

The Gospel of Luke – The Acts of the Apostles

The Prophecy of Isaiah in Luke's Writings

Mako A. Nagasawa

Confidence in the Truth

Lk.1¹ Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,³ it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;⁴ *so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.*

Jesus the Authoritative Teacher of the Scriptures: Beginning

Lk.2⁴⁶ Then, after three days they found him [Jesus] in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

Jesus the Authoritative Teacher of the Scriptures: End

Lk.24²⁵ And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, he explained to them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.²⁸ And they approached the village where they were going, and he acted as though he were going farther.²⁹ But they urged him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them.³⁰ When he had reclined at the table with them, he took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, he began giving it to them.³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.³² They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us on the road, while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?" ...⁴⁴ Now he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

The Apostles Commissioned by Jesus

Acts 17:10¹⁰ The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.¹¹ Now these were more noble – minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.¹² Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.

Acts 18:24²⁴ Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures...²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Acts 28:23²³ When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.²⁴ Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.

Israel and the Nations: Luke's Narrative and Isaiah's Prophecy

<i>Luke's Writings: Luke's Gospel</i>	<i>Isaiah's Prophecy</i>
Elizabeth is a barren woman who gives birth supernaturally	Inaugurates Isa.54:1 where the 'barren one, who [has] borne no child' has children with great joy
The angel Gabriel visits the virgin Mary to tell her she will bear the final heir of David, who will inherit the throne of David. 1:26 – 38	'His kingdom shall have no end' is conceptually identical with 'There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom' in Isa.9:7 and probably 7:14 also
Gabriel says that the Holy Spirit will overshadow Mary and conceive the 'Son of God.' Also, multiple people are said to be 'filled with the Holy Spirit.' 1:35, 41, 67; 2:25	Probable recall of the Holy Spirit resting on the messianic king in Isa.11:1 – 2 who will eventually share the Spirit in Isa.59:21
Zacharias prophesies by the Spirit about John the Baptist. 1:67 – 79	Quotes 'to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death' from Isa.9:2
Simeon in the Temple prophesies by the Spirit about Jesus. 2:28 – 32	Quotes 'a light of revelation to the Gentiles' from Isa.49:6
Anna is looking for 'the redemption of Jerusalem.' 2:38	Isa.40:1 and 52:9 concerns the redemption of Jerusalem
John the Baptist begins his ministry and is 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness' from Isa.40:3 – 5. 3:1 – 6	This is the beginning of Isaiah's vision of the 'return from exile' and the 'redemption of Jerusalem' starting from Isa.40.
Jesus is baptized and anointed by the Spirit. 3:21 – 22	Probable recall of the Holy Spirit resting on the messianic king in Isa.11:1 – 2, along with 42:1 – 4; 61:1 – 2
Jesus tempted for forty days in the wilderness. 4:1 – 13	'Israel' will go through water and fire (Red Sea, testing, and Sinai purification?) in Isa.43:1 – 2. This renewed Israel experiences God's supernatural springs of water and the Spirit as he journeys to the promised land again, in Isa.43:19 – 44:8.
Jesus begins his ministry and quotes from Isaiah's Servant Song. Quotes from Isa.61:1 – 2 and Isa.42:7 in a compressed quotation. 4:14 – 19	Isaiah's vision of the Messiah reaching the Gentiles and vindicating Jerusalem becomes Jesus' mission statement.
Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee. 4:14 – 9:50	Isaiah's saw the Messiah ministering in Galilee first, bringing light into darkness. Isa. 8:22 – 9:1
Jesus forgives sins. 5:17 – 24, 7:36 – 50, etc.	Echoes Isaiah's Servant Song from Isa.53
Jesus calls a remnant in Israel, making an analogy to new wine. 5:29 – 39	Remnant preserved, analogy to new wine. Isa.65:8 – 9
Jesus looks ahead to when he, as the bridegroom, 'is taken away from them.'	This is probably a quotation from Isa.53:8, 'By oppression and judgment he was taken away'
Jesus pronounces beatitudes on his disciples. 6:20 – 26	Isaiah distinguishes between the faithful remnant and the remainder of Israel in the same terms. Isa.65:13 – 15
Jesus heals the centurion's slave and praises the centurion for his faith. 7:1 – 10	Isaiah foresaw a time when foreigners would be fully welcomed into the covenant people's worship, contrary to the Mosaic Law. Contrast Isa.56:1 – 8 with Dt.23:1 – 6
Jesus clarifies his identity to John the Baptist. 7:22	By quoting Isaiah's Servant Songs. Isa.61:1 – 2 and Isa.42:1 – 9
Jesus offers 'peace' to the sinful woman. 7:50	Probably thinking about the 'peace' God gives to the righteous; Isaiah said that there is no peace for the wicked. Isa.48:22; 57:20 – 21
Jesus teaches the parable of the soils. 8:4 – 15	Using 'restoration from exile' motifs from Isa.55 (seed, rain, thorns, word)
Jesus says that the precedent for parables is given by Isaiah 6:10	'Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand' Isa.6:10
Jesus shepherds and feeds people in the wilderness. 9:10 – 17	Feeding in a wilderness was described in Isa.55:1 – 3 and 65:10 – 12
Jesus is frustrated with the Pharisees for their holier – than – thou attitude. 11:37 – 52	Frustration over Israel's holier than thou attitude prophesied in Isa.65:2 – 5
Jesus announces a long – delayed day of judgment on that attitude. 11:50 – 51	Prophesied in Isa.65:6 – 7
Jesus prophesies against Jerusalem. 12:41 – 13:9; 13:31 – 35	Isaiah prophesied against Jerusalem in Isa.1; 29:1 – 4; 65:11ff.
Jesus speaks of entering the kingdom of God in terms of a banquet. 14:7 – 24	Isaiah portrayed the kingdom/restoration in terms of a banquet in Isa.55:1 – 2
Jesus describes his ministry of restoration from exile in three parables. 15:1 – 32	Isaiah 40 – 55 is eminently concerned about restoration from exile

Jesus challenges Israel's historic relation to material wealth. 16:1 – 13	Isaiah foresaw a time of expanding Israel's traditional land boundaries in Isa.54:2
Jesus heals ten lepers, only one of which, a foreign Samaritan, turns back and gives glory to God. 17:11 – 19	Isaiah foresaw a time when foreigners would be fully welcomed into the covenant people's worship, contrary to the Mosaic Law. Contrast Isa.56:1 – 8 with Dt.23:1 – 6
Jesus challenges Israel's leadership using the parable of the vineyard. 20:9 – 16	Isaiah challenged Israel's leadership using a parable of the vineyard in Isa.5:1 – 8
Jesus contrasts the Temple's importance (unfavorably) with a widow. 20:45 – 21:4	Isaiah contrasted the Temple's importance (unfavorably) with the lowly and humble in Isa.66:1 – 2
Jesus prophecies Jerusalem's destruction. 21:5 – 36	Isaiah prophesied Jerusalem's destruction in Isa.1; 29:1 – 4; 65:11ff.
Jesus' crucifixion is paralleled to the Suffering Servant, restoring humans to paradise. 22:37ff	Isaiah's Suffering Servant restores Israel (and the nations) from exile in Isa.53 (see below)
Jesus' resurrection inaugurates a 'new covenant' where forgiveness of sins is offered to all nations. 24:47	Isaiah prophesied about 'new things' surrounding the Servant's teaching going out to the Gentile coastlands in Isa.42:6 and 49:6
Jesus' message begins from Jerusalem and is offered to the world. 24:47	Isaiah prophesied that the law would go forth from Zion in Isa.2:1 – 4
<i>Luke's Writings: Acts of the Apostles</i>	
<i>Isaiah's Prophecy</i>	
The apostles are aware that their responsibility is to the ends of the earth, to those who are afar off. Acts 1:8; 2:39	In fulfillment of Isaiah's vision of the word of the Messiah going forth from Zion from Isa.2, 42, etc.
Jesus sends his disciples into the world testifying to his enthronement	Isaiah saw the Servant addressing the nations from the standpoint of being ascended and enthroned. This is why Isa.52:13 – 53:12 is in the 'past tense,' but also why the other Servant Songs assume an enthroned Messiah. Isa.42, 49, 50.
The disciples speak in tongues at Pentecost. 2:1 – 13	Isaiah foresaw that God would bear witness to Israel through many tongues. Isa.28:11 – 16
The disciples call Jesus God's 'Servant' 3:26	Isaiah (out of all the prophets) primarily used the title 'Servant' for the Messiah
The disciples call Jesus 'the stone that the builders rejected, the cornerstone.' 4:11	Isaiah used these terms for the Messiah in Isa.8:14 – 15 and 28:16, as did Psalm 118
Stephen gives the longest speech in Acts, emphasizing Jesus as ruler and judge of Israel, critiquing the Temple in 7:49 – 50	He quotes Isaiah 66:1 – 2.
Philip witnesses to the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading Isaiah 53 in 8:32 – 35	He quotes Isaiah 53:7 – 8 because the eunuch didn't know to whom it referred
Paul responds to the rejection of diaspora Jews in Pisidian Antioch by turning to the Gentiles in 13:47	He quotes Isaiah 49:6 as applying not only to Jesus (as did Simeon in Lk.2) but to himself and his mission
Paul says in Athens that God does not live in temples made with hands. 17:24	This is probably an echo of Isa.66:1 – 2, as Stephen quoted
Paul comes to Jerusalem with a financial collection from the Gentiles for the famine – stricken believers in Jerusalem and Judea. 21:17ff., 24:17	This is probably a manifestation of the gifts from the nations that were to stream into Jerusalem in Isa.60:3 – 22. See also Paul's comments about the collection in Romans 15:8 – 28 and the references to Isaiah there.
Paul in Rome tells the Roman Jews that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles. 28:26 – 27	He quotes from Isaiah 6:10, since Isaiah's prophecy concerned a remnant of Jews and an outreach to the Gentile world, which was being fulfilled

Luke does not 'proof-text' from Isaiah to quote material about the Messiah. Rather, *the very backbone of Luke is Isaiah*. This is evident not only in the fact that Luke quotes Isaiah more than any other Old Testament book, but in the fact that Isaiah's themes are Luke's themes: sight and blindness, Israel and the nations, restoration from exile, new creation, Jerusalem.

Jesus' Use of Isaiah in the Parable of the Soils

Jesus' Parable of the Soils	Jesus' Explanation	Isaiah's Vision of Restoration Available to All
<p>Luke 8:5 A farmer went out to sow his seed.</p> <p>As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up.</p> <p>6 Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture.</p> <p>7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants.</p> <p>8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown. When he said this, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."</p> <p>9 His disciples asked him what this parable meant. 10 He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, 'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.' [Isa.6:9]"</p>	<p>11 This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.</p> <p>12 Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.</p> <p>13 Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.</p> <p>14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.</p> <p>15 But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.</p>	<p>Isaiah 55:1 Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.</p> <p>2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.</p> <p>3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.</p> <p>4 See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples.</p> <p>5 <i>Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.</i>"</p> <p>6 Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.</p> <p>7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.</p> <p>8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.</p> <p>9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.</p> <p>10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,</p> <p>11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.</p> <p>12 You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.</p> <p>13 Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed."</p>

Luke's Crucifixion Narrative & Isaiah's Prophecy of the Suffering Servant

Jesus' Crucifixion According to Luke	The Suffering Servant According to Isaiah
<p>Jesus quotes Isa.53:12 in Lk.22:37, "and he was numbered with transgressors," showing his awareness of being the Suffering Servant and invoking the entirety of Isaiah 53 during his trial, death, and resurrection. This refers first to the sword – bearing disciples, who will be mistaken for revolutionaries, and later to the two criminals. It marks off the beginning of the crucifixion narrative.</p>	<p>And was numbered with the transgressors (Isa.53:12)</p>
<p>I find no guilt in this man. (23:4) I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against him. (23:14) No, nor has Herod, for he sent him back to us, and behold nothing deserving of death has been done by him. (23:15) Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in him no guilt demanding death. I will therefore punish him and release him. (23:22) Certainly this man was innocent (23:47)</p>	<p>He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in his mouth (Isa.53:9)</p>
<p>And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing him vehemently. (23:10) The people stood by, looking on, and even the rulers were sneering at him. (23:35) The soldiers also mocked him. (23:36) And one of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at him. (23:39)</p>	<p>Yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted (Isa.53:4)</p>
<p>And he questioned him at some length, but he answered him nothing. (24:9)</p>	<p>Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so he did not open his mouth (Isa.53:7)</p>
<p>And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified him and the criminals. (23:33) But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (23:34) Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in paradise. (23:43) The two Emmaus road disciples walk with Jesus and their eyes are opened – a scene that comes from Genesis and the Fall where two people walk with God and their eyes are opened, only this time it is used to describe the return to paradise. Jesus tells his disciples to proclaim the forgiveness of sins (24:47)</p>	<p>He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our peace fell upon him, and by his scourging we are healed (Isa.53:5, 11 – 12)</p>
<p>And two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with him. (23:32) And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man...and he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain. (24:50 – 53)</p>	<p>His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet he was with a rich man in his death (Isa.53:9)</p>
<p>Jesus' atonement extends forgiveness to all nations (24:47)</p>	<p>Thus he will sprinkle <i>many nations</i>, kings will shut their mouths on account of him, for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand (Isa.52:13)</p>
<p>Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26 – 40)</p>	<p>Because the eunuch was reading Isa.53:7 – 8 in his chariot and didn't understand to whom it referred</p>