to indignation and hostility.”[76] The question concerning Joseph’s parentage infers questions about the rest of his family “present with us” (Matt 13:55–56) and reveals an insufficient awareness of Jesus’s divine origin.[77] Concerning this simmering incredulity, Marshall concludes that “Such a strong rejection of Jesus is needed to account for the force of his reply.”[78] Garland denies this stance, seeing no grammatical evidence of skepticism in their expressed sentiments. Instead, he argues that doubts about Jesus remain unspoken. As a prophet, Jesus reveals their thoughts just as Simeon had earlier prophesied that Christ would do.[79] Whether it happened by expressed words, changing mood, or by revealing hidden thoughts, Luke implies that the atmosphere began to turn against Jesus, giving rise to his scathing, preemptive exposition.

Sapiential Demand: “Physician Heal Yourself” (4:23)

With this shift in general sentiment from “gracious words” to pervasive doubt, Jesus predicts that they will “quote” a παραβολήν, “parable/proverb.”[80] The proverb is found in

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76. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 186.

77. Thompson, *Luke*, 75. Thompson states, “Although the crowd was impressed by Jesus’ speech and claims, it remained skeptical that he was the one who could bring such salvation. The inadequate understanding of Jesus’ origin recalls 2:49 (and 1:35).”

78. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 186.

79. Garland, *Luke*, 203. He asserts that καὶ cannot be adversative. But this assertion is surely wrong. The term is multivalent, καὶ can be contrastive meaning “but,” “yet,” or “however” and is often used that way in the NT. See BDAG, s.v. καὶ, 495.

80. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 186. Marshal notes that “παραβολή is used as an equivalent to Hebrew *māšāl*, ‘proverb’ (1 Sa. 10:12; et al.; F. Hauck, TDNT V, 744–61, especially 747–49).”

numerous forms in ancient texts.[81] In the synagogue context, the saying anticipates more than the mere demand to demonstrate his ability in front of them. As a "physician," they will expect him to θεράπευσον σεαυτόν "heal yourself"—that is, to do for them what they heard him do in their neighboring town of Capernaum (4:23).[82] The proverb has parallels in rabbinic and classical literature.[83] Servius Sulpicius Rufus, for example, encouraged Cicero to apply his own teachings to himself, being careful not to imitate "inept physicians who claim to have therapeutic skills … but cannot cure themselves" (*Cic. Fam.* VI. 5.5 [Bailey, LCL]). Likewise, Dio Chrysostom invoked the imagery to describe a competent philosopher alleging a lack of skill to rule the city, "it is as if someone should refuse to treat his own body, though professing to be a physician, and yet should readily treat other men" (Chrysostom, *Discourses 37–60* [Crosby, LCL]).[84] Nolland remarks, "The proverb sets forward the incongruity of a sick doctor."[85] The sapiential maxim is well attested in ancient literature and likely constitutes an "oral text." But what Jesus means by it remains at issue. Marshall summarizes, "Two accusations may be present: 1. Jesus should bring the same blessings to his own people as he has brought to Capernaum. There is jealousy of a rival town. 2. Jesus should provide signs to attest the verbal claims which he has made."[86] Bock

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81. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AYB 28 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 535. He comments, "In Greek literature, one finds, 'A physician for others, but himself teeming with sores' (Euripides *Frag.* 1086); in later rabbinical literature, 'Physician, heal your own lameness' (*Genesis Rabbah* 23 [15c])."

82. Thompson, *Luke*, 75.

83. John Nolland, "Classical and Rabbinic Parallels to 'Physician, Heal Yourself' (Lk. IV.2)," in *Novum Testamentum* 21 (1979): 193–209; cf. Monique Cuany, "'Physician Heal Yourself!'—Jesus' Challenge to His Own: A Re-examination of the Offense of Nazareth in Light of Ancient Parallels (Luke 4:22–30)," in *Novum Testamentum* 58 (2016): 347–68.

84. Nolland, "Classical and Rabbinic Parallels," 203. Many other examples have been cited including Euripides, Plutarch, Homer, and Genesis Rabbah.

85. Nolland, "Classical and Rabbinic Parallels," 203.

86. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 187.

agrees that these are all interpretive options and prefers the latter.[87] He also suggests that this saying is not a "prophetic future" but rather reveals what they are thinking in the present, "Jesus, the prophet, is reading their collective mind."[88] Nolland likewise remarks, "The proverb is a comment on his rejection in Nazareth which interprets that rejection (it is not a prophecy of the rejection)."[89] However, the wisdom saying is in response to a smoldering but as yet unrealized state of affairs. Garland affirms that the proverb is pushing forward and forewarns his ultimate rejection as God's anointed prophet.[90] From a sapiential-prophetic point of view, Jesus is revealing the state of their minds and foreshadowing a future response.

Later in the crucifixion narrative, Luke utilizes a near-identical phrase to suggest a mocking tone directed at Jesus to σῶσον σεαυτόν "save yourself" (Luke 23:37). Thompson indicates that the "proverbial exhortation for Jesus to save 'himself' (ἑαυτόν) should not be limited to the following demand to prove his power in his 'hometown.' The similarity to [Luke] 23:35 [σωσάτω ἑαυτόν] indicates that the statement scoffs at Jesus' claims since he himself does not appear so grand."[91] At his crucifixion, Jesus "saved others" but now cannot σῶσον σεαυτόν "save himself" (Matt 27:40). His countrymen, the chief priests, elders, and scribes hurled derisive insults at him (Matt 27:39–44). The complaint in Luke 4:23 captures a local sentiment but foreshadows a near future (Luke 4:28–29) and a national response (23:35, 37): if Jesus were

87. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53,* 416. He states, "The proverb's meaning is variously interpreted. Many suggest that the request is, 'Do at home what you have done elsewhere' (Hendriksen 1978: 257; Schürmann 1969: 236–37; Schneider 1977a: 109; Mark 6:1) ... Others suggest that Jesus is asked to prove his claims. He is to show his stuff, so he may be believed. It is a 'you profess, so now produce' mentality."

88. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, 416.

89. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, WBC 35A (Waco, TX: Word, 1989), 200.

90 Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 204.

91. Thompson, *Luke*, 75.

Israel's true Messiah and prophet, then he would be able to heal and save his own people and himself, just as they heard he did for others. Jesus predicts that they will "say" something that later materializes in their actions, typifying the religious authorities' future response to him in the synagogues and finally at his trial.

Sapiential Foreshadowing: "No Prophet is Accepted in His Hometown" (4:24)

Jesus follows this proverb with a second one (4:24). This stacking of sapiential sayings was standard for Second Temple sages.[92] Similar to the previous maxim, this proverb has extra-biblical textual parallels establishing the general idea that significant figures experience contempt in their places of origin.[93] Beginning with the solemn declaration Ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν, meaning "Surely, I say to you"[94] followed by ὅτι "that," which here is grammatically recitative introducing a direct discourse. Jesus tells them that in his hometown, οὐδεὶς προφήτης δεκτός ἐστιν, "No prophet is acceptable," directly conflicting with the "acceptable year of the Lord's favor" in the Isaian passage read earlier.[95] The variation ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ, meaning "in his home" can refer to either the prophet's provincial town or his homeland in general.[96] This

92. Ronald Allen Piper, *Wisdom in the Q-tradition: The Aphoristic Teaching of Jesus*, vol. 61 (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 8. cf. Jonathon Lookadoo, "Book of Sirach: Critical Issues," in *The LBD*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), n.p; Pancratius C. Beentjes, "Full Wisdom in the Lord," in *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 139–154. Sirach 1–9 mimics the formal stylistic elements of the book of Proverbs, piling up one proverb after another, though *The Ben Sira Scroll* explores wisdom throughout OT biblical texts, not just in proverbial sayings.

93. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 187.

94. My translation.

95. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* NIGTC*,* 187. He cites Dio Chrysostom 30 (47), "Physician, heal your own limp" in *Genesis Rabbah* (Gen. Rab. in SB II, 156); "A doctor who cures other people and is himself ill" from an Arabic proverb; οὐδὲ ἰατρὸς ποιεῖ θεραπείας εἰς τοὺς γεινώσκοντας αὐτόν (P. Oxy. 1:6).

96. BDAG, s.v. πατρίδι, 788. In context, John's Gospel seems to indicate ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ is Jesus's "homeland" or "home-country;" however, this could include members of his own immediate and extended family.

proverb is cited in all the Gospels with variations in the wording (Mark 6:4 and Matt 13:57; John 4:44).[97] As sapiential foreshadowing, Luke likely means it as a double entendre. This local incident is paradigmatic of prophets in general, and predictive of a more systemic rejection of Israel's Messiah. As a disinclined healer and an "unacceptable" prophet, Christ's exposition strikes a threatening chord among his countrymen.

The Risky Business of Rejecting the Prophets

Jesus's use of "wry maxims" identifies the Nazarenes in the greater messianic drama.[98] Historically, those who rejected the prophets had set themselves against God.[99] Moses warned that despising "the Word of the Lord" came with a steep penalty of being "utterly cut off" from Israel (Num 15:31). As the archetypical prophet, Moses predicted the following:

> The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.... I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. (Deut 18:15, 18–19)

Similar to Moses, this future prophet teaches the people and they should "listen to him" because he proclaims God's very word. The prophecy anticipates that some will not listen and, therefore, be held answerable to God (Deut 18:19). Peter cited this very prophecy as fulfilled in Jesus (Acts 3:22), and all three Synoptics record the transfiguration scene of Moses and Elijah conferring

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97. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, 537. Fitzmyer notes the minor variations "Mark has, 'A prophet is not without honor (*atimos*) except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.' Matthew follows Mark but omits 'among his own relatives.' See John 4:44, 'A prophet has no honor in his own country.'"

98. Garland, *Luke*, 198.

99. David L. Turner, Israel's Last Prophet: Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matt 23 (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2015), 152.

with Jesus. God affirms Christ as his Son, commanding the disciples to "Listen to him," just as they had listened to Moses and the prophets (Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35).

God's rejection of a generation of people in the wilderness became the pattern for all subsequent disciplinary acts.[100] Samuel re-enacted this pattern with Saul, who was deposed as king because he rejected "the Word of the Lord" (1 Sam 15:23, 26). The prophets of Israel and Judah follow this pattern of rejecting anyone who despises Torah or their enforcement of Moses' covenant (1 Kgs 13:20–26; Isa 2:6; 5:1–7; 5:24; Jer 6:19; 8:9; 23:17; Hos 9:17). Bock affirms, "Rejecting a prophet is risky. The choice was Israel's, and it paid a heavy price in the past. It risks paying again (13:32–35; 19:41–44)."[101] The story of the prophets is one of their repeated rejection by Israel and Judah.

Nazareth as "Those Who Reject the Prophets"

The audience must be aware of the implied intertextuality between this oral proverb about rejected homegrown prophets (Luke 4:23–24) in their own Scriptures. But surely the congregation is also aware of the OT examples of favorable responses to the prophets. The "Word of the LORD" comes to the "remnant of Judah" who hears and obeys God's inspired message regarding the threat of rejection by God (Jer 42:7–17; 28). This theme crystallizes in the post-exilic account of the prophet Haggai. Haggai delivers a message to the remnant of Israel returning to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Joshua. Haggai charges them to rebuild the house of the LORD. The leaders and "the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had

100. Turner, *Israel's Last Prophet*, 360.

101. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 417–18.

sent" (Hag 1:1–12). That generation was saved, enjoying prosperity and blessing in the land. Likewise, faithful "Israel" hears and accepts God's prophets sent to them. Those without faith and who remain unresponsive to Jesus will be subject to God's wrath. Richard Hays concludes,

> On this reading the incomplete citation of Isaiah 61:2 in Luke 4:18–19 should be heard as a classic instance of *metalepsis:* Jesus announces the acceptable (δεκτός) year of the Lord, but Isaiah's warning of the 'day of vengeance' hovers unspoken over the text—and perhaps subtly informs our understanding of the consequences for those in Jesus' own country who do *not* find him "acceptable" (δεκτός, 4:24).[102]

In case the point was unclear, Jesus presses the issue by citing two examples from the Former Prophets.

In the Days of Elijah and Elisha: Spoken and Unspoken Archetypes (Luke 4:25–27)

Jesus's use of the Elijah and Elisha narratives clarifies his intent. He does not explain his use of the proverbs in didactic fashion; instead, he cites two prophets who ministered at a particularly low point in Israel's history.[103] He first recalls Elijah,

> But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. (Luke 4:25–26)
>
> ἐπ᾽ ἀληθείας δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, πολλαὶ χῆραι ἦσαν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἠλίου ἐν τῷ Ἰσραήλ, ὅτε ἐκλείσθη ὁ οὐρανὸς ἐπὶ ἔτη τρία καὶ μῆνας ἕξ, ὡς ἐγένετο λιμὸς μέγας ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν, καὶ πρὸς οὐδεμίαν αὐτῶν ἐπέμφθη Ἠλίας εἰ μὴ εἰς Σάρεπτα τῆς Σιδωνίας πρὸς γυναῖκα χήραν. (Luke 4:25–26)

Then he includes Elijah's successor, Elisha,

> And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian. (Luke 4:27)

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102. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 14, 227.

103. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 417.

> καὶ πολλοὶ λεπροὶ ἦσαν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ ἐπὶ Ἐλισαίου τοῦ προφήτου, καὶ οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν ἐκαθαρίσθη, εἰ μὴ Ναιμὰν ὁ Σύρος. (Luke 4:27)

Jeremy Otten states, "Much of the scholarly discussion regarding Luke's use of Elijah has focused on prophecy fulfillment and typology, and has primarily revolved around whether Luke associates the OT prophet with Jesus, John, or both."[104] Marshall affirms that the use of an Elijianic "typology is particularly prominent in Luke" and originates in the teaching of Jesus.[105] Elijah was a prototype of the forerunner to the Messiah and was also the OT exemplar of miraculous prophetic ministry (Luke 1:17; 4:25; 9:8, 19, 30-33).

Elijah was sent "only" εἰς Σάρεπτα τῆς Σιδωνίας πρὸς γυναῖκα χήραν "to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow." The woman lived in a Phoenician town between Tyre and Sidon. The Nazarenes were undoubtedly familiar with the general contours of this ancient story and the characters implied in the narrative. During the time of the wicked king, Ahab, and Queen Jezebel (1 Kgs 16:29–32), Elijah saved a Gentile widow and her son from starvation, and later raised her dead son back to life (1 Kgs 17:8–15, 23).[106] Jezebel "cut off" or killed Israel's prophets (1 Kgs 18:4, 13) and sought to kill Elijah as well (1 Kgs 18:10; 19:10). In response to this, God promised to leave a faithful remnant of 7,000 who had not bowed to Baal (19:18).

Jesus continues the story they all know well. And though there were πολλοὶ λεπροὶ "many lepers" in Israel in Elisha's time, he was sent (by God) καὶ οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν "yet to none of them." The conjunction καὶ is adversative, indicating a contrasting and narrowing choice, εἰ μὴ

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104. Jeremy Otten, *I Alone Am Left: Elijah and the Remnant in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2021), 2.

105. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke:* 189. He cites France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 48.

106. Garland, *Luke*, 205

Ναιμὰν ὁ Σύρος "but only to Naaman the Syrian."[107] Thompson remarks, "references to Sidon and Syria (as well as a woman who was a widow and man who was a leper), however, anticipate the changing picture of God's people with the ministry of Jesus."[108] Oral proverbs and narratives recited by Jesus necessarily entail four key archetypes: the Spirit-enabled prophets (Elijah and Elisha), unfaithful Israel (Ahab-Jezebel, apostate Israel), the Gentiles (Naaman and the widow), and the remnant of all who believe (the remnant of 7,000). The two stated examples of the prophets and the Gentiles imply the unstated figures of Ahab-Jezebel and apostate Israel who followed their leaders into idolatry and rejected their prophets.

The examples of the poor widow and Naaman clarify what Jesus means by "the poor," "captives," "the blind," and "oppressed."[109] Jesus later raises a widow's son back to life (Luke 7:12–17) and indicts the scribes and Pharisees for "devouring" the houses of widows (Luke 20:47). Jesus answered John the Baptist summarizing, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them" (7:22). Jesus is a friend of sinners—called to heal the "sick" and not the "healthy;" this includes those within Israel and those outside the nation. Garland notes, "The problem, which will soon become evident, is that God's plan does not match the plan that the audience has in mind, which would vouchsafe them their special privilege and status."[110] Jesus eventually commissions his prophetic community to take his Gospel from Jerusalem to the farthest reaches of the Gentile world (Acts 1:8).

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107. Thompson, *Luke*, 76.

108. Thompson, *Luke*, 76.

109. Garland, *Luke*, 204.

110. Garland, *Luke*, 201.

Filled with Rage: The Wrath of Nazareth (4:28)

This message elicits a curious reaction, καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες θυμοῦ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ ἀκούοντες ταῦτα, translated "When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath" (4:28). Bock states, "The crowd knew their biblical history and got the point."[111] In the Isaian Jubilee, God's restoration of his people is cause for rejoicing among the nations but only after Yahweh has taken his wrath out on them. However, here, Jesus foretells that he will turn his attention to those outside the nation to include them in the offer of Yahweh's favor. Garland concludes, "If they are astute, they may be upset for 'being implicitly cast in the role of apostate Israel in this analogy to the Old Testament'"[112] The comparison is unflattering and prompts the congregation to deploy their lynching law.[113] Again, Bock concludes, "In effect, Jesus was saying that the Nazareans were worse than Syrian lepers and Phoenician widows."[114] More than that, the Nazarenes are likely aware of the impetus for Elijah and Elisha's ministry among the nonbelievers. The Nazarene's ancestors rejected the prophets, bringing judgment upon that generation.

Summary Conclusion of Chapter 6

This chapter examined Jesus's mode and his message. His exposition is comprised of several oral readings of various texts from memory. All of these texts are prophetic in some fashion, culminating in his use of the Elijah and Elisha narratives that are rife with figural

111. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 419.

112. Garland, *Luke*, 205.

113. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke,* 190; cf. Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 593; b. Sukkah 52A–B; Sanh. 7:1.

114. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, 419.

significance. The examples work in two directions—regarding the Gentiles who are now the recipients of God's liberating end-times salvation and toward Jesus's audience as they demonstrate their hostility to God's surreptitious plan. In the "acceptable year" of God's favor, the Nazarenes find God's anointed agent of liberation entirely "unacceptable." While scholars have typically fixated on a particular aspect of Jesus's offensive teaching in Nazareth, this chapter proposes that the offense was due to a convergence of the following three concerns.

First, Jesus likely presumes to take the seat of Moses and interpret the Scriptures with a social authority that his artisan background does not supply. Luke intended the reader to see the subtleties. Jesus does not feign scribal expertise by offering conventional halakic, midrashic, or haggadic comments on the day's passage. Instead, his interpretation is eschatological and Christocentric. Using elements of pesher and sapiential foreshadowing, Jesus assumes a "prophetic form" that triggers a dramatic shift from "gracious words" to pervasive doubts among the Nazarenes.

Second, Jesus's message subverts a well-known interpretation of Isaiah 61. The Nazarene's expected to hear a "reversal of fortunes" tradition for Israel, coinciding with Yahweh's vengeance on their Gentile neighbors. If he is the Jubilean Prophet of Isaiah, then his ministry of favor for Israel should begin in his hometown among some of the most conservative and pious Jews in Galilee. Instead, Jesus announces a programmatic shift to minister to foreigners. This message implies that to reject a legitimate prophet of Israel is to incur God's judgment. Jesus is that prophet, and now instead of being Yahweh's favored remnant who inherit the promises, the Nazarenes are those who reject the prophets. By all accounts, Jesus is initially a welcomed reader in their synagogue service (Luke 4:16). Yet, no one in this traditional Jewish town expects him to deliver such an expansive and inclusive vision of God's eschatological

Jubilee, least of all on his own authority.

Third, Jesus's authority to "handle" the text appears to far exceed that of his fellow rabbis. The findings of this chapter challenge the thesis that Luke's burden was to portray Jesus as a scribal-literate authority in order to appeal to a later Greek audience. Luke's portrait of Christ aims much higher than that. Jesus has God's own authority to announce, from the seat of Moses and in his own name, an unexpected new interpretation of the familiar Jubilean text. His unanticipated "reading" of the Isaian Year of Jubilee constitutes a blasphemous overreach that necessitates the enactment of their lynching laws. For the Nazarenes, Jesus's announcement of Yahweh's acceptable year of favor is simply unacceptable.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This research has sought to contribute to the scholarly conversation surrounding Jesus's authority as a teacher by examining the evidence for or against Luke's synagogue scene depicting a "reading" and "interpreting" Jesus (Luke 4:16–30). In contrast to a previous era of scholarship that assumed Jesus's education due to the ubiquity of higher learning in Galilee, critical NT scholars today have advanced the theory that Jesus was an altogether illiterate peasant or a scribal illiterate artisan. Jesus lacked the access, ability, and authority to read and interpret the text in the synagogue. If this new majority viewpoint is correct, then Luke's portrayal of Jesus as a reading, interpreting, and authoritative teacher is either a literary fiction or the report of a mistaken memory. If Luke's account is false, it would have rippling implications for Christians and scholars who have generally shared a high view of Jesus as a well-informed and capable teacher of the Bible.

Building on an already mediating instinct between high literacy and low literacy, this study proposed the following thesis: Luke's portrayal of Jesus as a capable public reader and expositor of the Scripture is historically credible and Christologically significant in that it signals Jesus's divine authority. Therefore, Luke was not motivated to portray Jesus as a scribal-literate teacher (Pharisee, scribe, or priest) to appeal to the *Sitz im Leben* of Theophilus or a later Greek "literate sensibility." This project proposed to address this with an explicitly theological-historiographical approach. The hypothesis of this dissertation is first supported by the existence of oraliterate readers in an oral-textual Judaic culture. It is further evidenced by Luke's Christological framing of the unit and Jesus's exposition of Isaiah 61:1–2 and 58:6, whereby he unilaterally subverts a well-established Jewish liberation tradition (Luke 4:18–19). In doing so,

Jesus strongly inferred that he was God's end-times royal prophet and son (the fulfillment of Isa 61), while simultaneously implying that the Nazarenes were those who reject the prophets. This perspective best explains the furious response to Jesus in the Nazareth synagogue, resulting in his expulsion from their town and the escalating tension between him and the scribal and Pharisaic elite that ultimately lead to his trial and death.

Predictions of Both Models of Jesus as a Reader

All interpretive models make predictions. The new majority view on Jesus's literacy (scribal-illiterate peasant/artisan) anticipates certain outcomes to unfold from the extant evidence. These predictions should be accounted for in both extra-biblical and biblical evidence of Jesus, particularly in Luke's Gospel.

First, the scribal-illiterate thesis should predict that Second Temple sources contemporaneous to Luke would contradict his portrayal. However, synagogue artifacts, inscriptions, and the writings of Philo and Josephus largely agree with Luke's depiction of the synagogue as a vigorous environment of *tôrâ* instruction. Scribal-literate leaders taught the people in order to give them a strong sense of biblical-cultural "literacy" as they modeled interpretive perspicacity. Israel's teachers provided a supply-side interest in the Scriptures for the common folk.

The second prediction is that because Luke's Gospel was merely polemical (and thus lacking in historical value), then to counteract the perception of Jesus's illiteracy Luke would overwhelmingly depict Christ as reading from material texts in oculiterate fashion. But even Luke most often describes him as an oraliterate reader who recites, paraphrases, or alludes to texts. In the one incident where Jesus handles a material text (Luke 4:18–19), Luke describes him immediately orally interpolating another passage into the day's reading (Isa 58:6). Those

Isaian passages are followed by Jesus's exposition involving multiple texts recited from Christ's memory. Moreover, in a post-resurrection appearance Jesus is portrayed, not as an exalted scribe, but rather as "a prophet mighty in deed and word" (Luke 24:19). The resurrected Son-prophet then teaches the disciples on the road to Emmaus from "Moses and all the Prophets ... in all the Scriptures" those things which concerned himself (Luke 24:27, 44). Given the time involved to walk this distance with the disciples and given the difficulty in reading a large scroll while walking, it is likely that Jesus did not possess a physical text as he explained select passages and their messianic significance in this post-resurrection narrative.

Third, the scribal-illiterate model would envisage that Jesus's lack of education would be a regular point of tension between himself and the scribal elite. As Evans has pointed out, it is never the case that Jesus is accosted for being illiterate. By contrast, the oraliterate model presented in this dissertation, predicts that no one would take issue with his reading of Scripture in public because his verbal recitation just *is* an acceptable act of literate reading in that culture for a synagogue educated nonprofessional. This acceptance of Jesus's handling of Scripture is exactly what one finds when reading the Gospel accounts.

Fourth, the scribal-illiterate model also should expect that Jesus's lack of literate training would become a major accusation at his trial. If Jesus has acted as an illegitimate reader and teacher of the Bible, then a religious governing body (like the Sanhedrin) predisposed to finding a valid accusation against him should not have far to look. There should be plenty of sincere or insincere Galilean witnesses who could attest that he frequently and falsely taught in their synagogues. Furthermore, his lack of scribal-literate education should easily implicate him as a false teacher in the temple. Yet, Jesus's defense before the Sanhedrin is that he freely taught in the temple day after day. In what is arguably the most contentious and critical interaction

between Jesus and the religious authorities (his trial), why is the accusation of him acting as a false scribe, Pharisee, or priest not presented as evidence against him?

The scribal-illiterate model makes certain predictions that are not supported by extant evidence. The view that Luke corrected Mark and Matthew by depicting Jesus as a scribal-literate authority seems unwarranted, especially given the evidence for the strong emphasis of Torah study in the synagogues, and the evidence for lay-readers in ancient literature. Luke's synagogue reading event is simply too incidental to support the new majority view that he invented the story for polemical purposes. Luke's own emphasis seems clear: Jesus is a royal-prophet-son who can subvert the hallowed and long-standing traditions of his Jewish culture on his own authority.

Addressing the Evidence and Assumptions

This study proceeded by first surveying and then addressing the extant artifacts and attestations validating Jesus's educational status. Scholars of the new majority view cite the following evidences in favor of their opinion: (1) mass illiteracy and pervasive orality in Greco-Rome and Roman Palestine, (2) the claim of Ben Sira that an impassable social gulf existed between the artisans and scribal-literate sages, (3) the charge that Luke, Philo, Josephus, and the late Qumran literature comprise "polemical texts" deemed inadmissible as historical evidence, (4) the claim that "school houses" are missing from synagogue remains, (5) the charge of anachronistic schooling backdated from the rabbinic period into the Second Temple era, and lastly (6) the charge that Luke concocted or reported on a mistaken memory of Jesus as a scribal elite. Below, the burden of this dissertation will be synthesized, drawing some conclusions concerning the underlying assumptions of the new majority opinion.

Mass Illiteracy and Pervasive Orality

The insight that Jesus was illiterate is extrapolated from two significant precedent resources: Werner Kelber's orality versus literacy thesis and William V. Harris's research on illiteracy rates in Greco-Rome. Scholars adopting this view have traced Jesus's lack of education to a general condition of mass illiteracy in the ancient world and the prevalence of orality instead of literacy during that time.

Chapter 3 addressed this problem by reevaluating Israel as an increasingly "bookish" faith with a growing concern for the biblical literacy of its people. The notion of a purely alliterate Israel passing oral tradition from generation to generation before the eventual writing of the Tanak seems to be without merit. Chapter 3 brought much-needed attention to the Hebrew Bible as an oral-textual document from the start. According to the ancient witnesses, Israel was never without a covenantal text, and those texts always existed symbiotically with oral exposition and interpretation. Oral textuality created theoretical space for the existence of oraliterate readers. These readers learned aurally and practiced reading orally before handling difficult-to-decode material texts. Moreover, the extant artifacts and attestations indicate that synagogues were, at the very least, houses of learning and instruction, schools of worship and devotion where education is described as frequent aural reception. This is not to say no social limits were placed upon the layman's technical training. There certainly were limits for them. However, some organic thinkers excelled by virtue of their interest and diligence without necessarily crossing the artisan-scribal social divide. Not having apprenticed with a recognized rabbi in Jerusalem, Jesus's exceeding wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of Scripture would indeed be surprising to his countrymen. But his essential ability to orally read and interact with

texts hermeneutically was supplied by his bookish Judaic culture, not his alleged education in a scribal guild.

Sirach and the Hasty Charge of Polemical Texts

Chris Keith brought our attention to the fact that in Sirach and Ben Sira's day (250–190 BCE), the craftsman, particularly the τέκτων (carpenter), could not obtain higher knowledge and wisdom, which was taken to mean scribal literacy by Schams and Keith (Sir 38:24–39:1). Conversely, Philo (30–40 CE) appears to suggest that synagogue leaders would call on nonprofessional readers from the congregation, followed by a seasoned interpreter that he describes as, "one of especial proficiency." Two things must be concluded from this. First, Philo's antecedent to "someone" called upon to read refers to the younger and elder members having already taken their seats in the congregation. Second, if the initial reader were sufficiently educated as a scribe or Pharisee, then why the need for a subsequent interpreter with greater hermeneutical authority and wisdom?

Philo describes an environment where leaders equipped laypeople to become quite capable with the text. That lay readers were raised up from within the congregation is generally evidenced from his description of the Alexandrian assembly and specifically by Luke's account of an Alexandrian Jew, Apollos, who was well-educated and likely not a scribal-literate leader. Furthermore, Philo claimed that the layman has no higher pursuit than the weekly study and mastery of the Torah (*Hypoth.* 7.11–14), and that devout Jews were interpretively astute such that they did not need to inquire of "experts" in the law. Keith dismisses this passage from Philo as mere apologetics when he states, "Philo's subsequent claim that all Jews know the law to the

extent that they do not need to consult scribal authorities must be seen as polemical rhetoric."[1] However, Josephus largely agreed with Philo and Luke to that extent. He claimed (no doubt hyperbolically) that all Jewish children "learned letters" and were well educated in Jewish customs at home during their formative years (*C. Ap.* 1.12). Josephus likewise claimed that artisans vacated their trades and workhouses to populate the synagogues every Sabbath, directly contradicting Ben Sira's claims that the craftsmen had no opportunity to pursue learning or knowledge due to the engrossing responsibilities of their tradecrafts.

This raises several questions concerning the usefulness of polemical texts. Why should scholars conclude that these writings have little historical value? Moreover, why is Ben Sira, quoted multiple times by Keith (to evidence the artisan-scribal divide), also not charged with polemical interests, and relegated to the same irrelevance? Furthermore, why think that Ben Sira, a sapiential text written around 230 years before Jesus and about 260 years or so before Luke, reflects synagogue practice better than do Philo and Josephus—historical texts written contemporaneously to the historian Luke? Acknowledging their flare for apologetics, Evans remarks,

> Recognizing the limited value of the late, idealized rabbinic literature and the apologetically oriented claims of Philo and Josephus, three general factors favor the probability of the literacy of Jesus. First, the injunctions of Scripture to teach and learn Torah; second, the value placed on Torah, of knowing and obeying its laws; and third, the advantage of being the first-born son. In view of these factors it is probable that Jesus received at least some education in literacy.[2]

1. Chris Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite: The Origins of the Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 67.

2. Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013), 84.

Furthermore, at least one of the Qumran cave texts (1Qs 6:6b–8a; 11–12) portrays the faith community as rotating lay readers with no scribe, Pharisee, or priest initially present to mediate that experience. Authority is located within "the multitude" of readers and interpreters stressing the egalitarian communitarianism that characterized their sect. Finally, what should scholars make of the many passages that portray scribal-literate leaders who ostensibly learned a tradecraft (*Ant.* 15.390; 1 Cor 4:11; 9:6, 15, 18; 9:18–19; 2 Cor 11:7, 23, 27; 12:13; Acts 17:10, 17; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7–8)?[3] To say that the elite could learn a trade but that tradesmen could not learn to read seems like an unwarranted bias. The existence of artisan skills, and in particularly carpentry among the priests, bodes well for the view that there was a degree of overlap between these separate classes.

The Charge of Anachronism

Similarly, scholars who deny Jesus's literacy accused Safrai, Schürer, Drazin, and Gerhardsson of anachronism—backdating rabbinic schooling and memory practices from the Tannaitic and Amoraic eras into Jesus's day.[4] While there is undoubtedly some truth that Safrai systematized Jewish education from a patchwork of Second Temple and rabbinic sources, one wonders why scholars are left with only two choices: (1) either projecting a fully orbed school system back into the first century, or (2) denying that Jewish education was available to non-elite

3. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: 15:1–23:35,* vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 2726. Provided the rabbinic traditions in the Mishnah were well preserved orally until the early third-century CE, then there is good reason to think, as Keener suggests, that "most sages worked

4. Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 47. No doubt the Amoraic schools emerged after the destruction of the temple. Their projections of a fully developed school system are surely anachronistic. However, the absence of a fully developed and universalized school system in the first century does not mean that elements of that system did not already exist within certain communities in Judaism. Joshua ben Gamla is not said to have invented the system out of nothing—he merely proliferated an already existing synagogue-based structure (64 CE).

townsfolk. A third live option remains. The Second Temple synagogue educational system was the seedbed of what later developed into universal schooling, with a continued emphasis on memory and retention.

What transpired between the mass illiteracy in Ezra's post-exilic Judaism and the opening pages of the Gospels? From where did all these educational terms originate such as "scribes and Pharisees" (γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι), "synagogue" (συναγῶγη), "synagogue ruler" (ἀρχισυνάγωγος), "Sadducee" (Σαδδουκαῖος), "study" (μανθάνω), "traditions" (παράδοσις), "school" (σχολή), and "educate" (παιδεύω)? Any adequate theory must account for this shift in first-century terminology. The scribal-literate class existed to perpetuate its own elite status and consolidate much social authority within its ranks, that much is sure. That impulse was, however, compatible with their function of providing a supply-side interest in religious texts. Their obsession with the Torah undoubtedly influenced the populace in that they engaged locals in "ever hearing" and "ever seeing" God's Word. The religious establishment modeled the interpretive techniques and perspicacity that average congregants needed for their own study and discourse of the Scripture at home. It was not all that it would become in a later Tannaitic or Amoraic period. However, it was the cultural "soil" from which that later educational rabbinic paradigm would emerge and flourish.

The Missing School Houses

The surviving evidence suggests much diversity in the practice, readings, liturgy, architecture, and functions of ancient synagogues. What seems to be missing is archeological evidence supporting a Second Temple educational system. Botha's criticism of Reisner and Safrai on this point is well taken. Evans affirms that the evidence for attached school rooms as such is lacking in this period. However, Botha's criticism presupposes that the synagogue itself

was not already an educational center—a claim that is denied by all available extant witnesses on the matter—from Caesar Augustus's decree forbidding theft against synagogue "schools" (*Ant.* 16.6.163) to Philo's assertion that synagogues were "schools of prudence and virtue," to Luke's claims that synagogues were prolific centers throughout the Roman Empire where reading and dialogue concerning the Scripture took place regularly (Acts 9:20; 13:14, 42; 14:1; 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19). Foundational elements that would eventually develop after the temple's demise were already present in many local first-century communities.

How well did teaching authorities preserve their cultural traditions? Regarding memory practices of later rabbis, Keener observes, "It does not seem probable, *prima facie*, that the later rabbinic method simply arose *ex nihilo* after 70 CE."[5] Rabbis assiduously preserved their culture, now threatened by the Temple's demise. Although as Keener notes, "Few scholars today would dispute that 'elaborations' and 'innovations' also occurred."[6] Enough of the rabbinical model was present in Jesus's day to enable interested laypeople who wanted to pursue knowledge to do so. As they grew in wisdom and stature among their peers as organic intellectuals, they rotated into the weekly synagogue readings. They were to read the text and stay within fixed social parameters. While lay readers were nurtured in an oral–textual environment and expected to read portions of the Scripture in synagogue services, they would not have been encouraged to overturn established readings or traditions. The right to change an established tradition would have been out of the reach of a local artisan reader.

5. Craig Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 429.

6. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability,* 429.

Luke's Portrayal of Jesus as a Scribal Literate

Since the evidence supports Jesus's identity as a nonprofessional reader of the Scripture in the synagogues of Galilee and Judea, there remains the issue of Luke's actual literary aims of portraying Jesus as a reader. Chapter 4 engaged in a historical–theological reflection of the synagogue scene, particularly concerning 4:14–15. Jesus's life is characterized by glorious angelic birth announcements (Luke 1:26–56; 2:8–21, 22–38; 41–51; 3:1–21) and a successful defeat of the supernatural forces set against him to offer counterfeit "authority and power" (4:1–12). Jesus's Galilean ministry is then suffused with God's empowering Spirit, resulting in his glorification by the provincial crowds (4:14–15). Like ancient prophets, Jesus is empowered with the Spirit; however, unlike them, Jesus also personally gives the Spirit to his followers, just as Yahweh did in the OT. As the Messiah, Jesus can enter his ultimate glory only through rejection and suffering (Luke 24:26). His ministry repeatedly leads to crowds "glorifying God," and the reader eventually learns that this is Jesus's own glory (Acts 7:55). His hometown presents him with the first of many rejections toward that end.

Concerning the perspective that Mark and Matthew portray Jesus as a scribal-illiterate because they use the word τέκτων—and that Luke distances him from this profession by dropping this word altogether—this assertion was found to be somewhat circumstantial. As was suggested, this view has at least four insuperable logical problems: (1) Who gave Jesus access to the seat of Moses to teach in local Galilean synagogues before he was outed in the Nazareth incident? In order to take this position of authority, he would have to be approved by the synagogue rulers in his region (allegedly due to them mistaking him as a scribal literate). And why, after his undoubted first mishandling of texts due to his lack of education, was he allowed to continue teaching in synagogues before he reached Nazareth? Surely those local leaders were

in a position to falsify his status as a mistaken scribal-literate teacher. So why didn't they? (2) Why would Matthew and Mark have any interest in such a disparaging portrayal of Jesus? As Keith has asserted, Mark and Matthew portray Jesus to have been exposed as an imposter. Whether he dubiously gained access to Galilean synagogues by posing as an official teacher, or merely allowed the charade to continue to his advantage—he has, in fact, deceived the people. It seems that Mark and Matthew would have no interest in casting aspersions on his character in this way. (3) If Luke had an interest in distancing Jesus from low class associations, then why does Luke's Gospel so frequently depict Jesus ministering among them? His outreach to the disenfranchised and downtrodden is particularly acute in Luke's account. (4) Why would Luke not erase or soften the crucifixion account of Jesus altogether? If a scribal-illiterate carpenter is an offense to Luke's largely Greek audience, then surely a crucified Lord would be a far greater psychological and social barrier for Greco-Romans. The logic of the "mistaken scribal-literate Jesus" simply fails as an adequate explanatory option for all these established facts.

Conversely, the existence of a social space for laymen to read the Scripture has already been suggested above. Synagogue officials did not expect lay readers to interpret texts from Moses's seat. Moreover, neither Matthew nor Mark used any terms associated with illiteracy. A comparison of the Markan-Matthean, and the Lucan accounts of the synagogue scene shows that the stories have several key points of contact, differing only in terms of Luke's additional teaching material and the Nazarenes' intent to permanently silence Christ. Luke focuses on the way Jesus interpreted the Isaian text, which is very suggestive of his divine authority.

Jesus reads a text in synagogue that predicts God's favor on faithful Israel and his judgment on their Gentile rivals. Chapter 5 offers something of an excursus as the exposition turns to Isaiah's text (61:1–11) in its context. Given Luke's tendency to abbreviate longer blocks

of material, especially in case of conversations and speeches, one can infer that Jesus read at least all of Isaiah 61. The strong semantic and thematic similarities between the more considerable Servant of Yahweh section (Isa 42; 52:1–63), particularly the flanking "Divine Warrior" texts (Isa 52:1–21; 63:1–6), would lend itself to a metaleptic understanding of the passage. For a public reader to invoke the Jubilean passage would necessarily imply other Isaian texts and Davidic imagery spilling over into Isaiah 61. Most commentators assume that Jesus intentionally excluded the day of vengeance passage (Isa 61:2b). That interpretation, however, is inconsistent with Luke's overall picture of Jesus as Yahweh's instrument of judgment and wrath (1:51–53; 6:20–26, 12:13–21; 13:1–9, 22–30; 16:19–31; 21:1–24). While the words (Isa 61:2b) signifying vengeance are absent from Luke's synagogue scene, the theme is unmistakable throughout his two-volume work. More specifically, the Nazarenes are implied to be those who have incurred God's wrath for rejecting his anointed herald-king. The theme of God's vengeance hangs portentously over the entire synagogue encounter.

An exposition of Jesus's chosen text in its original Isaian context (Isaiah 61:1–11) presents the promise of a reversal of fortunes for Judah and Israel. A Spirit-enabled end-times messenger will inaugurate Yahweh's new kingdom age (61:1–2). He carries out the LORD's judgment as a "reader/preacher" who proclaims the year of his world-righting salvation. When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people (61:2–3), they will be reconstituted in their land and will rebuild their temple and city (61:4). Their relationship with the nations will be characterized by domestic peace and spiritual mediation, but only insofar as Israel remains their superiors (61:5, 6) and only after God carries out his day of vengeance on his enemies. God pledges to form a new, long-term covenant with them (61:8). As a result, the peoples of the earth will serve Israel as they rejoice over his blessing upon Zion (61:5, 9–10).

Second Temple and Mishnaic literature largely maintains this hermeneutical tradition, amplifying themes of judgment and wrath as eschatological realities (1QIsa[a] 59:15–63:6; Jubilees 10:32; 24:28–33; 29:11; 30:4–6; 34:1–9; 38:1–10; 48:12; 11QMelch Col. II:1–6; Tg. Isa. 61:5–6). Altogether this establishes an interpretive tradition regarding the Isaian text. The year of Yahweh's favor is concurrent with the day of his vengeance on the nations. The question arises as to what kind of teacher could reverse this tradition on the basis of his own authority?

Chapter 6 examined Jesus's oraliterate reading of several "texts" from memory, which constitute his exposition of the Isaian passages. All these texts are generally prophetic in tone, culminating in his use of the Elijianic and Elishianic themes that are rife with figural significance. The stories from the former prophets involve four archetypes, two are stated and two are implied. The first archetype is the Spirit-empowered prophets, Elijah, and Elisha, who represent Jesus, God's anointed herald. The second archetype is Naaman and the widow, who represent the foreigners in the surrounding regions and cities, like Capernaum. The implied archetypes include apostate Israel and its leaders, Ahab-Jezebel, now exemplified by the intractable Nazarenes and perhaps their leaders. The last archetype is feasibly the remnant of 7,000, representing all Jews and Gentiles who will come to believe Jesus's message. Jesus clearly possesses Elijah's mantel to take this favorable ministry to outsiders. For Jesus to invoke these narratives after predicting that his "hometown" will not accept their prophet, would strongly suggest that the Nazarenes are *unfaithful Israel*, now guilty of rejecting the prophets. OT warnings directed at those who reject God's chosen servants and continue in unbelief are serious, resulting in God's wrath on the apostate Israelite. Furthermore, Nazareth demonstrates its role in the story by seeking to kill and silence Jesus, God's anointed king and spokesman.

Luke describes Jesus's ministry in divine prophetic terms. He is God's royal-prophet who rides into Jerusalem as its King and prophesies its destruction for rejecting the time of their visitation (Luke 19). He is also God's son-prophet—the last in a long line of anointed spokesmen who settle accounts with the tenants of Yahweh's vineyard (Luke 20). In doing so, he terminates that historic office as he takes the full measure of their abuse previously directed toward his forerunners, like John and Isaiah.

In the "acceptable year" of God's favor, the Nazarenes find God's anointed agent of liberation rather "unacceptable." Though initially a culturally suitable reader of the Scripture, Jesus has offered an intolerable message to his hometown congregation. This chapter proposed that the violation was stimulated by three concerns: (1) Jesus's posture is insubordinate—he presumes to take the seat of social authority not furnished by his artisan background. (2) Jesus's message is incendiary—his audience expects to hear a tradition in favor of faithful Israel, coinciding with Yahweh's vengeance on their Gentile neighbors. This expectation may have been heightened due to the relatively recent event of Judas the Galilean's revolt against Rome and the devastating consequences of his failure. Still convalescing from that defeat, the Galileans, including the Nazarenes, were likely expecting a stronger message from Jesus about God's retribution on their Gentile rivals. His use of a pesher hermeneutic to interpret the text self-referentially—and his use of the sapiential prophetic device to reveal their imminent rejection of him—began to sour them against Jesus. (3) Jesus's authority exceeds that of the religious establishment—no one in this culture would venture to teach the Bible the way Jesus does. In addition to his self-referential focus, he also employed a self-authenticating hermeneutic. The Isaian text escalates and terminates in him, and he alone has the authority to

reveal its meaning and bestow its blessings in this new eschatological reality. His unexpected "reading" of the text signals to Nazareth that their hometown prophet has badly overreached.

Contributions of this Research

This research has contributed to an inquiry into the historical Jesus as an educated, authoritative teacher from Nazareth. The study's first contribution to this line of research has been organizational. Chapter 2 identified and categorized a mediating view regarding Jesus's cultural literacy. This mediating tendency is evident as far back as the writings of Alfred Edersheim and Henry W. Beecher and it can be seen at times in both camps regarding Jesus's education—the received view (Jesus as literate) and the new majority perspective (Jesus as illiterate). The current mediating perspectives are distinct from the aforementioned views and have various foci such as Jewish book culture, ubiquitous public reading events, lay literacy exegesis and archeology, theoretical literacy spectrums, and oral education. All of these mediating approaches affirm the prospect that Jesus may have been able to read in a culturally meaningful sense without a commensurate ability to write much.

This research identified and applied an oraliterate theory from the literature to account for Jesus's learning and reading of the text. While some scholars such as Yaghjian, Botha, and Miller have theorized about a possible spectrum that included oraliteracy, this dissertation sought to apply this theory to Jesus in the context of Luke's Palestinian synagogue scene. To the researcher's knowledge, no one else has incorporated this insight in a commentary or a study of this length on Jesus's reading that day. An oraliterate reader would have been considered sufficiently educated for specific reading tasks. Jesus is most often depicted in the NT as an oral performer of Scripture—texts he cites by way of memory, sometimes verbatim and sometimes paraphrased. The fact, that Jesus reads from a material text handed to him in the synagogue

(Luke 4:18–19) reinforces this perspective because Jesus seems to orally interpose at least one other passage (58:6) into his reading and exposition. The synagogue narrative in Luke 4:16–30 involves the subsequent oral performance of several nonmaterial texts recited from Jesus's memory.

The study also reconsidered extant witnesses of Jewish education, particularly as it relates to the synagogue. Other scholars, such as Craig Evans, have engaged with this literature in considerable detail. However, this study identified some flawed hermeneutical assumptions that underlie and facilitate the new majority opinion on Jewish illiterate peasantry. I pointed out that if the Second Temple evidence is not dismissed as mere polemical rhetoric and deemed inadmissible a priori, then this evidence constitutes a compelling case for a general picture of novice education among Second Temple Jews. This research identified over half a dozen individual sources and over a dozen individual first-century CE texts that attest to a vigorous culture of synagogue study, all of which appear to contradict Ben Sira's second-century BCE claim that carpenters could not obtain learning.

Other scholars such as Keith and Crossan collapse the issue of reading into the issue of social authority as an interpreter. However, I proposed to pull those two issues apart, understanding Luke's synagogue scene as a favorable act of reading and an unacceptable act of interpreting Scripture. This view seemed to be sufficiently nuanced—Jesus is a capable, welcomed reader, and a capable but unwelcomed interpreter. This approach is lacking from other mediating scholarly views that continue to simply argue for Jesus's literacy, perpetuating the supposed "great divide" between literacy and orality.

Hermeneutically, this research likewise applied the insights of pesher hermeneutics and sapiential prophecy to Jesus's exposition. The criteria for each seemed to match his usage of

texts in hand and oral texts read from memory. Jesus does indeed appear to interpret "that" (Isaiah and Elijah) as "this contemporary situation" (unfolding in the synagogue). It is acknowledged that Jesus regularly employed various Jewish interpretive methods in the Gospels such as midrashic exposition, halakic regulatory instructions, the rules of Hillel and so forth. But here in Luke's synagogue scene, Jesus uses hermeneutical methods that suggest his self-perception to be equal to or greater than the Teacher of Righteousness in Qumran. Like the Teacher of Righteousness, Jesus alone has the ability to interpret and decode the mysteries of the prophetic text. Unlike the Teacher of Righteous, Jesus is the present-day fulfillment of that ancient passage. Like the pesher interpreters of a previous era, Jesus can fuse other texts with the principal text in Isaiah 61 in order to "fulfill" it. Likewise, Jesus can prophesy in sapiential fashion, revealing both the state of their hearts and their future actions through proverbs and maxims. To this researcher's knowledge, this is the only study that has applied both pesher elements and sapiential prophetic features to Jesus's interpretation in Luke 4:16–30.

Many other studies have focused on the Isaian Jubilee or its conceptual equivalents concerning the Second Temple interpretive trajectories. As far as is known, this is the only study that explicitly interprets the Isaian Jubilee in light of the "vengeance theme" as a received tradition in Judaism. This research focuses on those vengeance elements of Jubilean themes and texts from the Second Temple period. If the Jews in Jesus's Galilean synagogue were accustomed to hearing that passage interpreted in their favor and with God's wrath to their pagan adversaries (thus constituting the "gracious words" they longed to hear), then Christ's explanation would have represented a subversive "double reversal of fortunes" reading. This act of reversing their expectations as a singular authority on Scripture suggests that his authority exceeds the rabbis, and even Isaiah himself.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study could be taken in the direction of a more comprehensive biblical-theological treatment of various emergent themes within the Lucan unit. While the current project could only outline and adopt the royal-prophet motif, a future undertaking could explore David as "a prophet" with respect to certain Lucan passages. NT authors and the Second Temple Jewish works variously understood David to be an inspired prophetic figure; therefore, the fusion of this Davidic royal-prophet-teacher of Israel would be a promising direction in research.

This study could further impact how scholars view "literacy," widening our horizons to include oraliteracy as a legitimate first-century educational status. This would influence modern assessments of ancient literacy rates and effect how scholars talk about education in the ancient world. Moreover, this perspective would necessitate modern interpreters to reorient themselves from "orality versus literacy" to "orality as a mode of literacy."

This Lucan unit is suffused with figuralism. A future project could take this passage from the perspective of explicit and implicit typology. Exploring the differences between allegorical, pesher, and typological interpretation would be of great benefit. This is especially the case regarding Isaiah 61 and the obvious figuralism already present in that passage in its OT context. A more extensive study on Elijah-Elisha typology with regard to this passage and the issue of remnant theology would also be a welcomed avenue of inquiry.

This subject matter could further be explored by surveying a variety of Jesus's "oral texts" without ignoring the high Christology of the Synoptic authors. How did Jesus subvert other known and received traditions concerning his use of the Scripture? For example, one could explore the six legal sayings of Matthew's Gospel (Matt 5), typically beginning with the statement, "You have heard it said ... but now I say to you." A future endeavor could additionally

explore Jesus as an oraliterate reader of oral texts, combining a historiographical study with a distinctly Christological approach. What did Matthew, for example, mean when he said the crowds observed that Jesus was “one with authority”? How did Jesus’s singular authority in the Synoptics contrast with the communal and “group” authority among scribes, Pharisees, and priests? And how did his use of texts subvert their communal and entrenched position?

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