

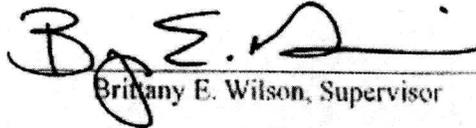
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IN ACTS 8:26-40

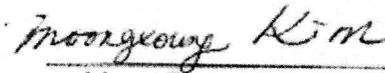
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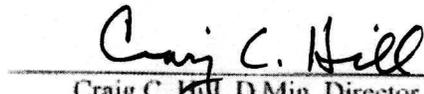
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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry
in the Divinity School of Duke University

2016

ABSTRACT

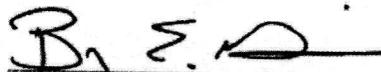
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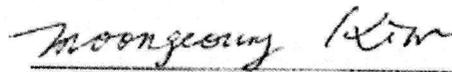
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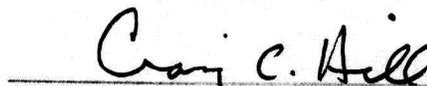
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ABSTRACT

In Luke's two volumes, Luke is not interested only in Gentiles and those with high social status but also in the marginalized and those who are outsiders. This dissertation seeks to read Luke's concern for outsiders and the theme of the inclusion of outsiders in the new kingdom of God in Luke's narrative of the Ethiopian eunuch's conversion in Acts 8:26-40. This paper examines the Ethiopian eunuch's complex identity from the perspectives of the Greco-Roman world, Old Testament (LXX) allusions to the Elijah-Elisha narratives, and Luke's interpretation of the Isaianic quotation of the Suffering Servant in Acts 8:32-33 (cf. Isaiah 53:7-8). This study pays close attention to the correlations between the theme of outsiders and three key characters in Acts 8:26-40: the Ethiopian eunuch, Philip, and the Suffering Servant. First, Luke depicts the Ethiopian eunuch as the consummate outsider—geographically, morally, socially, ethnically, and in terms of gender—and indicates that the eunuch represents other marginalized outsiders. The eunuch shows no one can prevent outsiders like him from inclusion in the kingdom of God. Second, Luke portrays Philip as a prophet, specifically a prophet like Elijah and Elisha. Philip emulates Elijah and Elisha by reaching out to the outsider (in this instance, the Ethiopian eunuch). Third, Luke presents the Isaianic Suffering Servant as a religious and social outsider and identifies the character with Jesus and the Ethiopian eunuch. The indescribable descendants of the Suffering Servant signify a universally inclusive messianic community and fulfill the outsiders' inclusion within the people of God as Isaiah prophesied (Isaiah 56:3-8). This thesis finally suggests ways to read the story of the Ethiopian eunuch today and concludes that it is imperative to include those outsiders among us within the community of Jesus's followers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	The Anchor Bible
<i>Aeth.</i>	<i>Ethiopian Story</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
AugCNT	Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament
<i>Bapt.</i>	<i>Homily on Baptism</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHT	Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>Cal.</i>	<i>Life of Caligula</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCSS	Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture
<i>Comm. Isa.</i>	<i>Commentary on Isaiah</i>
<i>CTSR</i>	<i>Chicago Theological Seminary Register</i>
<i>CurTM</i>	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
<i>Demon.</i>	<i>Demonax</i>
<i>Epist.</i>	<i>The Letters of St. Jerome.</i>
EurH Reihe	Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe
ExpBC	The Expositor's Bible Commentary

<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>Geogr.</i>	<i>The Geography of Strabo</i>
<i>Haer.</i>	<i>Against the Heresies.</i>
<i>Hom. on the Gospels</i>	<i>Homilies on the Gospels.</i>
<i>Hom. Matt.</i>	<i>Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew</i>
<i>Hom. Phil.</i>	<i>Homilies on Philippians</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Histories</i>
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Studies</i>
<i>IBT</i>	<i>Interpreting Biblical Texts</i>
<i>ICC</i>	<i>International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures</i>
<i>Il.</i>	<i>Illiad</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IVPNTC</i>	<i>IVP New Testament Commentary Series</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JITC</i>	<i>Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center</i>
<i>JRL</i>	<i>Journal of Religious Leadership</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>

<i>J.W.</i>	<i>Jewish War</i>
KEK	Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Moralia</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Natural History</i>
NCBCNT	New Collegeville Bible Commentary, New Testament
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NIB	New Interpreter's Bible
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIVAC	New International Version Application Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTIC	New Testament in Context Commentaries
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
<i>Od.</i>	<i>Odyssey</i>
PBTMon	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
<i>Philopatr.</i>	<i>Philopatris</i>

PiINTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
ProcC	Proclamation Commentaries
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review & Expositor</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Juvenal Satires</i>
SBLAB	Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SNTA	Studiorum Novi Testamenti Auxilia
SNTS	Society for New Testament Studies
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies: Monograph Series
SNTU	Studienzum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt
<i>Somn.</i>	<i>On Dreams</i>
SP	Sacra Pagina Series
<i>Spect.</i>	<i>Apology: De spectaculis</i>
<i>TBT</i>	<i>The Bible Today</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>Vit. Ant.</i>	<i>The Life of Saint Antony</i>
<i>Vit. Apoll.</i>	<i>The Life of Apollonius of Tyana</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Wesleyan Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series on the New Testament

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Throughout Luke's two books¹ which may have been written around the turn of the first century CE,² Luke shows to his readers and hearers³ a picture that the salvation offered in Jesus

¹ Scholars have argued for a common authorship of Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts based on (1) the similarity in stylistic, structural, and thematic elements; (2) the similarities of the prefaces in both Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-3; (3) the logical continuation of the plot line from Luke 24 into Acts 1: the prologue of Acts 1:1-3 refers back to the first book and offers a summary of it; and (4) the designation of Θεόφιλε. For more discussion on for the common authorship in Luke-Acts, see Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), XXIV-XXXV; Earl Richard, "Luke: Author and Thinker," in *New Views on Luke and Acts*, ed. Earl Richard (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1990), 23-7; I. Howard Marshall, "Acts and the 'Former Treatise,'" in *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting*, ed. B. W. Winter and A. D. Clarke (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1993), 163-82; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 51-60; C. Kavin Rowe, "History, Hermeneutics, and the Unity of Luke-Acts," *JSNT* 28 (2005): 131-54.

Following early Christian and modern scholarly convention, this study will identify the author of Acts with the author of Luke. Thus this project refers to the unnamed author of Luke and Acts as Luke.

² There are three positions of Acts' date: (1) the early date (60s); (2) centrist position (70s-90s); (3) the second century (100-130s). Some scholars arguing for the pre-70s typically make the following arguments. First, the date of writing would be after Paul's two-year imprisonment at Rome (60-62 or 61-63 CE), which is referred to in Acts 28:30. Second, Luke fails to describe the temple's destruction as past. Third, expectation of Roman justice would be unlikely after the Neronian persecution of 64-65 CE. For scholars who support a pre-70 date, see Adolf von Harnack, *The Date of Acts and the Synoptic Gospels*, trans. J. R. Wilkinson (New York, NY: Putnam, 1911), 97; Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, liv; Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 25-7. Other scholars who argue for the late first century (between 70s and 90s CE) typically rely on the following arguments. First, if the Third Gospel depends on the Gospel of Mark, Acts is best dated after 70 CE. Second, the Lukan apocalyptic discourses with their description of the siege of Jerusalem seem to presuppose the fall of the city. Third, if Clement of Rome knew Acts, it would have to be prior to 96 CE. Fourth, the portrait of churches like Ephesus requires a period before the Domitian persecution of the mid-90s. For scholars who assume between 70s and 90s CE, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, AB 28 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 53-7; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, SP 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 2; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), xiii-xiv. Still others assume that the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of Acts are between 100-130 CE. This date is predicated on several assumptions. First, the book of Acts was published together with the final edition of the Gospel of Luke. Second, Luke may use Josephus (the later books of the *Antiquities*) and a collection of Paul's letters, which establishes 100 CE as the earliest possible date. Third, the canonical Acts may be written as an anti-Marcionite text in the generation of Justin Martyr. For scholars who date Acts to the second century, see John T. Townsend, "The Date of Luke-Acts," in *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, ed. Charles H. Talbert (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 47-62; Joseph B. Tyson, "The Date of Acts: A Reconsideration," *Forum* 5 (2002): 33-51; Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2006), 1-346.

This study assumes the early date of Acts is less plausible, but the date is either centrist position (70s-90s) or the second century (100-130s): around the turn of the first century CE.

³ Luke tells his readers and hearers who his audience is: Theophilus. However, no ancient audience would assume that the dedicatee was necessarily socially representative of Luke's ideal audience. Thus, the audience of Luke-Acts seems not to be a person or a specific local community but a general audience of early Christians living

Christ of Nazareth (Acts 4:12 NRSV) will potentially be made available to all.⁴ In Luke-Acts, Luke often highlights the theme of universalism: the inclusion of the Gentiles within the people of God. For example, the prophet Simeon declares that God has prepared God's salvation "in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles [ἐθνῶν] and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:31-32). The introduction of John the Baptist includes an Isaianic passage with the same theme: "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6). Jesus depicts the eschatological banquet in a universalistic manner: "Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:23). The statement "repentance and forgiveness of sins shall be preached to all nations [ἔθνη]" (Luke 24:47) maps out the program for the next phase of the story, which continues in Acts.⁵ From the outset in Acts, Jesus announces that the disciples "shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8; cf. Isa 49:6). The potential participation of those from every nation and tribe is foreshadowed on the day of the Pentecost, when the people gathered "from every nation [ἕθνους] under heaven" (Acts 2:5) hear Peter's explicit appeal to the prophetic promise about pouring out the Spirit "upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17).⁶ In the following Petrine speech, Peter concludes with the

in the ancient Mediterranean world. It seems that Luke assumes a mixed audience in which Gentiles are numerically predominant. His audience is assumed to have familiarity with the Jewish Scripture (Luke mentions many names of the Israel's biblical history without any elucidation) and to have been associated with the synagogue (Luke 4:16-30; 4:31-33; 4:38; 6:6; 11:43; 12:11; 13:10; 20:46; 21:12; Acts 13:13-52; 14:1; 17:1-4; 18:8, 14-26; 22:19). At the same time, the audience seems to know the larger Roman Empire and the Greco-Roman culture. See L. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1*, SNTSMS 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 188; C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 10; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 423-34.

⁴ Dennis M. Sweetland, "Luke the Christian," in *New Views on Luke and Acts*, ed. Earl Richard (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1990), 57.

⁵ David E. Garland, *Luke*, ZECNT 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 967.

⁶ Howard Clark Kee, *To Every Nation under Heaven: The Acts of the Apostles*, NTIC (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 24.

Abrahamic promise that God’s covenant will include blessing for “all the families of the earth” (Acts 3:25). Philip goes down to the city of Samaria (Acts 8:5) where “the people [ἔθνος] of Samaria” (Acts 8:9) live and proclaims the good news (Acts 8:12). Peter sees the vision which represents a new stage in the progress of the gospel (Acts 10:10-16) and says in front of his first Gentile convert, “in every nation [ἔθνετ] anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (Acts 10:35). Paul, a chosen instrument to carry Jesus’s name “before Gentiles [ἔθνω]” (Acts 9:15), explains that he is “a light for the Gentiles [ἔθνω]” and a means of “salvation to the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47).⁷ Likewise, Luke portrays that the universal saving purpose of God is the chief motivating force within Luke’s entire narrative,⁸ and thus, that God is active in promoting the mission to the Gentiles (to the ends of the earth).⁹

Luke’s belief that salvation is universal is found not only in the mission to the Gentiles but also in Jesus’s and the disciples’ association with people both up and down the social scale, including people of high social standing and the marginalized¹⁰—in short, both “small and great” (Acts 26:22).¹¹ On the one hand, Luke depicts Jesus and his disciples relating to the rich and the noble: a rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-30), military officers (Luke 7:1-10; Acts 10:34-48; cf. Luke 23:47), a member of the council (Luke 23:50-53), a member of the court of Herod the ruler (Acts

⁷ Moore asserts that the phrase “end of the earth” also carries “ethnic” weight (i.e. the Gentile world). See Thomas S. Moore, “‘To the End of the Earth’: The Geographic and Ethnic Universalism of Acts 1:8 in Light of Isaianic Influence on Luke,” *JETS* 40 (1997): 389-99.

⁸ Guy D. Nave, Jr., *The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts*, SBLAB 4 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 25.

⁹ As a result, the disciples are enjoined to witness to the risen Jesus everywhere or universally. According to Barret, such a universal extension of the witness is nothing less than the content of Acts. See Charles Kingsley Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols. ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 79; Rowe, *World Upside Down*, 120; Keener, *Acts*, 1:495.

¹⁰ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 72.

¹¹ Rowe, *World Upside Down*, 125

13:1), proconsuls (Acts 13:7), leading women (Acts 17:4), philosophers (Acts 17:18), governors (Acts 24:10), and kings (Acts 26:2).¹²

On the other hand, Luke mainly portrays Jesus and his disciples as challenging human biases and violating the social codes of their times by associating with the defenseless, the powerless, and ostracized groups. Jesus and his disciples are in the company of sinners, the poor, tax collectors, the physically impaired, the demon-possessed, women (especially widows), and Samaritans. Jesus and his disciples do not discriminate against people due to their ethnic identity, economic status, occupation, power, gender, and other social markers. Jesus associates freely with the very tax collectors whom many first-century Jews considered despicable (Luke 5:29-30; 7:29, 34; 15:1; 19:1-10).¹³ Jesus is a friend of sinners (Luke 7:34; 19:7), welcomes sinners (Luke 15:1-2), makes himself available to them (Luke 7:36-50), and declares that he comes to call the sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32).¹⁴ Jesus's ministry to the poor (Luke 4:18; 7:22; 14:21) continues in the second volume (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-3; 9:36; 11:28-30; 24:17).¹⁵ Jesus heals those who

¹² Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, SP 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 17.

¹³ Tax collectors "were despised for their collusion with Rome." See Thomas E. Schmidt, "Taxes," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel*, ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity, 1992), 806. For the Lukan interest in the tax collectors, see Sweetland, "Luke the Christian," 60; A. M. Okorie, "The Characterization of the Tax Collectors in the Gospel of Luke," *CurTM* 22 (1995): 27-32; Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts: Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 248.

¹⁴ The term "sinners" appears nearly twenty times in Luke but never appears by that title in Acts. For the Lukan interest in the sinners in Luke, see Samuel John Roth, *The Blind, the Lame, and the Poor: Character Types in Luke-Acts*, JSNTSup 144 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 207; Dwayne Adams, *The Sinner in Luke*, The Evangelical Theology Society Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2008); Franklin Scott Spencer, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles*, IBT (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 136-9.

¹⁵ For the theme of the poor in Luke-Acts, see Thomas Hoyt, Jr., "The Poor in Luke-Acts," (PhD diss., Duke University, 1974), 97-212; David Peter Seccombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts*, SNTU Serie B, Band 6 (Linz: A. Fuchs, 1983), 24-43; Roth, *The Blind, the Lame, and the Poor*, 34-53, 112-133; Graham H. Twelftree, *People of the Spirit: Exploring Luke's View of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 113-5; Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 352-7; Joel B. Green, "Good News to the Poor: A Lukan Leitmotif," *RevExp* 111 (2014): 173-9; Patrick Whitworth, *Gospel for the Outsider: The Gospel in Luke & Acts* (Durham, UK:

cannot see, hear, walk, speak, or be healed by themselves (Luke 4:38-41; 5:12-14; 6:6-10; 7:21-22; 13:10-17; 17:11-19; 18:35-43) and his followers do the same healings for the physically impaired (Acts 3:1-10; 9:33-34; 14:8-10; 28:8-9). Jesus also heals the demon-possessed (Luke 4:33-36; 8:26-39) and his followers do the same healings (Acts 16:16-18; 19:12). Jesus and his disciples have a special interest in women,¹⁶ and his followers give attention to widows in particular (Luke 2:37; 4:25-26; 5:12-26; 7:11-17; 18:1-8; 20:47; 21:1-4; Acts 6:1; 9:39, 41).¹⁷

Jesus also focuses on the marginalized in his parables and teaching. In three representative presentations of Jesus's preaching, salvation is offered specifically to the poor (Luke 4:18; 6:20-23; 7:22).¹⁸ While the Matthean Jesus spiritualizes the beatitudes, the Lukan Jesus refers to the poor within the realities of poverty: "Blessed are you who are poor" (Luke 6:20; cf. Matt 5:3). The poor and the physically impaired are those who should be invited to the eschatological banquet table: "Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame" (Luke 14:13, 21). The poor man Lazarus is carried to Abraham's bosom (Luke

Sacristy, 2014), 61-75.

¹⁶ Luke 4:31-39; 7:11-17; 7:36-50; 8:1-3; 8:40-56; 10:38-42; 13:10-17; 15:8-10; 21:1-4; 23:27-29; 24:1-8, 49, 55-56; Acts 1:14; 2:17-18; 5:14; 6:1-7; 8:3, 12; 9:2; 9:36-42; 12:12-15; 16:1, 13-15, 16-24; 17:4, 12, 34; 18:2-3; 21:5, 9; 22:4. For the Luke's special interest in women in Luke-Acts, see Eugene H. Maly, "Women and the Gospel of Luke," *BTB* 10 (1980): 99-104; Quentin Quesnell, "The Women at Luke's Supper," in *Political Issues in Luke-Acts*, ed. R. J. Cassidy and P. J. Scharper (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983), 59-79; Jacob Jervell, "The Daughters of Abraham: Women in Acts," in *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1984), 146-57; Celeste J. Rossmiller, "Prophets and Disciples in Luke's Infancy Narrative," *TBT* 22 (1984): 361-5; Rosalie Ryan, "The Women from Galilee and Discipleship in Luke," *BTB* 15 (1985): 56-9; E. Jane Via "Women in the Gospel of Luke," in *Women in the World's Religions: Past and Present*, ed. Ursula King (New York, NY: Paragon House, 1987), 38-55; Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View," *JBL* 109 (1990): 441-61; James Malcolm Arlandson, *Women, Class, and Society in Early Christianity: Models from Luke-Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 120-50; Turid Karlsen Seim, "Approaching Luke: Glimpses of a Gospel," *CurTM* 27 (2000): 449-451; Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 119-23; Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 344-52.

¹⁷ Thomas J. Lane, *Luke and the Gentile Mission: Gospel Anticipates Acts*, EurH Reihe 23 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), 52.

¹⁸ Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 248.

16:19-31). Jesus asks the ruler who sought eternal life to sell what he has and give to the poor (Luke 18:22). In these ways, Luke shows that Jesus comes to seek and save the lost and that his followers do the same. Luke has a pervasive interest in those who are outsiders and their inclusion throughout his two volumes.

This thesis focuses on Luke's concern for outsiders and the inclusion of outsiders in the narrative of the Ethiopian eunuch and the evangelist Philip (Acts 8:26-40). This project started with questions such as (1) why Luke put multiple identity markers on the Ethiopian eunuch; (2) why the Old Testament (LXX) echoes and allusions are rich in the passage; and (3) what kind of roles the three main characters of the passage—the eunuch, Philip, and the Suffering Servant—play in the whole narrative of Luke-Acts. Trying to answer to those questions, this study reveals that Luke, “a consummate literary artist,”¹⁹ provides an unusual amount of narrative detail about the Ethiopian eunuch and the character's actions and uses literary frames and echoes from the OT (LXX)—especially 1 and 2 Kings (3 and 4 Kgdms) and the Book of Isaiah—in order to communicate the theme of outsiders. Above all, this dissertation attempts to read how Luke enhances his concern by going into the details about the three main characters. Thus, a guiding

¹⁹ Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship, & Dates* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1925), 548. Luke, a well-educated Greco-Roman author, was accustomed to using the rhetorical methods of his time, and at the same time he was a Christian theologian and apologist. On scholars' assumption about Luke as a literary specialist and a theologian, see Henry J. Cadbury, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke*, HTS 6 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920); Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, 548; C. H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*, SBLMS 20 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974); Thomas L. Brodie, “Towards Unraveling the Rhetorical Imitation of Sources in Acts: 2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40,” *Bib* 67 (1986): 66; Thomas L. Brodie, “Towards Unraveling Luke's Use of the Old Testament: Luke 7:11-17 as an *Imitatio* of 1 Kings 17:17-24,” *NTS* 32 (1986): 247; I. Howard Marshall, “How does One Write on the Theology of Acts?” in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 1; Franklin Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 137; Seim, “Approaching Luke,” 445; Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 50; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, PCNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 7-11; Keener, *Acts*, 1:492.

question throughout this work is the following: how is Luke's emphasis on outsiders and their inclusion depicted with these three characters in Acts 8:26-40? That is to say, how is the Lukan theme on outsiders written and read in the story of the Ethiopian eunuch?

A History of Reading Acts 8:26-40

In conventional interpretations, the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch has been seen as a kind of addendum to Philip's ministry among the Samaritans and as an incident "separated from the rest of the narrative and completely isolated from the rest of the history."²⁰ It is true that Luke makes no further reference to this episode after it takes place. However, this does not necessarily mean that the event has no relationship to the rest of the narrative in Acts.²¹

In addition to this conventional interpretation, commentators have proposed other kinds of readings which show this passage in fact is not an isolated incident but connects to the larger narrative of Acts. For example, (1) the Ethiopian eunuch story signifies the spread of the gospel to "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8);²² (2) the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch can be read as a

²⁰ Frederick John Foakes-Jackson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, MNTC 5 (New York, NY: Harper, 1931), 75. For other commentators who have agreed with the point of view, see Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 107-8; Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1987), 67; F. F. Bruce "Philip and the Ethiopian," *JSS* 34 (1989): 378; Gerd Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Book, 2005), 122.

²¹ Mary Ann Stachow, "'Do You Understand What You Are Reading?' (Acts 8:30): A Historical-Critical Reexamination of the Pericope of Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40)" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1998), 274.

²² George Campbell Morgan, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924), 212; Henry J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1955), 15; Richard P. C. Hanson, *The Acts in the Revised Standard Version* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), 109; Timothy C. G. Thornton, "To the End of the Earth: Acts 1:8," *ExpT* 89 (1978): 374-5; Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 80; Stachow, "'Do You Understand What You Are Reading?' (Acts 8:30)," 221; Andrew C. Clark, *Parallel Lives: The Relation of Paul to the Apostles in the Lukan Perspective*, PBTMon (Carlisle, UK; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2001), 152; Christopher R. Matthews, *Philip: Apostle and Evangelist*, NovTSup 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 74; John J. Pilch, *Visions and Healing in the Acts of the Apostles: How the Early Believers Experienced God* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 66-7;

foreshadowing or a partial fulfilment of Jesus's command to bring the mission to the "ends of the earth";²³ (3) the pericope about Philip's evangelism represents the movement of the gospel to the second of the three geographical regions in the Jewish table of nations.²⁴

Other exegetes have asserted that the pericope is largely modeled on the narrative of Elijah and Elisha,²⁵ with one group of scholars believing that Philip imitates Elijah, while another group

Keener, *Acts*, 2:1534; Brittany E. Wilson, *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 113, 246.

²³ Clarice Jannette Martin, "The Function of Acts 8:26-40 within the Narrative Structure of the Book of Acts: The Significance of the Eunuch's Provenance for Acts 1:8c" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1985), vii; Bruce "Philip and the Ethiopian," 379-80; Clarice Jannette Martin, "A Chamberlain's Journey and the Challenge of Interpretation for Liberation," *Semeia* 47 (1989): 117; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 151-2, 187; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 160; John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC 26 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 222; James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Narrative Commentaries (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 102; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 290, 293; Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 141-2; Tolonda Henderson, "'What is to Prevent Me from Being Baptized?': Reading beyond the Readily Apparent," *CTSR* 93 (2003): 16; Peter Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 367 (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 109; Scott Shauf, "Locating the Eunuch: Characterization and Narrative Context in Acts 8:26-40," *CBQ* 71 (2009): 762-5; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 223.

²⁴ James. M. Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon," in *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting*, ed. D. W. J. Gill and C. Gempf; vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*; ed. Bruce W. Winter; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 533-8; Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., *Africans who Shaped our Faith* (Chicago, IL: Urban Ministries, 1995), 222; Hilary Le Cornu and Joseph Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, Israel: Academion, 2003), 414; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004), 1297-9; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 423; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1542.

²⁵ Etienne Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l'histoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957), 180; Richard Belward Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1964), 121; Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 118; Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 79; Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 41-67; Gerhard A. Krodel, *Acts*, AugCNT (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 171; Rudolf Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), 294; Brodie, "Luke-Acts as an Imitation and Emulation," 82; F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 174; F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 225; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:108; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 118; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 182; Bock, *Acts*, 340; Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122; Stachow, "'Do You Understand What You Are Reading?' (Acts 8:30)," 254; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 292; Matthews, *Philip: Apostle and Evangelist*, 82; Robert W. Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, NIB 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 142; Franklin Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 102; Pervo, *Acts*, 220; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PilNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 292; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1539-40.

contends that Philip emulates Elisha.²⁶ Either way, they believe that Philip does what Elijah and Elisha did in 1-2 Kings, just as Jesus imitates Elijah and Elisha in Luke's Gospel. The imitation of Elijah and Elisha in Luke-Acts is then taken to show that the prophetic works of the two old Israelite prophets are revived in Jesus's ministry in the Gospel of Luke and that his followers continue this trend in Acts.²⁷

Recently, others again have argued that the Ethiopian eunuch story is concerned with the program of restoration of Israel in Isaiah.²⁸ For them, the function of this pericope between the conversions of Samaritans and Gentiles in the narrative of Acts may complete the program of the restoration of Israel in Isaiah:²⁹ the gospel had come to Jews and Samaritans, and now to an outcast in Acts 8:26-40, and the next step will be to the Gentiles.³⁰ Luke Timothy Johnson explains that “[t]he conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch does not yet represent a formal opening to the Gentiles,

²⁶ For scholars who compare Philip to Elijah, see Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l'histoire*, 180; Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 121; Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 118; Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 79; Krodel, *Acts*, 171; Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 294; Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, 174; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text*, 225; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:108; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 118; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Bock, *Acts*, 340; Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 292; Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 142; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 292; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1539-40.

For scholars who compare Philip to Elisha, see Brodie, “2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40,” 41-67; Brodie, “Luke-Acts as an Imitation and Emulation,” 82; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 182; Stachow, “Do You Understand What You Are Reading?” (Acts 8:30),” 254; Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 102; Pervo, *Acts*, 220.

²⁷ O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology*, 62.

²⁸ For the similar viewpoint on the Ethiopian eunuch story, see Mikeal C. Parsons, “Isaiah 53 and Acts 8: A Reply to Professor Morna Hooker,” in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. William H. Bellinger, Jr. and William R. Farmer (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1998), 104-19; David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, WUNT 2 (Reihe; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 123-42; Bart J. Koet, “Isaiah in Luke-Acts,” in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 89; Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, 187; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 131.

²⁹ Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 140-1.

³⁰ David Peter Seccombe, “The New People of God,” in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 360.

but rather to those who were marginalized within the people of God.”³¹ Then, the promise of Isaiah 56:3-8 is either fulfilled in the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, or at least, can be lurking in the background of the scene.³² Interestingly, Isaiah 56:3-8 explicitly makes reference to the

³¹ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 160.

³² For scholars who believe that the eunuch fulfills or echoes Isa 56:3-6, see Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts: The Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1955), 107; Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 120; Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), 47-8; G. A. Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 179-80; Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts of the Apostles*, ExpBC 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 363; O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology*, 146; Krodell, *Acts*, 38; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:109; Leland J. White, "Midrash: A Key to the Meaning of the Scriptures," *Professional Approaches to Christian Education* 17 (1986): 84; Philip F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 161-2; R. J. Porter, "What did Philip Say to the Eunuch," *ExpT* 100 (1988): 54-5; Howard C. Kee, *Knowing the Truth: A Sociological Approach to New Testament Interpretation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), 93-4; Bart J. Koet, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, SNTA 14 (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1989), 84; Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), 105; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text*, 225; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Franklin Scott Spencer, "The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible: A Social-Science Analysis," *BTB* 22 (1992): 161; Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon," 535; Wright, Jr., *Africans who Shaped our Faith*, 212; Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 113; Smith, "Do You Understand What You are Reading?," 68; David P. Moessner, "The 'Script' of the Scriptures in Acts: Suffering as God's 'Plan' (βουλή) for the World for the 'Release of Sins,'" in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. Ben Witherington III (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 231; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 31 (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 410; Spencer, *Acts*, 93; Seccombe, "The New People of God," 360; Martin, "A Chamberlain's Journey," 108-9; Walaskay, *Acts*, 87; Cottrel R. Carson, "Do You Understand What You Are Reading? A Reading of the Ethiopian Eunuch Story [Acts 8:26-40] from a Site of Cultural Marronage," (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1999), 86, 145; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 296; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 140-2; Le Cornu and Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts*, 2:416; Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 143, 146; Justo L. González, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 117; Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 143; Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122; Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 103; Henderson, "What is to Prevent Me from Being Baptized?," 16; Talbert, *Reading Acts*, 80; Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall, *Called to be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 111, 118; Bock, *Acts*, 341-2; J. Bradley Chance, *Acts*, SHBC 23 (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2007), 136; Demetrius K. Williams, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian K. Blount et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 227; Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, 109; Nicholas Thomas Wright, *Acts for Everyone* (London: SPCK; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 135; Parsons, *Acts*, 120; Alan J. Thompson, *One Lord, One people: The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting*, LNTS 359 (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 97; Pervo, *Acts*, 222; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 292; Shauf, "Locating the Eunuch," 768; Manuel Villalobos, "Bodies Del Otro Lado Finding Life and Hope in the Borderland: Gloria Anzaldúa, the Ethiopian Eunuch of Acts 8:26-40, *Y Yo*," in *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*, SemeiaSt 67, ed. Teresa J. Hornsby and Ken Stone (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 206; Clark M. Williamson, "The Ethiopian Eunuch: Dealing with a Gender-Bender: Acts 8:26-40," *Encounter* 73.3 (2013): 53; Schnabel, *Acts*, 423-7; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1540, 2:1590; Allen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 78, 81; Sean D. Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch: Strategies of Ambiguity in Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 36; William S. Kurz, *Acts of the Apostles*, CCSS (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 146; Brittany E. Wilson, "Neither Male nor Female': The Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:26-40," *NTS* 60 (2014): 406, 410-1, 417;

foreigners and the eunuchs (Isa 56:3-4) and to the reconstitution of Israel (Isa 56:8). Thus, through Philip's witness of the gospel, a foreign outcast is invited to participate in the restored people of God.³³

More recently, still others have studied the intersection between the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 and his multiple characteristics (the geographical, social, racial, ethnic, sexual, gender-related, class-related traits) as an Ethiopian and a eunuch in the Greco-Roman world.³⁴ They regard the eunuch as "a multifaceted character who defies easy classification" in relation to standard categories such as ethnicity, social class, and gender.³⁵ They believe that commentators have focused on one or two characteristic(s) of the Ethiopian eunuch and that those attempts have resulted in a skewed perspective.³⁶ Thus, they attempt to bring the complex set of the eunuch's identities into the interpretation, using the theoretical approach of intersectionality.³⁷

Aaron Perry, "Lift up the Lowly and Bring down the Exalted: Gender Studies, Organizations, and the Ethiopian Eunuch," *JRL* 14 (2015): 60; Guy Prentiss Waters, *A Study Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Pistyll Holywell, UK: EP Books, 2015), 217; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 131.

³³ Chance, *Acts*, 139.

³⁴ Marianne B. Kartzow and Halvor Moxnes, "Complex Identities: Ethnicity, Gender and Religion in the Story of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)," *Religion & Theology* 17 (2010): 184-202; Sean D. Burke, "Queering Early Christian Discourse: The Ethiopian Eunuch," in *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*, SemeiaSt 67, ed. Teresa J. Hornsby and Ken Stone (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 175; Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 1-17; Wilson, "Neither Male nor Female," 405-21; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 117-36.

³⁵ Spencer, *Acts*, 91; cf. Carson, "Do You Understand What You Are Reading?," 145; Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 101; Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 1; Wilson, "Neither Male nor Female," 421.

³⁶ Kartzow and Moxnes, "Complex Identities," 185.

³⁷ Intersectionality is a study of intersecting social identities such as racial, gender, or sexual identities and an approach to understanding the complex facets of discrimination and exclusion in a society. According to Kartzow and Moxnes, the concept of intersectionality is the primary analytic tool which feminist and anti-racist scholars have deployed for theorizing identity. See Kartzow and Moxnes, "Complex Identities," 189. For further discussion on the intersectionality, see Leslie McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, (2005): 1771-96; Jennifer C. Nash, "Re-Thinking Intersectionality," *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 1-15; Kathy Davis, "Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes a Feminist Theory Successful," *Feminist Theory* 9 (2008): 67-85; B. T. Dill and R. Zambrana, *Emerging Intersections: Race, Class and Gender in Theory, Policy, and Practice* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009); Nancy J. Ramsay, "Intersectionality: A Model for Addressing the Complexity of Oppression and Privilege," *Pastoral Psychology* 63

The Ethiopian Eunuch, Philip, and the Suffering Servant

The present study brings together these last three interpretative trends—Elijah-Elisha allusions, the theme of outcasts and their inclusion in Isaiah, and intersectionality—to clarify how they intersect and reinforce Luke’s central claim concerning the inclusion of outsiders. With those three viewpoints, this study maintains that the characters in Acts 8:26-40—the Ethiopian eunuch, Philip, and the Suffering Servant (or Jesus)—represent outsiders and signify Luke’s emphasis on their inclusion in the kingdom of God. The following discussion of this argument will consist of three main chapters and a concluding chapter.

Chapter 2 mainly focuses on the Ethiopian eunuch. The chapter examines each of the overlapping characteristics of the Ethiopian eunuch depicted in Acts 8:26-27 according to the standards and the perspectives of the Greco-Roman world, the Jewish Scriptures, and the early church. Since the information given to describe the Ethiopian eunuch is indeed multi-leveled, the chapter, beginning with the discussion on the Ethiopian’s geographical origin, deals with the discussion of morality, ethnicity, social status, and gender mainly in the first-century context. The chapter explains that the eunuch’s multiple identity markers enhance his “outsider-ness” and that the eunuch is in fact a representative outsider within Acts. Also, the eunuch does not only play the role of representing outsiders, but also that of emphasizing their inclusion in the new community of God. The chapter describes how this symbolic outsider takes action without hindrance to belong to the family of God through baptism.

Chapter 3 mainly examines the description of Philip with the traits of Elijah and Elisha.

(2014): 453-469; Kimberlé Crenshaw, *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings* (Cincinnati, OH: The New Press, 2015), 1-320.

The chapter starts with the discussion of Luke's general use of the Elijah/Elisha narrative in the Gospel of Luke. Then the chapter turns to Luke 4:25-27, where Jesus mentions both Elijah and Elisha, and to Luke 7:1-17, where Jesus emulates both Elijah and Elisha. Next, the chapter focuses on the details of Acts 8:26-40 where Luke presumably alludes to both Elijah and Elisha as he does in Luke 4:25-27 and 7:1-17. The chapter provides a suggestion as to why Luke alludes to both of the two old Israelite prophets in Philip's story: Luke 4:25-27, Luke 7:1-17, and Acts 8:26-40 are all intricately connected and the Elijah and Elisha features in these pericopae point to the inclusion of outsiders. That is, Philip is described as a prophet to the outsider like both Elijah and Elisha.

The remaining chapter concentrates on the Isaianic Suffering Servant, whom Luke identifies as Jesus. Chapter 4 argues that Luke uses the Isaiah 53:7-8 quotation in Acts 8:32-33 for two purposes. First, Luke identifies the Suffering Servant with Jesus. This section explains that the Suffering Servant and the Lukan Jesus are depicted as religious and social outsiders in Acts 8:32-33a. Second, Luke sees the new people of God (that is, the beginning of the gathering of the Church and its ongoing mission) in Acts 8:33b. This section argues that the Ethiopian comes to belong to the Servant's indescribable descendants and, in this way, that Luke emphasizes the theme of inclusion of outsiders. This section concludes that Luke has the Isaianic promise in Isaiah 56:3-8 in view: the inclusion of the outcasts in the kingdom of God.

Finally, chapter 5 concludes by summarizing the whole discussion. The chapter contains concluding remarks and suggested readings of the story today. Overall, the final chapter seeks to answer to the question, "who might be considered the outsiders among us today?" and calls on the imperativeness of their inclusion in Jesus's new generation.

CHAPTER 2: THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH: A REPRESENTATIVE OUTSIDER

In Acts 8, in the midst of a successful ministry in Samaria, Philip takes a surprising and unexpected turn. Whereas Luke has thus far chronicled the spread of the gospel largely in terms of mass conversion, the gospel's spread is depicted in terms of an individual experience.¹ While Peter and John return north to Jerusalem, Philip is commanded to go south and to relocate to a desert place.² After divine guidance,³ Philip encounters “an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians” (Acts 8:27) who is, according to Robert Tannehill, “a very strong representative of foreignness.”⁴

Luke identifies the unnamed Ethiopian eunuch by nationality, physical condition, and social position.⁵ The fact that he is an Ethiopian and a eunuch would arouse considerable interest on the part of Luke's audience.⁶ This chapter will show how this person who is described with an unusual amount of narrative detail signifies the consummate outsider when read by Luke's early

¹ Guy Prentiss Waters, *A Study Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Pistyll Holywell, UK: EP Books, 2015), 215.

² Waters, *A Study Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 215.

³ For commentators who note the emphasis on the role of divine guidance in the story of the Ethiopian eunuch, see Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 310-5; Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 78; Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1987), 67-8; William H. Willimon, *Acts, Int* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988), 72; Franklin Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 132-4; Justo L. González, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 118-9; Christopher R. Matthews, *Philip: Apostle and Evangelist*, NovTSup 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 75.

⁴ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 108.

⁵ Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 224.

⁶ Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light: Aspects of Conversion in the New Testament*, OBT 20 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), 103.

hearers. To do that, this chapter will first discuss the eunuch in relation to geography, morality, ethnicity, social status, and gender. Then, the chapter will briefly examine how the eunuch's speech and action signify the inclusion of outsiders.

The Representative Outsider

Geographical Categories

The Greco-Roman usage of the Greek word “Ethiopia” referred to the African territory south of Egypt.⁷ The ancient African kingdom of Cush (Nubia) was under the Meroitic period (from 650 or 542 BCE to 339 or 350 CE).⁸ Located well below Abu Simbel—between the fifth and sixth cataracts of the Nile (or between the fourth cataract and Aswan, or between Khartoum and Aswan), Cush (Nubia) of Meroë was the major African kingdom in this region in Luke's days.⁹ Luke's use of the word “Candace” (Acts 8:27) has convinced scholars that the Cushite (Nubian) kingdom of Meroë is specifically in view here.¹⁰ According to S. M. Burstein, “Candace was the

⁷ Josephus, *Ant.* 2.239; *J.W.* 4.608; Juvenal, *Sat.* 10.150; Franck M. Snowden, *Black in Antiquity Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 7; William Leo Hansberry and Joseph E. Harris, *Africa and Africans as Seen by Classical Writers* (Washington: Howard University Press, 1977), xvii; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 423-34; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 1535.

⁸ The history of ancient Nubia (Cush) is divided into three major periods: the Napatan (from 751 to 650 or 542 BCE), when Napata was the seat of government, the Meroitic (from 650 or 542 BCE to 339 or 350 CE), when Meroë became the seat of government, and the X-Group period (339/350-550 CE). See Pliny, *Nat.* 6.29; Clarice Jannette Martin, “A Chamberlain's Journey and the Challenge of Interpretation for Liberation,” *Semeia* 47 (1989): 112.

⁹ For a discussion of the complexities related to determining the boundaries of Ethiopia in the ancient world, see William Y. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); Martin, “A Chamberlain's Journey,” 112, 119; David O'Connor, “Understanding Ancient Nubia,” in *Ancient Nubia: Egypt's Rival in Africa* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1993), 1-8; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1551-2.

¹⁰ Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 7; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 310; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 186.

title of the mother of the Meroitic king.”¹¹ According to Edwin M. Yamauchi, the practice of using the name “Candace” comes to an end after the Meroitic kings Natakamani, Amanitare, and Sherakarer in the first half of the first century.¹²

Greek and Roman writers identified four major groups of peoples who lived toward the edges of what they considered the inhabited world: to the east were “Indians,” to the west the “Celts” or “Iberians,” to the north the “Scythians,” and to the south the “Ethiopians.”¹³ That is, Ethiopia was recognized as one of the geographical extremes—the southernmost limit of the world.¹⁴ For instance, the ancient Greek author Homer describes the Ethiopians as “the most remote people.”¹⁵ The fifth-century BCE historian Herodotus describes Ethiopia as the most distant country and peoples to the southwest.¹⁶ The Greek geographer from Asia Minor, Strabo (64/63 BCE-24 CE), describes Ethiopia as “the extremities of the inhabited world.”¹⁷ For Strabo, Ethiopia is not just one people, but represents “the South”: Ethiopia included all of Africa south of Egypt¹⁸ and all people in the South can be named Ethiopians.¹⁹ Among the Romans in the era

¹¹ S. M. Burnstein, ed., *Ancient African Civilizations: Kush Axum* (Princeton: Wiener, 1998), 140.

¹² Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Africa and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 171.

¹³ Timothy C. G. Thornton, “To the End of the Earth: Acts 1:8,” *ExpT* 89 (1978): 374; Martin, “A Chamberlain's Journey,” 118.

¹⁴ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 3.1-37; Pliny, *Nat.* 6.35; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 54.5.4; Patricia Beattie Jung and Joan Roughgarden, “Gender in Heaven: The Story of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Light of Evolutionary Biology,” in *God, Science, Sex, Gender: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Christian Ethics*, ed. Patricia Beattie Jung and Aana Marie Vigen (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 231.

¹⁵ Homer, *Od.* 1.22-23.

¹⁶ Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.25; 3.107.

¹⁷ Strabo, *Geogr.* 1.2.27; 17.2.1.

¹⁸ Snowden, *Black in Antiquity*, 105.

¹⁹ “I maintain, I say, that just so, in accordance with the opinion of the ancient Greeks, all the countries in the south which lie on Oceanus were called ‘Ethiopia.’” See Strabo, *Geogr.* 1.2.27.

of the Roman Empire, Ethiopia remained a region on the border of the Empire and the gateway to an entirely other “inhabited world.”²⁰ According to the geographical perspective of ancient writers, Ethiopia was quite frequently identified as a place “down south” or one of “the ends of the earth” that marked the boundaries of the inhabited world or the threshold to an undiscovered world.²¹

Likewise, Ethiopians were considered to come from the borders of the known world in the Old Testament.²² There are fairly frequent references to Ethiopia (Cush), indicating knowledge of the country by the Israelites.²³ Isaiah 11:11-12 seems to regard Ethiopia (Cush) as one of “the corners of the earth.”²⁴ In Esther 8:9 Ahasuerus issues a decree to the officials from India to Ethiopia (Cush) which seems to be the boundaries of the empire.²⁵ In the other OT scriptures, Ethiopia lays at the ends of the world (Esth 1:1; Ezek 29:10; Zeph 3:10).²⁶

²⁰ J. S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 149-56.

²¹ Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 3.20; 6.1; Heliodorus, *Aeth.* 1.6.15; 10.16.6; Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 103; William J. Larkin, Jr., *Acts*, IVPNTC 5 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 131; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 290; John J. Pilch, *Visions and Healing in the Acts of the Apostles: How the Early Believers Experienced God* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 66; Franklin Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 101; Brittany E. Wilson, “‘Neither Male nor Female’: The Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:26-40,” *NTS* 60 (2014): 412.

²² Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 103.

²³ Hilary Le Cornu and Joseph Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, Israel: Academon, 2003), 414.

²⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Narrative Commentaries (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 114.

²⁵ Keith H. Reeves, “The Ethiopian Eunuch: A Key Transition from Hellenist to Gentile Mission: Acts 8:26-40,” in *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context*, ed. Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 115.

²⁶ The phrase “the end of the earth” is found in the LXX, the New Testament, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and Greek and Roman classical literature. In (1) the Biblical literature (both the LXX [fourteen occurrences] and the New Testament [Acts 1:8; 13:47]), (2) the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphical literature and (3) classical literature, the phrase ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς means that (1) a particular nation or people is usually not specified, (2) it exhibits a metaphorical usage expressing “the most extreme limits of the earth,” and (3) the outermost limit of a particular geographical entity or proximity. In sum, the phrase ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς is used to designate the farthestmost regions of the world, and is nonrestrictive in its geographical scope. For more discussion on the ends of the earth,

In Luke's own writings, Ethiopia can also be seen as one of the ends of the earth. Ethiopia has the association with the Queen of Sheba (Sheba was the son of Raamah and grandson of Cush in Gen 10:7). The Queen of Sheba who is also known as the "Queen of the South" comes "from the ends of the earth" in Luke 11:31 (cf. Matt 12:42).²⁷ It is no coincidence that the only two occurrences of βασιλίσσα in Luke-Acts are used of the "the Queen of the South" in Luke 11:31 and "the Queen of the Ethiopians" in Acts 8:27.²⁸ Also, in Luke 13:29, Luke explicitly adds "north and south" to Matthew's "east and west" (Matt 7:8-12) when he describes those who are included in the kingdom of God. Luke may have proleptically envisioned the "south" in attendance at the eschatological banquet.²⁹ In addition, Ethiopia was outside of the boundaries of the Roman Empire in Luke's time and the eunuch is the sole figure in Acts whose conversion is reported from outside those boundaries.³⁰

Thus, as the introductory chapter explained above, some commentators have interpreted the eunuch story as a partial fulfilment of Jesus's command to bring the mission to the "end of the

see Clarice Jannette Martin, "The Function of Acts 8:26-40 within the Narrative Structure of the Book of Acts: The Significance of the Eunuch's Provenance for Acts 1:8c" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1985), 52-122; E. Earl Ellis, "The End of the Earth [Acts 1:8]," *BBR* 1 (1991): 123-32; James. M. Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon," in *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting*, ed. D. W. J. Gill and C. Gempf; vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*; ed. Bruce W. Winter; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 483-544; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, SP 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 154; Thomas S. Moore, "'To the End of the Earth': The Geographic and Ethnic Universalism of Acts 1:8 in Light of Isaianic Influence on Luke," *JETS* 40 (1997): 393-4; Paul W. Walaskay, *Acts* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 84; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1538.

²⁷ Sheba also forms the southern part of the messianic empire which is anticipated to extend "to the ends of the earth" in Psalm 72:10 (71:9 LXX). See Le Cornu and Shulam, *On the Jewish Roots of Acts*, 2:414.

²⁸ Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon," 536.

²⁹ Martin, "A Chamberlain's Journey," 115; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1534-5.

³⁰ Nils Dahl, "Nations in the New Testament," in *New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World*, ed. Mark E. Glaswell and Edward W. Fashole-Luke (London: SPCK, 1974), 62-3.

earth” (Acts 1:8).³¹ Others have agreed that the Ethiopian eunuch signifies the spread of the gospel to “the end of the earth” in Acts.³² In either sense, the eunuch from Ethiopia is a powerful representative of geographical outsiders: those who exist at the geographical limits—the margins of the earth.³³

Morality

In Greco-Roman literature, the Ethiopians’ dark skin color was regarded as their most distinctive and unusual feature.³⁴ “Ethiopian” (Αἰθίοψ) literally meant “burnt face.”³⁵ “Blackness”

³¹ Martin, “The Function of Acts 8:26-40,” vii; F. F. Bruce “Philip and the Ethiopian,” *JSS* 34 (1989): 379-80; Martin, “A Chamberlain’s Journey,” 117; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 151-2; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 160; John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC 26 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 222; Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 102; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 290, 293; Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 141-2; Tolonda Henderson, ““What is to Prevent Me from Being Baptized?: Reading beyond the Readily Apparent,” *CTSR* 93 (2003): 16; Peter Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 367 (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 109; Scott Shauf, “Locating the Eunuch: Characterization and Narrative Context in Acts 8:26-40,” *CBQ* 71 (2009): 762-5; Pervo, *Acts*, 223.

³² George Campbell Morgan, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924), 212; Henry J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1955), 15; Richard P. C. Hanson, *The Acts in the Revised Standard Version* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), 109; Timothy C. G. Thornton, “To the End of the Earth: Acts 1:8,” *ExpT* 89 (1978): 374-5; Mary Ann Stachow, ““Do You Understand What You Are Reading?” (Acts 8:30): A Historical-Critical Reexamination of the Pericope of Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40)” (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1998), 221; Andrew C. Clark, *Parallel Lives: The Relation of Paul to the Apostles in the Lucan Perspective*, PBTMon (Carlisle, UK; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2001), 152; Matthews, *Philip*, 74; Pilch, *Visions and Healing in the Acts of the Apostles*, 66-7; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1534; Brittany E. Wilson, *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 113, 246.

³³ Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 105; David Tuesday Adamo, *Africa and Africans in the New Testament* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006), 90.

³⁴ See Jer 13:23; Negaim 2.1; Bekhoroth 7.6; Homer, *Od.* 19.244-248; Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.29-32; 3.17-24; 4.183, 197; Seneca, *Nat.* 4A.218; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 6.1. Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 103; Parsons, *Acts*, PCNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 119, 121.

³⁵ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 3.8.1-3; Pliny, *Nat.* 2.80.189-190; G. L. Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002), 39-41; L. A. Thompson, *Romans and Blacks* (London: Routledge, 1989), 104-9; Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., *Africans who Shaped our Faith* (Chicago, IL: Urban Ministries, 1995), 221; Wilson, ““Neither Male nor Female,”” 412.

and “the Ethiopian” were in many respects synonymous.³⁶ The color of the Ethiopians was proverbial in Jeremiah 13:23: “Can Ethiopians change their skin or leopards their spots?”³⁷ Greco-Roman literature evidently depicts the Ethiopians as recognizably black Africans.³⁸ For examples, Homer describes Eurybates, the herald who attends Odysseus and accompanies him from Ithaca to Troy in the *Odyssey*, as one with dark skin (μελανόχροος).³⁹ The first-century CE Roman statesman Seneca the Younger proposes that the African sun and heat are responsible for the Ethiopians’ skin color, saying, “First of all, the burnt color of the people indicates that Ethiopia is very hot.”⁴⁰ In the early first century CE Manilius in his poem on astrology mentions the groups who are to be included most frequently in a familiar classical “color scheme”: Ethiopians, the blackest; Indians, less sunburned; Egyptians, mildly dark.⁴¹

The Ethiopian’s skin color was often associated with morality.⁴² On the one hand, in some Greco-Roman writings, the black Ethiopians were idealized as people of great piety and beauty. For instance, Homer speaks of the blameless Ethiopians with attributes like innocence, love of freedom, wisdom, and piety.⁴³ The first-century BCE Greek historian Diodorus of Sicily comments that the Ethiopians’ piety has been published abroad among all men, and it is generally held that

³⁶ Snowden, *Black in Antiquity*, 5, 23.

³⁷ Frank M. Snowden, Jr., *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 5-6.

³⁸ Martin, “A Chamberlain’s Journey,” 113.

³⁹ Homer, *Od.* 19.244.248.

⁴⁰ Seneca, *Nat.* 4.A.218.

⁴¹ Marcus Manilius, *Astronomicon* 4.722-30.

⁴² Marianne B. Kartzow and Halvor Moxnes, “Complex Identities: Ethnicity, Gender and Religion in the Story of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40),” *Religion & Theology* 17 (2010): 192.

⁴³ Homer, *Il.* 1.423-4; 23.205-7; *Od.* 5.282-7.

the sacrifices practiced among the Ethiopians are those which are most pleasing to heaven.⁴⁴

Yet, on the other hand, within many other Greco-Roman writings Ethiopians and Blacks were used in writings to symbolize immoral behavior and vices.⁴⁵ “Black” was also associated with the demonic, and demons were depicted as Ethiopians (and Egyptians).⁴⁶ The fifth-century BCE Greek poet Pindar uses the term μέλαινα to describe the “hardened heart” that has turned away from God.⁴⁷ The first-century CE moralist Plutarch advises a young man not to spend his time with those prone to evil—blackened men—because of their malevolence.⁴⁸ The first-century CE historian Suetonius uses Ethiopians to describe scenes from the underworld where demons dwell.⁴⁹ The second-century CE satirist Lucian describes a long-haired demon which is “blacker than darkness.”⁵⁰

The Greco-Roman rhetoric concerning Ethiopians was reflected to some degree in early Christian writings.⁵¹ In apocryphal literature, black is the color of the devil. In the late first-century

⁴⁴ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 3.3.1.

⁴⁵ G. L. Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002), 35–8.

⁴⁶ Kartzow and Moxnes, “Complex Identities,” 192.

⁴⁷ Pindar, *Fragment 225.1-2*; Byron, *Symbolic Blackness*, 35.

⁴⁸ Plutarch, *Mor.* 12.

⁴⁹ Suetonius, *Cal.* 57.4.

⁵⁰ Lucian, *Philopatr.* 31.

⁵¹ Byron, *Symbolic Blackness*, 30-45. Besides apocryphal and patristic literature, Christian ascetic and monastic literature in the later centuries shows that black-skinned people and Ethiopians were used to describe evil and to distance the ascetics from their previous sinful life. For example, The Ethiopians, incarnations of evil and temptation, appeared as women, little boys, and giants. In *The Life of Anthony* (251-356 CE) by Athanasius, Anthony encounters a devil who appears in the form of a black boy. An anonymous fifth-century desert father in *The Sayings of the Fathers* reports how an Ethiopian woman tempts a troubled monk. In the fifth-century text *Life of Melania the Younger*, a representative of Nestorianism takes on the form of a young black man. In *The Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschus, a Byzantine monk in between late sixth and early seventh century, a demon appears like a dancing Ethiopian boy and an Ethiopian man of extraordinary size. See Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* 6; *Apophthegmata Patrum* 5.5; *Vita Melaniae Junioris* 54; John Moschus, *The Spiritual Meadow* 160.66.

text *The Epistle of Barnabas*, the devil is called “the Black one” whose way is described as crooked and full of curses.⁵² The late second-century *Acts of Peter* describes a female demon as “Ethiopian, not Egyptian, but altogether black.”⁵³ Also, in patristic literature, some church fathers believe that the Ethiopian eunuch's dark skin is a symbol of evil.⁵⁴ Tertullian regards Ethiopia as a sinful nation: “Egypt and Ethiopia are every nation that sinneth.”⁵⁵ Jerome also associates Ethiopians with sin: “At one time we were Ethiopians in our vices and sins.”⁵⁶

These texts overwhelmingly indicate negative perspectives toward dark-skinned people. Many writers in the Greco-Roman world regarded the Ethiopians as dark-skinned others who symbolized evil. Not only due to their geographical context but also due to their skin color, Ethiopians were often viewed as the consummate “other.”

Ethnicity

In the Ethiopian eunuch pericope (Acts 8:26-40), the ethnic identity of the eunuch with respect to Judaism is ambiguous. Though most scholars have been preoccupied with the precise ethnic identity of the eunuch, it is not easy to determine whether the eunuch is a Jew or Gentile.⁵⁷ There are three prevailing views on the eunuch's ethnic identity in relation to Judaism.

⁵² *Barn.* 4.10; 20.1.

⁵³ *Acts of Peter* 22.

⁵⁴ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 34; Tertullian, *Bapt.* 4; Jerome, *Epist.* 69.6; 108.11.

⁵⁵ Tertullian, *Spect.* 3.

⁵⁶ Jerome, *Homily 18 on Psalm* 86.

⁵⁷ David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, WUNT 2 (Reihe; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 140.

First, the eunuch might be a Jew (or a proselyte to Judaism).⁵⁸ The eunuch went to Jerusalem to worship and possessed a scroll of Jewish Scripture (Acts 8:27-28). The familiar stories of Jews serving in foreign courts—such as in Ezra, Daniel, Nehemiah, and Esther—support the idea of an Ethiopian Jew serving a queen.⁵⁹ In this reading, εὐνοῦχος can refer to his status as an “official” rather than to his physical status as a “eunuch”.⁶⁰ Indeed, the use of εὐνοῦχος in the Septuagint does not necessarily imply emasculation, but may simply reference a court official (Jer 52:25; 2 Esdr 11:11 LXX).⁶¹ Moreover, the placement of the story in the context of the narrative of Acts suggests that the eunuch is a Jew: the conversion of the eunuch takes place before the

⁵⁸ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.12.8; 4.23.1; Jerome, *Epist.* 53.5; Joseph A. Alexander, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols. (New York, NY: Charles Scribner, 1859), 341–2; Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible* 6 (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1925), 104; Robert H. Smith, *Concordia Commentary: Acts* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), 144; Foakes-Jackson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 75-6; Stephen G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts*, SNTS 23 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 171; Robert E. Tourville, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Verse-by-verse Commentary from the Classical Pentecostal Perspective* (New Wilmington, PA: House of Bon Giovanni, 1983), 166; John Wesley, *Wesley’s Notes on the Bible*, ed. Roger G. Schoenhals (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury, 1987), 479; Jack T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 151-3; Willimon, *Acts*, 72; Craig C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 39; Eugene E. Carpenter and Wayne McCown, eds., *Asbury Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 946; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 159; Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 205; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 31 (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 410, 412; Philip A. Bence, *Acts: A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 1998), 95; David Peter Seccombe, “The New People of God,” in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 360; Joseph B. Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the Scholars: Critical Approaches to Luke-Acts* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 101; Matthews, *Philip*, 87; Robert W. Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, NIB 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 143; Reeves, “The Ethiopian Eunuch,” 115; Gerd Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Book, 2005), 122; Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall, *Called to be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 118; Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 338; Clark M. Williamson, “The Ethiopian Eunuch: Dealing with a Gender-Bender: Acts 8:26-40,” *Encounter* 73.3 (2013): 53.

⁵⁹ Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 101; Shauf, “Locating the Eunuch,” 767.

⁶⁰ Theodore Ferdinand Karl Laetsch, *Jeremiah* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1952), 230, 295; Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts of the Apostles*, ExpBC 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 365; Willimon, *Acts*, 71–72; Wilson, *Gentiles and the Gentile Mission*, 171.

⁶¹ Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 310; Adamo, *Africa and Africans in the New Testament*, 89; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 425.

decisive breakthrough of the Gentile mission—the conversion of Cornelius—in chapter 10.

The second possibility is that the eunuch might be a Gentile.⁶² In this perspective, the eunuch is more likely to be a Gentile because he is a eunuch. In Acts 8:27, the term *δυνάστης*, or “official,” indicates his court status, and hence it is unlikely that *εὐνοῦχος* would be meant in a similar sense (otherwise there would be strong redundancy).⁶³ In Acts 8:27, it is more plausible that the term *εὐνοῦχος* refers to the eunuch’s physical state of castration.⁶⁴ If Luke had wanted to

⁶² Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.1.13; Augustin, *Hom. on the Gospels* 49.11; John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 26.4; Chrysostom, *Hom. Phil.* 3; Jerome, *Epist.* 108.11; Bede, *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 81; Morgan, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 212-3; Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts: The Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1955), 107; Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), 121; Richard Belward Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1964), 122-3; Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 78; Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), 48; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 314; I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, TynNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 160-1; Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 104; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:108, 110, 498; Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 175; Bruce, “Philip and the Ethiopian,” 379-80; Martin, “A Chamberlain’s Journey,” 109; Polhill, *Acts*, 222; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 129, 173, 186, 273; Chalmer E. Faw, *Acts*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 106; Charles Kingsley Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols. ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 425-6; Marcus J. Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* (New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 58; Warren Austin Gage and John Randolph Beck, “The Gospel, Zion’s Barren Woman and the Ethiopian Eunuch,” *Crux* 30 (1994): 35; Abraham Smith, “‘Do You Understand What You Are Reading?’: A Literary Critical Reading of the Ethiopian [Kushite] Episode [Acts 8:26–40],” *JITC* 22 (1994): 57; Martinus C. De Boer, “God-fearers in Luke-Acts,” in *Luke’s Literary Achievement: Collected Essays*, ed. C. M. Tuckett, trans. Ruth-Hélène Quinche (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 56, 68; Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 113-4; Clare Amos, “Acts,” in *Sowers and Reapers: A Companion to the Four Gospels and Acts*, ed. John Parr (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1997), 412; Brian S. Rosner, “The Progress of the Word,” in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 226; Walaskay, *Acts*, 86; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 293; Stewart Custer, *Witness to Christ: A Commentary on Acts* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2000), 111; Paul N. Tarazi, *The New Testament: An Introduction*, 2 vols. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 218; González, *Acts*, 115; Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 141; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 76; Chance, *Acts*, 136; Nicholas Thomas Wright, *Acts for Everyone* (London: SPCK; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 135; Parsons, *Acts*, 121; Yon Gyong Kwon, *A Commentary on Acts* (London: SPCK, 2012), 82; Waters, *A Study Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 217.

⁶³ Aaron Perry, “Lift up the Lowly and Bring down the Exalted: Gender Studies, Organizations, and the Ethiopian Eunuch,” *JRL* 14 (2015): 58.

⁶⁴ Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 141; Kartzow and Moxnes, “Complex Identities,” 195; González, *Acts*, 114; Franklin Scott Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible: A Social-Science Analysis,” *BTB* 22 (1992): 156; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 296; Bock, *Acts*, 341; Pervo, *Acts*, 224; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PiNNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 293; Kartzow and Moxnes, “Complex Identities,” 195; Williamson, “The Ethiopian Eunuch: Dealing with a Gender-

clarify that the Ethiopian was strictly an official, he could have repeated the term δυνάστης throughout the passage rather than εὐνοῦχος.⁶⁵ Instead, Luke repeatedly refers to the Ethiopian man as a “eunuch” throughout Acts 8:26-40 (Acts 8:27, 34, 36, 38, 39).⁶⁶ Also, it was common practice in the ancient world for the officials of female rulers to be eunuchs in the physical sense.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the term εὐνοῦχος frequently refers to physical eunuchs in the Greco-Roman world.⁶⁸ If his status is understood in a physical sense, it is not likely that the eunuch is a full Jewish proselyte, since a (castrated) eunuch could not worship in the temple on the basis of Deut 23:1 (Deut 23:2 LXX; cf. 1QSa II:5-6).

Also, in this reading, the eunuch would be a Gentile since he is an Ethiopian. The word “Ethiopian” is the most common generic word denoting a dark-skinned African.⁶⁹ F. Scott Spencer

Bender,” 55.

⁶⁵ Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 166-7.

⁶⁶ Five out of the six NT occurrences of the noun εὐνοῦχος appear within these fifteen verses of the pericope. See Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 141.

⁶⁷ Herodotus, *Hist.* 8.105; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 1.33-36; W. F. Burnside, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 129; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 155; Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible,” 156; Spencer, *Acts*, 93; Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 114; Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 142; Parsons, *Acts*, 119; William S. Kurz, *Acts of the Apostles*, CCSS (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 99; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 296; Custer, *Witness to Christ*, 111; Wright, *Acts for Everyone*, 134; Pervo, *Acts*, 224; Kartzow and Moxnes, “Complex Identities,” 192; Waters, *A Study Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 216.

⁶⁸ According to Sean Burke, in Greek texts from the fifth century BCE to the second century CE or in Greek-Jewish texts from the second century BCE to the first century CE, an example of the use εὐνοῦχος—as referring to a person who was clearly not castrated—has not been found. See Sean D. Burke, “Queering Early Christian Discourse: The Ethiopian Eunuch,” in *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*, SemeiaSt 67, ed. Teresa J. Hornsby and Ken Stone (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 178; Sean D. Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch: Strategies of Ambiguity in Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 33-8.

⁶⁹ According to Snowden, “Ethiopians were the yardstick by which antiquity measured colored peoples.” See Snowden, *Black in Antiquity*, vii, 53; cf. Martin, “A Chamberlain's Journey,” 111; R. S. Sugirtharajah, “Postscript: Achievements and Items for a Future Agenda,” in *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 442.

concludes that his African heritage tips off his indisputable Gentile identity.⁷⁰ In addition, “Ethiopia” typically denotes a foreign, enemy nation that God will defeat in Israel’s scriptural texts (cf. Jer 46:9-10; 2 Kgs 19:9; 2 Chr 12:3; 14:9-15; 16:8; Isa 18:1-2, 7; 37:9; Ezek 30:1-9; Zeph 2:12).⁷¹ For Israelites, the Ethiopians are the Gentiles (except for Jewish remnants in Ethiopia; cf. Isa 11:11-12; Ps 87:4 [86:4 LXX]; Zeph 3:10).

Furthermore, the eunuch might be a Gentile if Acts is to be understood according to the Jewish “table of nations” tradition.⁷² In regard to his ethnicity, this text might want to emphasize that the man was an Ethiopian, that is, a Cushite, a descendant of Ham.⁷³ Some commentators explain that the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch represents the movement of the gospel to the second of the three geographical regions in the Jewish table of nations:⁷⁴ the mission to Shem is described in Acts 2:1-8:25, the mission to Ham in 8:26-40, and the mission to Japheth in 9:1-28:31.⁷⁵ Since both Ham and Japheth represent Gentile nations,⁷⁶ the Ethiopian eunuch, a progeny of Ham, is a Gentile.

⁷⁰ Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 129.

⁷¹ Wilson, ““Neither Male nor Female,”” 415.

⁷² Scott, “Luke’s Geographical Horizon,” 533-8; Wright, *Africans who Shaped our Faith*, 222; Le Cornu and Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts*, 2:414; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004), 1297-9; Schnabel, *Acts*, 423; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1542.

⁷³ Scott, “Luke’s Geographical Horizon,” 533-5.

⁷⁴ Le Cornu and Shulam, *On the Jewish Roots of Acts*, 2:414; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1297-9; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1542.

⁷⁵ According to Schnabel, Acts 8-10 describes three representative conversions for Gentile missions: (1) the Ethiopian eunuch, (2) Saul (later Paul) of Tarsus, who becomes a Jewish apostle to the Gentiles, and (3) Cornelius, the Roman centurion. The eunuch, Paul and Cornelius descend respectively from the three sons of Noah—Ham, Shem and Japheth. See Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1297-9.

⁷⁶ Le Cornu and Shulam, *On the Jewish Roots of Acts*, 2:415.

Third and finally, the eunuch's ethnic identity as either a Jew or Gentile is uncertain.⁷⁷ In this reading, Luke intentionally leaves the eunuch's Jewish or Gentile ethnicity undefined or blurred.⁷⁸ Perhaps Luke cannot and does not say that the eunuch is a Gentile since Luke does not want to make Philip forestall Peter, the legitimate founder of the Gentile mission.⁷⁹

This reading is most compelling since it is true that this pericope does not pinpoint whether the eunuch is a Jew or Gentile. If we consider the position of this story in Acts, we find that it is situated between the conversion of the Samaritans and that of the Gentiles. The position of the eunuch's "in between" status thus best captures his relationship vis-à-vis Judaism. The Ethiopian does not fully belong to Jewish or Gentile circles, but stands between them, overlapping with both ethnic categories.⁸⁰ That is to say, the Ethiopian eunuch is a figure who cannot be categorized ethnically, and he is by no means a Jewish "insider."

Social Status

The Ethiopian eunuch has an ambiguous social status. Many interpreters have viewed the

⁷⁷ Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History*, 16; Fred D. Gealy, "Ethiopian Eunuch," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, ed. George A. Buttrick (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1962), 2:178; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 314; Dahl, "Nations in the New Testament," 62-3; Gerhard A. Krodel, *Acts*, ProcC (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1981), 38; O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology*, 105; Gerhard A. Krodel, *Acts*, AugCNT (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 166; Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 67-9; Larkin, *Acts*, 133; Adamo, *Africa and Africans in the New Testament*, 90; Paul Borgman, *The Way According to Luke: Hearing the Whole Story of Luke-Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 295; Shauf, "Locating the Eunuch," 774.

⁷⁸ Krodel, *Acts*, 38; Giuseppe Betori, "Luke 24:47: Jerusalem and the Beginning of the Preaching to the Pagans in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Luke and Acts*, ed. Gerald O'Collins and Gilberto Marconi, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1993), 118.

⁷⁹ Haenchen suggests that two competing traditions existed among early Christians regarding the first Gentile's conversion: the story of the Ethiopian eunuch told by the Hellenists and that of Cornelius told by the Hebrews. Haenchen concludes that Luke intentionally left the eunuch's religious identity ambiguous, so that he could preserve both traditions. See Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 314-5.

⁸⁰ Wilson, "Neither Male nor Female," 421.

Ethiopian eunuch as a respectable individual with high status, political power, wealth, and intelligence.⁸¹ According to the narrative of Acts, the eunuch is a leading official (δυνάστης) in Candace's court, specifically, the head of the treasury (Acts 8:27) and thus seems to be responsible for the financial affairs of the Ethiopian state.⁸² In antiquity, Meroë was known for its wealth.⁸³ According to the second century BCE minister Heliodorus, Ethiopians cared little for gold or jewels, heaps of which the royal palace had in storage.⁸⁴ No wonder the eunuch has wealth at his disposal to be driven in a spacious chariot (the eunuch has at least a driver to order the chariot to stop in Acts 8:38 and the chariot has a room for Philip in Acts 8:31)⁸⁵ and possesses an expensive Greek scroll of Isaiah (commissioning and producing a scroll would have been expensive in Luke's days, Acts 8:28).⁸⁶ Not only is the eunuch an individual with wealth, he also has the privilege of

⁸¹ Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122-3; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 162; O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology*, 133; Martin, "The Function of Acts 8:26-40," 5; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 411-2; Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 99, 104; Carpenter and McCown, *Asbury Bible Commentary*, 946; Faw, *Acts*, 106; Abraham Smith, "A Second Step in African Biblical Interpretation. A Generic Reading Analysis of Acts 8:26-40," in *Reading from This Place*, ed. F. F. Segovia and M. A. Tolbert (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 225, 228; Wright, Jr., *Africans who Shaped our Faith*, 212; Larkin, *Acts*, 132; Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 284; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 293; Stachow, "'Do You Understand What You Are Reading?' (Acts 8:30)," 254; Custer, *Witness to Christ*, 111; Talbert, *Reading Acts*, 75; Mary Rose D'Angelo, "The ANHP Question in Luke-Acts: Imperial Masculinity and the Deployment of Women in the Early Second Century," in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 54; Matthews, *Philip: Apostle and Evangelist*, 74; Bock, *Acts*, 341; Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 66; Pervo, *Acts*, 222; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 293; Aaron Kuecker, *Spirit and the 'Other': Social Identity, Ethnicity and Intergroup Reconciliation in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 444 (New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2011), 164; Kurz, *Acts of the Apostles*, 146; Waters, *A Study Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 216.

⁸² Schnabel, *Acts*, 425.

⁸³ John H. Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 46-7.

⁸⁴ Heliodorus, *Aeth.* 9.24.

⁸⁵ Burnside *The Acts of the Apostles*, 130; Kurz, *The Acts of the Apostles*, CBC 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1983), 99; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 159; Bock, *Acts*, 343; Allen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 78.

⁸⁶ Wilson, "'Neither Male nor Female,'" 419.

being literate (Acts 8:32).⁸⁷ The eunuch also has a good command of the Greek language since he uses the optative in Acts 8:31.⁸⁸ Overall, the eunuch appears to be a wealthy, well-educated, high-status person with political prestige.⁸⁹

With this viewpoint, the conversion of the eunuch aligns with Luke's interest in people of high position (Luke 7:1-10; 18:29-30; 19:2-10; 23:47, 50-53; Acts 4:36-37; 10:1-7; 13:1; 17:4; 17:18; 24:10; 26:2). In Acts in particular, Luke reports the conversion of a number of prominent individuals, and the eunuch falls into this category.⁹⁰ He is an official (δυνάστης) and stands for one of the powerful. In Luke's writings, the other use of the term δυνάστης occurs in the Magnificat where Mary pronounces that God has "brought down the mighty ones [δυνάστας] from their thrones and exalted those of low degree" (Luke 1:52).⁹¹ Basil (330–379 CE), bishop of Caesarea, states that the eunuch and Philip are symbolic of social classes in their times, and that the eunuch stands for the rich and the great.⁹²

However, other scholars have contested the position of the eunuch in the social hierarchy in the Greco-Roman period. Most eunuchs in antiquity were slaves.⁹³ In the Roman Empire,

⁸⁷ Le Cornu and Shulam, *On the Jewish Roots of Acts*, 2:422; Allen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 78.

⁸⁸ For the discussion on the eunuch's language, see Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 311; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; González, *Acts*, 115.

⁸⁹ Wilson, "Neither Male nor Female," 404-5.

⁹⁰ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 159-60; De Boer, "God-fearers in Luke-Acts," 68; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1571.

⁹¹ The word δυνάστης is frequently used in Luke-Acts: Luke 1:35, 49, 52; 5:17; 21:26; 22:69; 24:49; Acts 8:10; 10:38; 19:11. See Wilson, "Neither Male nor Female," 404.

⁹² Basil contrasted the "rich" (πλούσιος), "high and mighty" (σοβαρὸς καὶ ὑπέρογκος) eunuch with the "poor" (πένητα), "unskilled and easily despised" (ιδιώτην καὶ εὐκαταφρόντων) evangelist Philip. See Basil, *Homily 13 on Holy Baptism*, 16.

⁹³ For examples of texts that present eunuchs as slaves, see Josephus, *Ant.* 9.122–23; 16.229–34; Josephus *J.W.* 1.488–9; Josephus, *Life* 429; Juvenal, *Sat.* 6.366–78; Ovid, *Amores* 2.2–3; Pliny, *Nat.* 7.39.128–29; Strabo, *Geog.* 13.1.57; Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 98.

eunuchs were often slaves or prisoners at war: they were transported from outside the Roman Empire⁹⁴ and they were brutalized and castrated by other men as a form of punishment or subjugation.⁹⁵ Eunuchs belonged to the lower social class in the era of the Roman Empire and did not begin to rise to positions of political authority in the empire until the third century CE (so well beyond the date of Acts).⁹⁶ The Roman law forbade elite Roman males to perform castration,⁹⁷ which meant that eunuchs could not join inner elite circles.

Some court eunuchs were freedmen and thus fell in between the categories of free and slave.⁹⁸ In Greek and Roman society, the freedmen who had been manumitted continued to owe considerable obligations to their former masters.⁹⁹ According to Sean D. Burke, a Roman patron retained the right to a freedman's estate upon death and the right could be passed on to his heirs.¹⁰⁰ The patron also retained the right to torture and even to kill his freedmen.¹⁰¹ Court eunuchs who

⁹⁴ George M. Lamsa, *New Testament Commentary from the Aramaic and the Ancient Eastern Customs* (Philadelphia, PA: A. J. Holman, 1945), 61–3; Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 172–96; Shaun Tougher, “In or Out? Origins of Court Eunuchs,” in *Eunuchs in Antiquity and Beyond*, ed. Shaun Tougher (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2002), 143–59; Theodore W. Jennings Jr., *The Man Jesus Loved: Homoerotic Narratives from the New Testament* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 2003), 155; Burke, “Queering Early Christian Discourse,” 179; Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 98, 113–5.

⁹⁵ Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 167; L. E. Roller, “The Ideology of the Eunuch Priest,” in *Gender and the Body in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. M. Wyke (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 118; Kathryn M. Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 206.

⁹⁶ Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 122.

⁹⁷ Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 121. Even those eunuchs who managed to rise to position and power could not wholly escape the stigma associated with their peculiar position. See Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 167–8.

⁹⁸ Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 93; Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 115. For an example of a text that refers to a eunuch as a freedman, see Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 62.28.2–3.

⁹⁹ Thomas Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 3; Michael Grant, *A Social History of Greece and Rome* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992), 112–22; Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 98, 115.

¹⁰⁰ Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 115.

¹⁰¹ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

were freedmen were not slaves but would continue to be treated very much like slaves.¹⁰² Thus, eunuchs could be classified as “unfortunates” alongside bastards and orphans.¹⁰³

Eunuchs were not only of low status but also were the objects of scorn and shame. While Roman men were supposed to demonstrate their manliness through military success, political office, familial authority, and the refusal to submit to humiliation,¹⁰⁴ eunuchs became the epitome of male shame, being unable to gain traditional male honor by having a family. For many Greco-Roman authors, the shame of eunuchs became manifest in effeminate speech, gestures, postures, and above all castration.¹⁰⁵ Thus, eunuchs were regarded as “damaged goods”¹⁰⁶ and they belonged to “the most despised and derided group of men.”¹⁰⁷

The practice of employing court eunuchs is likely to have been pervasive and is well documented in antiquity: in the courts of Persia, China, India, Byzantium, and Israel.¹⁰⁸ We also find one even from the court of Ethiopia in Acts. Luke’s early auditors would have assumed that the Ethiopian eunuch was a high-status personage as Basil does. Or, if Luke’s original hearers had

University Press, 1982), 242, 303.

¹⁰² Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 115.

¹⁰³ Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1981), 175.

¹⁰⁴ Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, “Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World,” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 42.

¹⁰⁵ Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible,” 157.

¹⁰⁶ Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching Luke-Acts*, Preaching Classic Texts (St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2000), 53.

¹⁰⁷ Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible,” 156. For more discussion on eunuchs as objects of scorn and shame, see Lewis A. Coser, *Greedy Institutions: Patterns of Undivided Commitment* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1974), 24; Piotr O. Scholz, *Eunuchs and Castrati: A Cultural History*, trans. John A. Broadwin and Shelley L. Frisch (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2001), 115; Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 99-100.

known the status of eunuchs in their time, they would have assumed the Ethiopian as a lowly and shameful (or scornful) one. Or, they would have assumed the eunuch as the one who defies easy social categorization—neither elite nor nonelite.¹⁰⁹

Gender Categories

The eunuch also has an ambiguous gender identity. We can categorize three kinds of viewpoints on the eunuch's gender identity. First, the eunuch might be a man. In Acts 8:27, Luke calls the eunuch “a man” (άνήρ). Some church fathers such as Irenaeus, Eusebius, and Chrysostom emphasize that the eunuch indeed is a man.¹¹⁰ Jerome claims that the eunuch obtains the name of “man” due to the vigor of his faith¹¹¹ and writes that after his baptism, the Ethiopian eunuch “deserved to be called a man.”¹¹² Bede the Venerable claims that he is called a man “because of his virtue and integrity of mind.”¹¹³ The early Christian scholars above downplay the eunuch’s role as a castrated man and use both terminological arguments (that Scripture called him “a man”) and his so-called masculine virtues to legitimize his maleness.¹¹⁴

Second, the eunuch might not be a man. According to Burke, eunuchs were depicted as

¹⁰⁹ Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 136.

¹¹⁰ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.12.8; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.1.13; Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 26.4.

¹¹¹ Jerome, *Against Jovinianus* 1.12.

¹¹² Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 14.53.

¹¹³ Bede, *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* 8.

¹¹⁴ Kartzow and Moxnes, “Complex Identities,” 195.

“not-men,”¹¹⁵ “effeminate males,”¹¹⁶ or “half-men/half-males”¹¹⁷ throughout Greek and Roman texts.¹¹⁸ Eunuchs were regarded as the ultimate non-men, effeminate males, or half-men/half-males since they lacked one of the main features of masculinity: functioning male genitalia.¹¹⁹ For example, Diogenes Laertius, a third-century CE biographer of the Greek philosophers, states that “men can become eunuchs, but eunuchs never become men.”¹²⁰ Eunuchs were “cut off” from the opportunity to procreate and were left outside the traditional household context, since they could not fulfill roles as husbands and fathers.¹²¹ Thus, “they lived outside of conventional time”¹²² and moved “from a secure male place into an uncertain zone of ambiguity and suspicion”¹²³ as unmanned men or non-men.

Third, the eunuch might be neither a man nor a woman. In the Greco-Roman world, eunuchs were gender-liminal figures who fell in between the categories of “male” and “female.”¹²⁴ Eunuchs are gendered as hybrids of male and female,¹²⁵ or as “neither male nor female.”¹²⁶ They

¹¹⁵ Babrius, *Fables* 54; Martial, *Epigrams* 11.81; Quintilian, *Orator's Education* 5.12.17-21.

¹¹⁶ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 8.26; 8.28; Lucian, *Demon*. 12; Lucian, *Eunuch* 7.

¹¹⁷ Ovid, *Fasti* 4.179-87; Virgil, *Aeneid* 12.95-100.

¹¹⁸ Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 107.

¹¹⁹ Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 119.

¹²⁰ *Diogenes Laertius* 4.43.

¹²¹ Kartzow and Moxnes, “Complex Identities,” 194.

¹²² Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant*, 206.

¹²³ H. Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 88.

¹²⁴ Wilson, “Neither Male nor Female,” 406.

¹²⁵ Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses* 21.4-5; Lucian, *Eunuch* 10; Terence, *Eunuch* 355-69.

¹²⁶ Philo, *Somn.* 2.184; Lucian, *Eunuch* 6; Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 7.7.6.

were seen as “an equal opportunity lover”¹²⁷ and their sexual activities were regarded as “all-inclusive”¹²⁸ because of this gender-liminal characteristic. Eunuchs were also socially permitted to associate freely with both women as well as men, and they were not considered a true member of either group.¹²⁹ Related to their ambiguous gender identities, they were even depicted as monstrous figures who were not even human at all.¹³⁰ For example, Lucian says the following: “[a eunuch is] neither man nor woman but something composite, hybrid and monstrous, alien to human nature.”¹³¹ Eunuchs did not fit into typical gender boundaries.

Thus, though some church fathers assert that the eunuch is a man, the gender of the eunuch would have been viewed suspiciously by many living in the Roman Empire. Eunuchs were figures who lacked manliness, especially in a Greco-Roman context. What is more, the eunuch could also “not be placed securely either as male or as female”; they upset the male/female gender binary.¹³² The Ethiopian eunuch, therefore, would have been viewed as an outsider who lives outside the parameters of the ancient gender binary.¹³³

Summary: The Inclusion of the Representative Outsider

With our review of the scriptural and historical evidence about the Ethiopian’s identity, the following question must be posed: Why does Luke include this story about such a complex

¹²⁷ Roller, “The Ideology of the Eunuch Priest,” 127.

¹²⁸ Martial, *Epigrams* 3.81; Kartzow and Moxnes, “Complex Identities,” 194.

¹²⁹ Jung and Roughgarden, “Gender in Heaven,” 233.

¹³⁰ Martial and Terence call eunuchs monsters. See Martial, *Epigrams* 9.7; Terence, *Eunuch* 695.

¹³¹ Lucian, *Eunuch* 6–11; Parsons, *Body and Character in Luke and Acts*, 134–5.

¹³² Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 80.

¹³³ Kartzow and Moxnes, “Complex Identities,” 197.

character? This investigation into the geographic, moral, ethnic, social, and gender status of the Ethiopian eunuch has uncovered a multi-dimensional character eminently suited to Luke's emphasis on outsiders and the inclusion of outsiders. Since the eunuch is a quintuple outsider, the encounter between Philip and the eunuch moves Luke's emphasis on witness toward the marginalized outsider with respect to geography, ethnicity, social status, and matters related to gender. Thus Gaventa rightly states that the eunuch is a symbolic convert—symbolic of the inclusive, barrier-breaking thrust of the Christian gospel.¹³⁴

Surprisingly, Luke describes this representative outsider as the protagonist of the story.¹³⁵ The eunuch is mentioned more often than either Philip or God in the passage.¹³⁶ Philip acts less compared to the story of his great deeds in Samaria (Acts 8:4-25), and he mainly appears as the guided instrument of God in Acts 8:26-40.¹³⁷ Luke, however, introduces the Ethiopian with the phrase “and behold” (καὶ ἰδοὺ Acts 8:27)—an expression used often to call attention to what follows.¹³⁸ As the real protagonist, the outsider takes initiative by asking questions to Philip (Acts 8:31, 34) and inviting Philip to sit with him (Acts 8:31). The eunuch also shows his positive reception of the gospel by being emboldened to request baptism (Acts 8:36).¹³⁹ The outcast with a complicated identity does not allow distance, marginalization, or isolation to deter him from

¹³⁴ Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 106.

¹³⁵ For the scholars who read the eunuch as the protagonist of the story, see Martin, “A Chamberlain's Journey,” 110; Henderson, ““What is to Prevent Me from Being Baptized?,”” 16.

¹³⁶ Henderson, ““What is to Prevent Me from Being Baptized?,”” 19.

¹³⁷ Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 316.

¹³⁸ Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 103.

¹³⁹ “The official himself requests baptism (Acts 8:37) and orders the chariot to stop so he can enter the water (Acts 8:38). Much of the action is driven by the official (Acts 8:31).” See Keener, *Acts*, 2:1588-9.

seeking new ways of being in closer relationship to the God of Israel.¹⁴⁰

The eunuch's final question in Acts 8:36 deserves special attention. Here the eunuch asks: "What is to prevent [κωλύει] me from being baptized [βαπτισθῆναι]?" (Acts 8:36c) The word βαπτίζω is significant in Luke-Acts. In the first sermon in Acts, Peter tells his hearers how they should respond to the proclamation of the gospel: "Repent, and be baptized [βαπτισθήτω] every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). In Acts 2:42, Luke reports that those who were baptized (ἐβαπτίσθησαν) "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." The eunuch's initiative and willingness to be baptized demonstrates his faithfulness and furthers Luke's emphasis on baptism as initiation into the Christian community.

Furthermore, the word κωλύω ("I prohibit") is another key word in the Lukan narrative.¹⁴¹ The word κωλύω appears twelve times in Luke-Acts out of twenty-three uses in the New Testament.¹⁴² In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus opposes disciples who exclude others not part of their group (μὴ κωλύετε, Luke 9:50), teachers of the law whose teaching keep others from the kingdom (ἐκωλύσατε, Luke 11:52), and disciples who exclude children (μὴ κωλύετε, Luke 18:16). This principle is carried over into God's not "prohibiting," or excluding, Gentiles in Acts (Acts 10:47;

¹⁴⁰ Henderson, "What is to Prevent Me from Being Baptized?," 21.

¹⁴¹ Oscar Cullmann proposes that the use of the verb κωλύω in relation to baptism, in the form of a question asking, "What is to prevent?" was part of an early baptismal formula. Also, scholars such as Conzelmann, González, and Kee have asserted that in Acts 8:36; 10:47; and 11:17 the verb κωλύω functions as a technical, ritualized term in relation to baptism. Such a conclusion, however, does not take account of the use of the verb κωλύω in the narrative of Luke-Acts. See Oscar Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament*, trans. J. K. S. Reid, SBT (London: SCM, 1950), 71–80; Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 69; González, *Acts*, 116; Kee, *To Every Nation under Heaven*, 111; Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 136.

¹⁴² Luke 6:29; 9:49,50; 11:52; 18:16; 23:2; Acts 10:47; 11:17; 16:6; 24:23. See Stachow, "Do You Understand What You Are Reading?" (Acts 8:30)," 264; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1590.

11:17).¹⁴³ The final comment on this theme is the final word of Acts: ἀκωλύτως (“unhindered,” Acts 28:31).¹⁴⁴ Luke deliberately uses the term ἀκωλύτως as the “catch word” to “epitomize his two-volume work” at the end.¹⁴⁵ Thus, as Frank Stagg proposes, the word κωλύω indicates one of the major themes of Luke-Acts: “the unhindered spread of the gospel.”¹⁴⁶ According to Luke, no one can hinder God’s action. Even outsiders will be included.

In Lukan eschatology, people from “the south” (Luke 13:29) will sit at the banquet table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets.¹⁴⁷ For this eschatological banquet, the invitation is issued to outsiders such as the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame (Luke 14:21). “The crippled” (ἀναπήρους) include those who are disabled, maimed, injured, or bereft of some member of their body. Thus those like the eunuch—those who are from the “south” and those who are maimed—will be in attendance at the eschatological banquet. In Acts 8:26-40, Luke reiterates that the eunuch—an outsider in every sense of the word—will be welcomed without hindrance.

¹⁴³ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1590.

¹⁴⁴ Pervo, *Acts*, 226.

¹⁴⁵ Frank Stagg, “The Unhindered Gospel,” *RevExp* 71 (1974): 451.

¹⁴⁶ Stagg, “The Unhindered Gospel,” 451-62; Richard I Pervo,

¹⁴⁷ Martin, “A Chamberlain's Journey,” 115.

CHAPTER 3: PHILIP: THE “PROPHET” TO THE OUTSIDER

Many scholars have discussed the connection between Luke-Acts and the Elijah-Elisha narratives.¹ All four Gospels allude to Elijah and Elisha in some ways,² but the allusion is particularly prominent in Luke’s work.³ In terms of its narrative framework, Luke-Acts is similar to the Elijah-Elisha narratives: for example, both texts consist of balanced halves bridged by an ascension into heaven.⁴ Also, throughout his two-volume work, Luke internalizes various themes, images, events, and terms from the Elijah-Elisha passages (1 Kgs 17-2 Kgs 9 [3 Kgdms 17-4

¹ Morton Scott Enslin, “Luke and the Samaritans,” *HTR* 36 (1943): 295-6; Walter Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition*, SNTSMS 7 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 44; Larrymore C. Crockett, “Luke 4:25-27 and Jewish-Gentile Relations in Luke-Acts,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 177-83; Raymond Edward Brown, “Jesus and Elisha” in *Perspective* 12 (1971): 85-104; D. G. Bostock, “Jesus as the New Elisha,” *ExpT* 92 (1980): 39-41; Thomas L. Brodie, “Jesus as the New Elisha: Cracking the Code,” *ExpT* 93 (1981): 39-42; Thomas L. Brodie, “Luke the Literary Interpreter: Luke-Acts as a Systematic Rewriting and Updating of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative,” (PhD diss., Rome: Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1981); Thomas L. Brodie, “The Accusing and Stoning of Naboth [1 Kgs 21:8-13] as One Component of the Stephen Text [Acts 6:9-14; 7:58a],” *CBQ* 45 (1983): 417-32; Thomas L. Brodie, “Luke, 7:36-50 as an Internalization of 2 Kings 4:1-37: A Study in Luke’s Use of Rhetorical Imitation,” *Bib* 64 (1983): 457-85; Brodie, “2 Kings 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40,” 41-67; Brodie, “Luke 7:11-17 as an *Imitatio* of 1 Kings 17:17-24,” 247-67; David A. S. Ravens, “The Setting of Luke’s Account of the Anointing: Luke 7:2-8:3,” *NTS* 34 (1988): 282-92; Thomas L. Brodie, “Luke-Acts as an Imitation and Emulation of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative” in *New Views on Luke and Acts* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990): 78-85; Craig A. Evans, “Luke’s Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives and the Ethic of Election,” in *Luke and Scripture* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 70-83; Thomas L. Brodie, *The Crucial Bridge: The Elijah-Elisha Narrative as an Interpretive Synthesis of Genesis-Kings and a Literary Model for the Gospels* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 82-5; José Severino Croatto, “Jesus, Prophet Like Elijah, and Prophet-Teacher like Moses in Luke-Acts,” *JBL* 124/3 (2005): 451-65; John C. Poirier, “Jesus as an Elijianic Figure in Luke 4:16-30,” *CBQ* 71 (2009): 349-63; Jaroslav Rindoš, *He of whom it is Written: John the Baptist and Elijah in Luke* (Frankfort am Main : Peter Lang, 2010), 1-234; Jonathan Huddleston, “What Would Elijah and Elisha Do? Internarrativity in Luke’s Story of Jesus,” in *JTI* 5 (2011): 265-82; Richard Hays, “The Future of Scripture,” *WTJ* 46 (2011): 34-8; Clint Burnett, “Eschatological Prophet of Restoration: Luke’s Theological Portrait of John the Baptist in Luke 3:1-6,” *Neot* 47 (2013): 1-24; John S. Kloppenborg and Joseph Verheyden eds., *The Elijah-Elisha Narrative in the Composition of Luke*, LNTS 493 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 1-160.

² For the discussion on the Elijah-Elisha narrative as a literary model for the Gospels, see Brodie, *The Crucial Bridge*, 79-98.

³ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1978), 189; Huddleston, “What Would Elijah and Elisha Do?,” 268.

⁴ Thomas L. Brodie, “Luke’s Use of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative,” in *The Elijah-Elisha Narrative in the Composition of Luke*. ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Joseph Verheyden, LNTS 493 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 6.

Kgdms 9 LXX]).⁵ For example, in Luke 5:12-13, Jesus prays on a mountain before choosing his disciples, as Elijah does in 1 Kings 19.⁶ In Luke 9:51-56, Jesus's disciples talk about calling fire from heaven and their remarks closely echo the language of 2 Kings 1:10 and 12.⁷ In Luke 9:61-62, Jesus calls a disciple, as Elijah did, and the dedicated plowman says "I will follow you," but Jesus corrects the idea that the disciple should turn back (cf. 1 Kgs 19:21).⁸ In Luke 19:41-44, Jesus's weeping over the coming destruction of the city of Jerusalem evokes memories of Elisha's weeping over the coming atrocities by Hazael (cf. 2 Kgs 8:11-12).⁹ In Luke 23:43-44, according to some manuscripts, an angel from heaven strengthens Jesus when Jesus is in the garden of Gethsemane, as an angel of the Lord touches Elijah (1 Kgs 17:1-7).¹⁰ In Luke 23:20, the accusation against Jesus with the words "we found this man perverting our nation" (Luke 23:20) is similar to King Ahab's accusation against Elijah: "Is it you, the perverter of Israel?" (1 Kgs 18:17).¹¹ In Luke 24:31, the risen Jesus opens the disciples' eyes to perceive a spiritual reality as Elisha did for his

⁵ Other than the examples in the body, here are the other passages which are reminiscent of Elijah and Elisha: Luke 1:17; 4:25-27; 7:1-17; 7:36-50; 9:8, 19, 30-33, 51-56; 24:49-53; Acts 6:9-14 and 7:58. Luke 1:17 is not from 1 Kgs 17-2 Kgs 9 (3 Kgdms 17-4 Kgdms) but from Mal 3:1, 4:5-6, Sir 48:10 (In Luke 1:17, the Elijah-allusion applies immediately to John the Baptist: in Luke 1:13-17, the future of John the Baptist is linked to the spirit and power of Elijah. John comes in the spirit and power of Elijah and turn the heart of the fathers to the children.). For the explications for other examples, see Brodie, "The Accusing and Stoning of Naboth," 420; Thomas L. Brodie, "Greco-Roman Imitation of Texts as a Partial Guide to Luke's Use of Sources," in *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, ed. Charles H. Talbert (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1984), 17-46; Brodie, "Luke's Use of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative," 19-28; J. Bradley Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple, and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 49; Rindoš, *He of whom it is Written*, 14; Joseph Verheyden, "By Way of Epilogue: Looking Back at the Healing of Naaman and the Healing of the Centurion's Slave—In Response To John Shelton," in *The Elijah-Elisha Narrative in the Composition of Luke*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Joseph Verheyden, LNTS 493 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 153.

⁶ Huddleston, "What would Elijah and Elisha do?," 268.

⁷ Hays, "The Future of Scripture," 34; Brodie, "Luke's Use of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative," 19-28.

⁸ Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives and the Ethic of Election," 77.

⁹ Hays, "The Future of Scripture," 35.

¹⁰ Rindoš, *He of whom it is Written*, 16.

¹¹ Hays, "The Future of Scripture," 35.

servant in 2 Kings 6:17.¹² In Acts 1:4-5, 8-11, Jesus’s final promise to his disciples concerning the Spirit before his ascension alludes to Elijah’s ascent with the transfer of his mighty prophetic “spirit” to his successor Elisha (2 Kgs 2:1-16).¹³ In Acts 9:36-42, Peter prays and raises Tabitha in an upper room (Acts 9:37) as Elijah (1 Kgs 17:9-24) and Elisha (2 Kgs 4:32-37) pray and raise children from death in upper rooms (1 Kgs 17:19, 23; 2 Kgs 4:10-11, 32).¹⁴ In Acts 20:7-12, Paul also revives a man named Eutychus as Elijah and Elisha do. Paul embraces the young man (cf. 1 Kgs 17:19; 2 Kgs 4:34-35) and lets his life return to him (cf. 1 Kgs 17:21; 2 Kgs 4:31).¹⁵

By patterning Jesus after the prophets Elijah and Elisha, Luke invites readers to connect his narrative with everything they know about Elijah and Elisha. This connection includes the prophets’ relationship with the marginalized, including women and especially widows (1 Kgs 17:8-24; 2 Kgs 4:1-7; 2 Kgs 4:8-37; 8:1-6), the hungry (2 Kgs 4:42-44), and Gentiles (1 Kgs 17:8-24; 2 Kgs 5:1-27).¹⁶ Luke picks up the theme of Elijah and Elisha’s relationship to the marginalized and applies it to his texts. From Luke 4:25-27 where Elijah and Elisha are explicitly mentioned, we find a connection with the Elijah-Elisha tradition and the same Lukan motif. The primary emphasis in Luke 4:14-30 falls on the “good news for the poor” theme announced in 4:18-19.¹⁷ In

¹² Hays, “The Future of Scripture,” 36-7.

¹³ Franklin Scott Spencer, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles*, IBT (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 39.

¹⁴ Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 1711.

¹⁵ Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 512.

¹⁶ Hays, “The Future of Scripture,” 34; Huddleston, “What would Elijah and Elisha do?,” 265, 268.

¹⁷ Though some scholars have suggested that the references to Elijah and Elisha in Luke-Acts serve to announce the salvation of the Gentiles and the rejection of Israel, there is no mention of Israel’s rejection in the stories of Elijah or Elisha in 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 9. Rather, the greatest concern of Elijah (and Elisha) appears to be the restoration of the covenant between YHWH and Israel (1 Kgs 19:10). See Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 188; Bart J. Koet, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, SNTA 14 (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1989), 47. For the discussion on the theme of the salvation of the Gentiles and Israel’s rejection,

other passages in Luke, one of the main characteristics of the Gospel is to embrace outsiders—the poor, the defenseless (such as widows and orphans) and the ostracized (such as tax collectors, sinners, the physically impaired, the demon possessed, lepers, Samaritans, and Gentiles).¹⁸ What is most intriguing is the relevance between the theme of outsiders and the appearance of Elijah and Elisha. Specifically, this theme of outsiders becomes most noticeable when Luke mentions *both* Elijah *and* Elisha.

At the outset of his public ministry, Jesus mentions both Elijah and Elisha as illustrations of the good news he brings (Luke 4:25-27). After these programmatic words concerning Elijah and Elisha, Jesus then emulates both Elijah and Elisha in Luke 7:1-17 by raising a dead son and by healing a Gentile commander in a manner akin to the stories from 1 and 2 Kings. These actions in turn help confirm Jesus’s identity as “the one who is to come” (Luke 7:19) in Luke 7:18-23. Both Elijah and Elisha are powerful scriptural precursors to Jesus’s identity as the Spirit-filled prophet and anticipated “coming one.” These prophets help illuminate Jesus’s inclusion of the

see Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke*, trans. R. Payne Smith (Long Island, NY: Studion, 1983), 95; Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1942), 123, 129; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, AB 28 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 537; Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple, and the New Age in Luke-Acts*, 123; Franklin Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 140; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, BECNT 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 418; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 91-2; Robert Tannehill, *Luke*, ANTC (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 94; John Nolland, “Salvation-History and Eschatology,” in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 77; Spencer, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles*, 127; Justo L. González, *Luke*, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 66; Patrick Whitworth, *Gospel for the Outsider: The Gospel in Luke & Acts* (Durham, UK: Sacristy, 2014), 28.

¹⁸ Evans, “Luke’s Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives,” 77. The followings are representative examples of embracing various kinds of outsiders from Luke and Acts: the poor (Luke 4:18; 7:22; 14:21; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-3; 9:36; 11:28-30; 24:17); widows and orphans (Luke 2:36-38; 4:25-26; 5:12-26; 7:11-17; 18:1-8; 20:47; 21:1-4; Acts 6:1-7; 9:36-43); tax collectors (Luke 5:29-30; 7:29, 34; 15:1; 19:1-10); sinners (Luke 7:36-50; 15:1-2; 19:7); the physically impaired (Acts 3:1-10; 9:33-34; 14:8-10; 28:8-9); the demon-possessed (Luke 4:33-36; 8:26-39; Acts 16:16-18; 19:12); Samaritans (Luke 10:33-35; 17:16-18; Acts 1:8; 8:4-25), and Gentiles (Luke 4:26-27; 7:1-10; 14:23; 24:47; Acts 2:39; 3:25-26; 10:1-48; 11:15-17; 15:7-11).

marginalized and God's care for "the least, the lost, and the lowly."

Like Jesus, Philip in Acts 8:26-40 also behaves in a manner that emulates both Elijah and Elisha. Luke patterns Jesus's followers after Jesus himself throughout his second volume, and Luke's patterning of Philip after Jesus in Acts 8 continues this trend.¹⁹ Such parallels demonstrate that the risen Jesus is working in his church and that his followers are imitators of Jesus.²⁰ Yet among the many parallels between Jesus and his followers in Acts, Luke associates Philip with both Elijah and Elisha in Acts 8:26-40, just as the evangelist does in Luke 4:25-27 and 7:1-17. When Luke alludes to both prophets in these two Lukan passages, we find Luke's special interest in the theme of the inclusion of outsiders. By alluding to both Elijah and Elisha in Philip's story, this theme that is so central to Jesus's identity and message emerges yet again.

Jesus, Elijah, and Elisha in Luke 4:25-27

In Luke 4, Luke begins with a programmatic description of Jesus's entry into public life. Luke 4:16-30 presents his inaugural speech at Nazareth. The narrative of Jesus's address in the Nazareth synagogue is recognized by many commentators as a carefully worked out preview of the ministry of Jesus or even a microcosm of the entirety Luke-Acts.²¹ In Luke 4:16-19, Jesus

¹⁹ Spencer argues that the disciples of Jesus follow Jesus's words and deeds and that we can find those examples in Acts. For instance, as Jesus restores a paralyzed man early in his ministry (Luke 5:17-26), so Peter and Paul's first public miracles feature healings of congenitally lame men in Jerusalem (Acts 3:1-10) and Lystra (Acts 14:8-10). Philip also cures "many others who were paralyzed or lame" in Samaria (Acts 8:7). The dying Stephen echoes Jesus's final prayers from the cross: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59) and "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60) are similar to "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46) and "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing (Acts 23:34)." See Spencer, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles*, 44-5; Thomas J. Lane, *Luke and the Gentile Mission: Gospel Anticipates Acts*, EurH Reihe 23 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), 69.

²⁰ O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology*, 62.

²¹ Jack T. Sanders puts "it seems impossible to find a commentary on Luke that does not label Luke 4:16-30 'programmatic.'" See Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1960), 31-37, 221; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, SBLDS 39 (Missoula: Scholars, 1977), 91-6; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 177-8, 276; David L. Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts*

reads the description of the year of God's favor in the Isaiah scroll which centers on acts of care for the marginalized, persons who by physical condition or other circumstance stand outside the community.²² That is, Jesus announces the focus, purpose, and direction of his ministry through the Isaianic quotation: "to bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18; cf. Isa 61:1). The phrase "to bring good news to the poor" summarizes Jesus's "mission of deliverance for the marginalized, the needy, and outsiders."²³ As the narrative progresses, Jesus will consistently carry out this mission: Jesus's ministry will benefit the poor and the outsiders in various social, economic, and spiritual dimensions.²⁴

After this initial presentation of his mission, Jesus demonstrates that the sort of mission for which he has been anointed has its precedent—the prophetic activity of Elijah and Elisha.²⁵ Jesus gives an exemplary role to both Elijah and Elisha and mentions two specific incidents from

(Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980), 19; Brodie, "Luke 7:11-17 as an *Imitatio* of 1 Kings 17:17-24," 249; Brodie, "2 Kings 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 45; Philip F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 218; Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple, and the New Age in Luke-Acts*, 123; Brodie, "Luke-Acts as an Imitation and Emulation," 81; Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives," 76; Nolland, "Salvation-History and Eschatology," 77; Jack T. Sanders, "Can Anything Bad Come out of Nazareth, or Did Luke Think That History Moved in a Line or in a Circle?" in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson*, ed. Richard P. Thompson and Thomas E. Phillips (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 299. F. Neiryck, "Luke 4:16-30 and the Unity of Luke-Acts," in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. J. Verheyden. BETL 142 (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 357; Peter Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 367 (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 205; Sean D. Burke, "Queering Early Christian Discourse: The Ethiopian Eunuch," in *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*, SemeiaSt 67, ed. Teresa J. Hornsby and Ken Stone (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 184; John Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman [2 KGS 5.1-19] As a Central Component for the Healing of the Centurion's Slave [Luke 7:1-10]," in *The Elijah-Elisha Narrative in the Composition of Luke*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Joseph Verheyden, LNTS 493 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 69; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 82.

²² John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 115.

²³ Carroll, *Luke*, 109.

²⁴ Carroll, *Luke*, 113.

²⁵ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 537; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 217.

the Elijah-Elisha stories.²⁶ The selective telling of the Elijah-Elisha stories in Luke 4:25-27 provides the hermeneutical key for comprehending what Jesus meant by the citation from Isaiah and his declaration of its fulfillment in Luke 4:18-19, 21.²⁷ In other words, by putting the anecdotes from the Elijah and Elisha narratives in Jesus's inaugural speech, Luke indicates that both Elijah and Elisha are fundamental to understanding Jesus and his mission.²⁸ Indeed, Luke 4:25-27 functions as the model of announcing the good news to the poor and the outsiders throughout the Gospel of Luke.

In Luke 4:25-26, Jesus describes how Elijah is sent to a Gentile widow—a person of low status. In the biblical tradition, widows appear as a defined social group of vulnerable people in ancient Israel.²⁹ The Lukan concern for the marginalized group, widows, is one of major themes throughout Luke-Acts as the episodes concerning widows spread across major divisions of Luke-Acts.³⁰ In Jesus's inaugural address, Jesus mentions Elijah going to the non-Jewish widow who is a representative of the marginalized.³¹

²⁶ Brodie, "Luke's Use of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative," 7.

²⁷ James A. Sanders, "Isaiah in Luke," *Int* 36 (1982): 154; Jeffrey S. Siker, "'First to the Gentiles': A Literary Analysis of Luke 4:16-30," *JBL* 3 (1995): 83.

²⁸ Kenneth Duncan Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God's People Intertextually*, JSNTSup 282 (London; New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2005), 18.

²⁹ Ronald A. Simkins, "The Widow and Orphan in the Political Economy of Ancient Israel," *Journal of Religion & Society* 10 (2014): 22.

³⁰ The episodes related to widows in Luke-Acts are these: (1) Birth Narrative: Anna (Luke 2:36-38); (2) Galilean Section: The Widow at Nain (Luke 7:11-17; cf. the Widow at Zarephath, 4:25-26); (3) Central Section or Travel Narrative: The Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8); (4) Passion Narrative: The Poor Widow (Luke 21:1-4; cf. 20:27-40, 45-47); (5) Beginnings of the Church (Jerusalem): Neglected Hellenist Widows (Acts 6:1-7); (6) Extension of the Church (Judaea and Samaria): Supported Widows at Joppa (Acts 9:36-43). See F. Scott Spencer, "Neglected Widows in Acts 6:1-7," *CBQ* 56 (1994): 718. Otherwise in the New Testament "widow" is only at Matthew 23:13; Mark 12:40, 42, 43; 1 Corinthians 7:8; 1 Timothy 5:3 (twice), 4, 5, 9, 11, 16 (twice); James 1:27; Revelation 18:7. See Lane, *Luke and the Gentile Mission*, 69; Graham H. Twelftree, *People of the Spirit: Exploring Luke's View of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 119.

³¹ Jacob Mulloor, *Demolishing the Divide: A Lukan Reading of Fraternity* (Kochi: Karunikan Books, 2011),

In Luke 4:27, Jesus goes on to describe that Elisha also encounters a non-Jew, a Syrian military commander with leprosy by the name of Naaman. Since leprosy represents a curse in the ancient world,³² the leprosy of Naaman serves as a marginalized marker of his social, religious, and relational status. Naaman is also a Gentile military leader. Naaman is a general in Aram's army. Israel and Aram had many wars in the past (2 Sam 10:6-19; 1 Kg 11:23-35; 20:1-34). The fact that Naaman is a general of one of Israel's traditional enemies reinforces his outsider-ness.

With these examples, Jesus underscores that "good news to the poor" embraces the widow, the unclean Gentile, those of low status, and those from enemy nations; in other words, all those who are outsiders.³³ Jesus's references to Elijah and Elisha illustrate that some of those whom God blesses are not among those one would have expected God to bless, which angers Jesus's listeners (Luke 4:28). The ministries of Elijah and Elisha remind readers that "those who appear to be the least entitled to taste the benefits of 'the year of the Lord's favor' are the most likely to do so."³⁴ The story of Elijah and Elisha makes it clear that Israel's prophets do not limit their ministries to the "in-group."³⁵ They show no partiality regardless of gender, class, or race.³⁶

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³² According to McColl and Ascough, leprosy in the ancient world was, first, a disfiguring disease which made people experience isolation from their families, communities, and religious practices. Second, leprosy was associated with the designation of "unclean" (Lev 13-14). Victims of leprosy were subjected to humiliation and censure, including prohibition from entering the temple. Third, in a society where interdependence was not only the norm but also necessary for survival, lepers were cast out from the network of social bonds. See Mary Ann McColl and Richard S. Ascough, "Jesus and People with Disabilities: Old Stories, New Approaches," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 63 (2009): 3.

³³ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 218.

³⁴ Alexandru Neagoe, *The Trial of the Gospel: An Apologetic Reading of Luke's Trial Narratives*, SNTSMS 116 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 45.

³⁵ Parsons, *Luke*, 83.

³⁶ Parsons, *Luke*, 83.

Neither does God or Jesus (Acts 10:34).

In sum, in Jesus's programmatic address at Nazareth, the role of two Israelite prophets as agents of healing to—and thus the exercise of God's grace among—outsiders is paramount.³⁷ It is Jesus's sustained concern with the marginalized that connects Jesus's ministry to that of these two prophets of Israel.³⁸

Jesus, Elijah, and Elisha in Luke 7:1-23

As Luke Timothy Johnson aptly summarizes, “chapter seven [in Luke] is thematically... closely related to the Nazareth pericope.”³⁹ Indeed, the first three scenes of Luke 7 (7:1-10, 11-17, and 18-23) are related to 4:16-30.⁴⁰ In the third scene (Luke 7:18-23), which is about Jesus's identity as “the coming one,” the summary of Jesus's ministry starts and ends with the phrases “the blind receive their sight” and “the poor have good news brought to them,” which is first announced in 4:18.⁴¹ Jesus's saying, “blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me” (Luke 7:23), recalls what the people of Nazareth did in Luke 4:28-30: They drove Jesus out of the town, led him to the brow of the hill, and tried to hurl him off the cliff, filled with rage.⁴² Indeed, Luke 7:1-23 as a whole is concerned with Jesus's identity in relation with the Nazarene address.

With respect to Elijah and Elisha, Jesus specifically puts Luke 4 into practice by

³⁷ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 218.

³⁸ Carroll, *Luke*, 116.

³⁹ Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions*, 96.

⁴⁰ Tannehill, *Luke*, 123.

⁴¹ Tannehill, *Luke*, 123.

⁴² Tannehill, *Luke*, 123.

ministering to a foreign military officer and then helping a widow in 7:1-17.⁴³ Jesus's healing of the centurion's slave (Luke 7:1-10) recalls Elisha's encounter with Naaman, and his raising of the son of the widow of Nain from the dead (Luke 7:11-17) recalls Elijah's raising of the son of the widow of Zarephath.⁴⁴ These two illustrations in Luke 7:1-10 and 7:11-17 explicitly link Jesus's ministry with that of Elijah and Elisha.

Jesus and Elisha (Luke 7:1-10)

Scholars have long discussed the relationship between 2 Kings 5:1-19 (4 Kgdms 5:1-19) and Luke 7:1-10.⁴⁵ Some of them argue that Luke is structurally based on, or is an intentional reworking of, the Elisha-Naaman story.⁴⁶ They list several key similarities between 2 Kings 5:1-19 (4 Kgdms 5:1-19) and Luke 7:1-10.⁴⁷ First, both narratives have Gentile military

⁴³ Brodie, "Luke 7:11-17 as an *Imitatio* of 1 Kings 17:17-24," 250; Spencer, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles*, 131.

⁴⁴ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 276; Tannehill, *Luke*, 123, 127; Spencer, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles*, 131; David E. Garland, *Luke*, ZECNT 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 205; Huddleston, "What Would Elijah and Elisha Do?," 268; Karl Allen Kuhn, *The Kingdom According to Luke and Acts: A Social, Literary, and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 119.

⁴⁵ Larrymore C. Crockett, "Luke 4:25-27 and Jewish-Gentile Relations in Luke-Acts," *JBL* 88 (1969): 177-83; Brodie, "Luke 7:11-17 as an *Imitatio* of 1 Kings 17:17-24," 251-4; Ravens, "The Setting of Luke's Account of the Anointing," 282-92; Tannehill, *Luke*, 94, 123-4; Green, *Luke*, 283-4; Judette M. Kolasny, "An Example of Rhetorical Criticism: Luke 4:16-30," in *New Views on Luke and Acts*, ed. Earl Richard (Collgeville, MN: Liturgical, 1990), 71; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 117, 120; Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives," 74; David B. Gowler, "Text, Culture, and Ideology in Luke 7:1-10: A Dialogic Reading," in *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins*, ed. David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist, and Duane F. Watson (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 104-5; 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, MI: Baker, 2007), 298-9; Garland, *Luke*, 295; Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 65-87; Alexander Damm, "A Rhetorical-Critical Assessment of Luke's Use of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative," in *The Elijah-Elisha Narrative in the Composition of Luke*, eds. John S. Kloppenborg and Joseph Verheyden, LNTS 493 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 100-8; Dennis R. MacDonald, "Toward an Intertextual Commentary on Luke 7," in *The Elijah-Elisha Narrative in the Composition of Luke*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Joseph Verheyden, LNTS 493 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 151; Parsons, *Luke*, 117.

⁴⁶ Crockett, "Luke 4:25-27 and Jewish-Gentile Relations in Luke-Acts," 182-83; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 120; Damm, "A Rhetorical-Critical Assessment of Luke's Use of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative," 100-5.

⁴⁷ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 284; Crockett, "Luke 4:25-27 and Jewish-Gentile Relations in Luke-Acts,"

commanders.⁴⁸ Both Naaman and Luke’s centurion are officers of a foreign army (2 Kgdms 5:1; Luke 7:2). Second, in both, the commanders are well-respected.⁴⁹ Naaman is in high favor with his master (2 Kgdms 5:1) and the centurion has great honor according to Jewish elders (Luke 7:4-5). Third, both commanders hear about their healer.⁵⁰ Naaman is told of the prophet Elisha (4 Kgdms 5:3) and the centurion hears about Jesus (Luke 7:3). Fourth, in both, Jews intercede on behalf of Gentiles.⁵¹ The Jewish slave girl of Naaman’s wife provides the information concerning the prophet in Samaria (4 Kgdms 5:3-4). The Jewish religious leaders are sent to ask Jesus to come and heal the centurion’s slave (Luke 7:3). Fifth, in both, the person in need of healing is identified as an esteemed δούλος (“servant” or “slave”).⁵² The king of Aram sends to the king of Israel a request to heal his servant (δούλος) (4 Kgdms 5:6), and the centurion sends Jewish elders a request for Jesus to come and heal his slave (δούλος) (Luke 7:3a).⁵³ Sixth, in both, there are intermediaries.⁵⁴ A messenger meets Naaman (2 Kgdms 5:10a), and the centurion’s friends are sent to meet Jesus (Luke 7:6b). Seventh, in both, after a command is given, a distance healing

182-83; Gowler, “Text, Culture, and Ideology in Luke 7:1-10,” 104-5; Garland, *Luke*, 295; Shelton, “The Healing of Naaman,” 73-4, 86; Parsons, *Luke*, 117.

⁴⁸ Tannehill, *Luke*, 124; Pao and Shnabel, “Luke,” 299; Garland, *Luke*, 295; Shelton, “The Healing of Naaman,” 72-3; Damm, “A Rhetorical-Critical Assessment of Luke’s Use of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative,” 100; Parsons, *Luke*, 117.

⁴⁹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 284; Pao and Shnabel, “Luke,” 299; Garland, *Luke*, 295; Shelton, “The Healing of Naaman,” 72-3; Parsons, *Luke*, 117.

⁵⁰ Garland, *Luke*, 295; Shelton, “The Healing of Naaman,” 74.

⁵¹ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 117; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 284; Shelton, “The Healing of Naaman,” 73; Damm, “A Rhetorical-Critical Assessment of Luke’s Use of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative,” 100; Parsons, *Luke*, 117.

⁵² Tannehill, *Luke*, 124; Shelton, “The Healing of Naaman,” 72.

⁵³ Shelton, “The Healing of Naaman,” 79, 81.

⁵⁴ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 120; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 284; Garland, *Luke*, 295; Shelton, “The Healing of Naaman,” 74.

occurs.⁵⁵ Elisha's word restores Naaman (2 Kgdms 5:14), and Jesus's word heals the servant (Luke 7:10). Eighth, the healer does not meet the sick person before healing takes place in both.⁵⁶ Naaman is standing on the doorstep (4 Kgdms 5:9), and Jesus is about to reach the house (Luke 7:6), yet neither Naaman nor the centurion's slave sees Elisha or Jesus. Ninth, both stories reach their zenith at the respective declarations concerning faith and Israel.⁵⁷ In Elisha's case, Naaman declares that "now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel" (4 Kgdms 5:15a): the outsider's declaration of faith regarding the God of Israel. In Jesus's case, Jesus declares that "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith" (Luke 7:9): the declaration regarding the faith of the outsider and of Israel.⁵⁸ Lastly, both narratives end with a return "into the house." Naaman mentions "into the house of Rimmon" (εἰς οἶκον) in 4 Kgdms 5:18, and the messengers return "into the house" (εἰς τὸν οἶκον) in Luke 7:10.⁵⁹

In this way, by healing a Gentile commander's sick slave from a distance after a petition for help, Jesus follows the example of Elisha.⁶⁰ In the story of Naaman's healing in 2 Kings 5, Naaman comes to faith in the God of Israel. Luke amplifies the situation in Luke 7 to show an outsider not just having faith, but having more faith than anyone in Israel.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Ravens, "The Setting of Luke's Account of the Anointing," 287; Tannehill, *Luke*, 124; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 284; Garland, *Luke*, 295-6; Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 74; Parsons, *Luke*, 117.

⁵⁶ Tannehill, *Luke*, 124; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 284; Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 74; Parsons, *Luke*, 117.

⁵⁷ Tannehill, *Luke*, 124; Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 84.

⁵⁸ Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 75.

⁵⁹ Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 75, 85. Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 75.

⁶⁰ Carroll, *Luke*, 116.

⁶¹ Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 84.

Jesus and Elijah (Luke 7:11-17)

Many other scholars have discussed the relationship between 1 Kings 17:10-24 and Luke 7:11-17.⁶² They suggest that Luke's account in Luke 7:11-17, which only appears in Luke's Gospel, is modeled after Elijah. Similar words and themes are found in 1 Kgs 17:10-24 (3 Kgdms 17:10-24) and Luke 7:11-17.⁶³ First, both stories start with similar wordings: "it happened after this" (καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ ἡμέρας) in 3 Kgdms 17:7 and "it happened afterward" (καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἔξῃς) in Luke 7:11.⁶⁴ Second, in both, a healer enters a walled city with a gate.⁶⁵ Elijah approaches the "gate of the city" (ἐπορεύθη εἰς ... εἰς τὸν πυλῶνα τῆς πόλεως, 3 Kgdms 17:10), and Jesus also approaches the "gate of the city" (ἐπορεύθη εἰς ... τῆ πύλη τῆς πόλεως, Luke 7:11-12). Third, in both, the prophet (healer) meets a widow. Elijah meets a widow who is gathering sticks at the gate of the town (3 Kgdms 17:10). Jesus meets a woman with a dead son and a large crowd from the town (Luke 7:12). Fourth, in both, the dead man is the only son of the widow and either the widow or the son is emphasized by the words "καὶ

⁶² Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 276, 283; Brodie, "Luke 7:11-17 as an *Imitatio* of 1 Kings 17:17-24," 250-63; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 656; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 120; Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives," 76-7; Spencer, "Neglected Widows," 723; Tannehill, *Luke*, 94; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 290; Brodie, *The Crucial Bridge*, 84; François Bovon, *Luke 1*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. Christine M. Thomas, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 268; Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, 18; Hays, "The Future of Scripture," 34; Carroll, *Luke*, 163-6; Garland, *Luke*, 303; R.T. France, *Luke*, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 123; Damm, "A Rhetorical-Critical Assessment of Luke's Use of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative," 94-9; MacDonald, "Toward an Intertextual Commentary on Luke 7," 134-6; Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 69; Parsons, *Luke*, 122.

⁶³ Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives," 76-7; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 290; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 268; Thomas L. Brodie, *The Birthing of the New Testament: The Intertextual Development of the New Testament Writings* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2004), 298, 303; Carroll, *Luke*, 165; Garland, *Luke*, 303; Damm, "A Rhetorical-Critical Assessment of Luke's Use of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative," 94-97; MacDonald, "Toward an Intertextual Commentary on Luke 7," 135-6; Parsons, *Luke*, 122.

⁶⁴ Brodie, "Luke 7:11-17 as an *Imitatio* of 1 Kings 17:17-24," 252.

⁶⁵ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 656; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 268; Brodie, "Luke 7:11-17 as an *Imitatio* of 1 Kings 17:17-24," 252; Tannehill, *Luke*, 127; Carroll, *Luke*, 165; Garland, *Luke*, 303; MacDonald, "Toward an Intertextual Commentary on Luke 7," 135; Parsons, *Luke*, 122.

ἰδοῦ”.⁶⁶ In 3 Kgdms 17:10, 17, after καὶ ἰδοῦ follows the phrase “a widow is there and no spirit is left in her son.” In Luke 7:12, after καὶ ἰδοῦ follows “a man had died.” Fifth, in both, the phrase “and he gave him to his mother,” which appears nowhere else in the Septuagint or the New Testament, is identical.⁶⁷ Elijah “gave him to his mother” (καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ, 3 Kgdms 17:23) and Jesus also “gave him to his mother” (καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ, Luke 7:15).

In each narrative, the mother is a widow and the child is an only son, which means the death of the widow’s son deprives her of her sole remaining male protector and provider. Thus, the probable outcome was a threat to her ability to live since she would have no one to support her.⁶⁸ Jesus’s restoration of the young man is at the same time a restoration of the widow. Jesus’s resurrection of the unnamed widow’s son literally provides life to the widow as well. The widow at Nain is a classic representative outsider singled out by Jesus in the previous and next scenes as the special object of God’s favor and Jesus’s gracious care (Luke 4:8-19; 7:22-23).⁶⁹

The close resemblances between these parallel accounts reinforces the identity of the one who brings good news to the poor and extends God’s grace to the socially marginalized.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 285; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 656; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 268; Carroll, *Luke*, 165; Garland, *Luke*, 303; Parsons, *Luke*, 122.

⁶⁷ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 286; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 656; Brodie, “Luke 7:11-17 as an *Imitatio* of 1 Kings 17:17-24,” 252; Tannehill, *Luke*, 127; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 119; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 268; Bock, *Luke*, 652; Brodie, *The Birthing of the New Testament*, 302, 306; Huddleston, “What would Elijah and Elisha do?,” 269; Carroll, *Luke*, 165; Garland, *Luke*, 303; France, *Luke*, 124; MacDonald, “Toward an Intertextual Commentary on Luke 7,” 135-6; F. Gerald Downing, “Imitation and Emulation, Josephus and Luke: Plot and Psycholinguistics,” in *The Elijah-Elisha Narrative in the Composition of Luke*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Joseph Verheyden; LNTS 493 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 117; Parsons, *Luke*, 122.

⁶⁸ See Tannehill, *Luke*, 127; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 118; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 291; Carroll, *Luke*, 165.

⁶⁹ Spencer, “Neglected Widows,” 724.

⁷⁰ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 290.

Coupled with the raising of the widow of Nain's son, Jesus is portrayed as a great prophet of a caring God (Luke 7:16) and as one whose healing power is accessible to the marginalized.⁷¹ Just as Elijah and Elisha extend God's compassionate care to outsiders (Luke 4:25-27), Jesus takes up the mantle of the prophets and follows their pattern. Jesus follows in the footsteps of these two famous prophets and carries God's salvation beyond Israel's borders to outsiders.⁷²

Philip, Elijah, and Elisha in Acts 8:26-40

The mission in Luke 4:18-19 is fulfilled not only by Jesus (Luke 7:1-17), but also by his follower Philip. Just as Jesus takes God's favor to non-Jewish outsiders in the manner of Elijah and Elisha, so does Philip.⁷³ Interestingly, in the eunuch and Philip story, Philip is not depicted as emulating only one of the prophets but rather as emulating both Elijah and Elisha. For example, Philip runs up to a chariot as Elijah did (1 Kgs 18:45-46; Acts 8:29-30) and at the same time meets a foreign, prominent, and royal official as Elisha did (2 Kgs 5:1, 9; Acts 8:27-28). The following two parallels in Acts 8:26-40 link Philip's ministry with that of both Elijah and Elisha.

Philip and Elijah (Acts 8:26-40)

Some commentators explain that 2 Kings 5 (4 Kgdms 5) underlies the whole of the Philip narrative in Acts 8.⁷⁴ Scholars such as Trocmé and Strelan draw attention to the correspondence

⁷¹ Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 67.

⁷² Carroll, *Luke*, 159.

⁷³ Fred B. Craddock, *Luke* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990), 63.

⁷⁴ Richard Belward Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1964), 121; Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 118; Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 79; Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 174; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 225; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 118; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 274; Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 115; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PiNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 292; Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*,

between the story of Philip in Acts 8:26-40 and that of Elijah in 1 Kings 18-19. In the encounter between Philip and the eunuch, Philip may not raise a widow's son, but a number of his actions still recall this story involving Elijah. The parallels between Elijah and Philip are sufficient to confirm some coloring of Philip's ministry with Elijah-like characteristics.⁷⁵

A number of similarities exist between Acts 8 and 1 Kings 18-19.⁷⁶ First, we can see an initial divine command in both narratives (1 Kgs 18:1; Acts 8:26).⁷⁷ Elijah occasionally receives commands from angels (1 Kgs 19:5, 7; 2 Kgs 1:3, 15), and Philip is sent on a mission by an angel (Acts 8:26). Second, both are directed to go to out-of-the-way places (1 Kgs 17:8; Acts 8:26).⁷⁸ Elijah is told to go to Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:8), and Philip to the road heading to Gaza (Acts 8:26). Third, both are told that "get up and go" (ἀνάστηθι καὶ πορεύου, 3 Kgdms 17:9; Acts 8:26).⁷⁹ In both narratives, the command is given with precisely the same verbs. Fourth, both characters' prompt obedience follows the command: "he rose and went" (ἀνέστη καὶ ἐπορεύθη in 3 Kgdms 17:10; ἀναστὰς ἐπορεύθη in Acts 8:27). Fifth, the setting is a desert locale (1 Kgs 18:2, 5;

142; Bock, *Acts*, 340; Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122; Strelan, "The Running Prophet [Acts 8:30]." *NovT* 43 (2001): 32-4; Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall, *Called to be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 117; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1539.

⁷⁵ Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 79; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 135; William Frank Lawrence, Jr., "The History of the Interpretation of Acts 8:26-40 by the Church Fathers Prior to the Fall of Rome," (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1984), 54.

⁷⁶ Scholars such as Trocmé, Spencer, Munck, and Martin. See Etienne Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l'histoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957), 180; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1539.

⁷⁷ Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l'histoire*, 180; Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 121; Martin, "The Function of Acts 8:26-40," 3; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 274; Strelan, "The Running Prophet," 32; Robinson and Wall, *Called to be Church*, 117; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 292; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1539, 1545.

⁷⁸ Strelan, "The Running Prophet," 32.

⁷⁹ Strelan, "The Running Prophet," 33.

19:4; Acts 8:26).⁸⁰ Elijah hears from God in the desert (1 Kgs 19:4), and Philip obeys God in a “desert” region (Acts 8:26).⁸¹ Sixth, both characters meet with a pious, royal official (1 Kgs 18:3-4, 7; Acts 8:27-28).⁸² Elijah meets Obadiah who is in charge of Ahab’s palace (1 Kgs 18:7), and Philip meets the eunuch who is in charge of Candace’s treasury (Acts 8:27). Seventh, both religious figures run up to a chariot (1 Kgs 18:45-46; Acts 8:29-30).⁸³ Elijah outruns chariot (1 Kgs 18:45-46), and Philip runs to the eunuch’s chariot (Acts 8:29-30). As scholars often note, the image of Philip running to the chariot is one of the strongest parallels with the Elijah narrative.⁸⁴ Eighth, the prophetic figure engages the official in conversation (1 Kgs 18:7-15; Acts 8:30-35).⁸⁵ Ninth, both narratives conclude with a ritual act: a sacrificial offering in Elijah’s story and baptism in Philip’s story (1 Kgs 18:20-40; Acts 8:32-35).⁸⁶ Tenth, just when it is needed, water appears or pours out: heavy rain in Elijah’s story and an unidentified body of water in Philip’s story (1 Kgs 18:41-45; Acts 8:36).⁸⁷ The rain in Elijah’s story brings an end to the drought, and the water in Philip’s story enables the baptism of the eunuch. Eleventh, both religious figures are removed by being suddenly

⁸⁰ Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l’histoire*, 180.

⁸¹ The word ἔρημος can be translated as either “desert” or “deserted.” Scholars have debated which noun “desert” or “deserted” modifies. Luke could refer to either a desert road or deserted Gaza. Many think that application to the road is more likely. See Keener, *Acts*, 2:1548; cf. Bruce, “Philip and the Ethiopian,” 378.

⁸² Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l’histoire*, 180; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 292; Robinson and Wall, *Called to be Church*, 117; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1539.

⁸³ Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l’histoire*, 180; Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 121; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 310; Martin, “The Function of Acts 8:26-40,” 3; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Robinson and Wall, *Called to be Church*, 117; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 292; Pervo, *Acts*, 224.

⁸⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1539.

⁸⁵ Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l’histoire*, 180.

⁸⁶ Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l’histoire*, 180.

⁸⁷ Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l’histoire*, 180.

“snatched away” (1 Kgs 18:12, 46; cf. 2 Kgs 2:16; Acts 8:39).⁸⁸ Both characters are physically removed from the scene and found in a different place.⁸⁹ Elijah is found in Jezreel (1 Kgs 18:46) and Philip in Azotus (Acts 8:39-40). Twelfth, this mysterious removal of both prophetic figures is attributed to the “Spirit of the Lord” (1 Kgs 18:12; cf. 2 Kgs 2:11; Acts 8:39).⁹⁰

Thirteenth, the phrase “saw him no more” (οὐκ εἶδεν αὐτὸν ἔτι in 4 Kgdms 2:12) is almost a verbatim expression with “οὐκ εἶδεν αὐτὸν οὐκέτι” in Acts 8:39.⁹¹ Fourteenth, both incidents take place at noon (μεσημβρίας, 3 Kgdms 18:26; Acts 8:26).⁹² Elijah’s experience on Mount Carmel occurs at noon (3 Kgdms 18:26-29), and Philip is told to go to a wilderness road at noon (Acts 8:26). Although the word μεσημβρίας in this latter instance can also be translated as “south,” revelation in Acts often occurs around this time (see Acts 10:9; 22:6; 26:13).⁹³ Lastly, both Elijah and Philip are associated with Samaria and Samaritans. Elijah ministers in Samaria (1 Kings 18-21), and Philip is in Samaria when the angel instructs him to go to the wilderness road (Acts 8:5-26).

⁸⁸ Trocmé, *Le Livre des Actes et l’histoire*, 180; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 108-9; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Martin, “The Function of Acts 8:26-40,” 3; Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 115; Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, KEK 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 274; Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 290; Pervo, *Acts*, 220, 226; Duba, “Disrupted by Luke-Acts,” 119.

⁸⁹ Strelan, “The Running Prophet,” 32.

⁹⁰ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 136, 274; Lawrence, “The History of the Interpretation of Acts 8:26-40,” 70; Martin, “The Function of Acts 8:26-40,” 3; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text*, 225; Walaskay, *Acts*, 88; Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 145; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 292; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1539.

⁹¹ Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 79; Lawrence, “The History of the Interpretation of Acts 8:26-40,” 70; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 313; Martin, “The Function of Acts 8:26-40,” 12; Pervo, *Acts*, 220.

⁹² Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 121.

⁹³ Especially, in Acts 22:6, Paul receives his call while travelling at noon (μεσημβρίας). See Strelan, “The Running Prophet,” 33-4; Pervo, *Acts*, 223.

Philip and Elisha (Acts 8:26-40)

Other commentators such as Brodie and Spencer draw attention to the correspondence between the story of Philip and the eunuch and that of Elisha and Naaman in 2 Kings 5.⁹⁴ They suggest that Philip resembles Elisha in Acts 8 and that the status and condition of Naaman and those of the Ethiopian eunuch are parallel.⁹⁵ This parallel is plausible since Jesus refers to Naaman in Luke 4:27, as discussed above.⁹⁶ There are also numerous similarities between the texts, ranging from broad themes to subtle details. The following words and themes are the telling similarities between 2 Kings 5:1-19 (4 Kgdms 5:1-19) and Acts 8:26-40.

First, both Elisha and Philip meet a foreign, prominent, and royal official (2 Kgs 5:1, 9; Acts 8:27-28).⁹⁷ The officials are from a foreign monarchy: Naaman is from Aram and the eunuch from Ethiopia. Both nations are described as enemies of Israel in Israel's scriptural texts (Aram as enemy: 2 Sam 10:6-19; 1 Kg 11:23-35; 20:1-34; Ethiopia as enemy: 2 Kgs 19:9; 2 Chr 12:3; 14:9-15; 16:8; Isa 18:1-2, 7; 37:9; Ezek 30:1-9; Zeph 2:12; Jer 46:9-10). Aram is a neighboring nation of Israel; Ethiopia is a nation far from Israel. Luke ensures that the foreign nation is a land that represents the "the ends of the earth" (cf. Acts 1:8).⁹⁸

Second, both Elisha and Philip meet foreigners who are in chariots (2 Kgs 5:9; Acts 8:28).

⁹⁴ See Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 45; Brodie, "Luke-Acts as an Imitation and Emulation," 82; Spencer, *Acts*, 92; Franklin Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 102.

⁹⁵ Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 51-58.

⁹⁶ This is the only time, outside the original context, that Naaman is mentioned by name in the canon. See Shelton, "The Healing of Naaman," 65-6.

⁹⁷ Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 47; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 138; Pervo, *Acts*, 220; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1540.

⁹⁸ Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 51.

Philip's meeting with a chariot-riding foreigner stands out since "the New Testament does not have many stories about prestigious foreigners coming in chariots."⁹⁹ What is more, both texts refer to the "chariot" (ἄρμα) three times. The word ἄρμα occurs about 170 times in the Septuagint and only four times in the NT: three times in Acts 8 and once in Rev 9:9. Indeed, there are no other LXX or NT passages in which the word occurs three times in the singular except Acts 8:26-40 and 4 Kgdms 5.¹⁰⁰

Third, both Naaman and Philip hear a double-command in both narratives (2 Kgs 5:8-10; 8:26, 29).¹⁰¹ In 2 Kgs 5:8-10, two directional instructions are from Elisha and from a messenger (ἄγγελος, 4 Kgdms 5:10) of Elisha. The first beckons Naaman to come to Elisha's house, and the second comes via a messenger of Elisha, enjoining Naaman to wash in the Jordan seven times. Likewise, we can also find a double-command in the Philip and the eunuch pericope. The messenger (ἄγγελος, Acts 8:26) of the Lord tells Philip to go down towards the desert, and the Spirit tells Philip to come to the chariot (Acts 8:29).¹⁰²

Fourth, both Naaman and the Ethiopian eunuch want to know about a prophet or a prophetic text and come to know something else: God of Israel (2 Kgs 5:15) and Jesus (Acts 8:35).¹⁰³ Naaman in his chariot comes and stands at Elisha's door in order that he may know the prophet. Philip comes to the eunuch in order to question whether the eunuch knows about the prophetic text

⁹⁹ Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 45.

¹⁰⁰ Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 64; Mary Ann Stachow, "Do You Understand What You Are Reading?" (Acts 8:30): A Historical-Critical Reexamination of the Pericope of Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40)" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1998), 254.

¹⁰¹ Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 138-9.

¹⁰² Pervo, *Acts*, 220.

¹⁰³ Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 54-5.

he is reading. In both texts, the foreign official is led to knowing something more significant: in one case, the God of Israel; in the other, Jesus.

Fifth, in both narratives a discussion leads to an immersion in water (2 Kgs 5:13-14; Acts 8:38-39).¹⁰⁴ Although Naaman does not appreciate Elisha's prophetic message at first, he goes on to discuss the message with his servants (2 Kgs 5:11-13). After doing so, he proceeds to the river to perform the required ritual and is cured. Just as Elisha's prescription is not understood immediately by Naaman, the eunuch does not fully understand the message of Isaiah 53. Likewise, when Philip provides the necessary counsel (Acts 8:34-35), the eunuch is eventually enlightened by Philip's explanation. When he proceeds to some water, he responds by submitting himself to the required ritual—baptism (Acts 8:36).¹⁰⁵

Sixth, both Naaman and the eunuch go down and are washed through immersion in a body of water (2 Kgs 5:14; Act 8:38).¹⁰⁶ Naaman goes down and washes seven times in the Jordan. The eunuch also goes down to the water and is baptized. The wording in both texts is worth noting: καὶ κατέβη ... καὶ ἐβάπτισατο (4 Kgdms 5:14); καὶ κατέβησαν ... καὶ ἐβάπτισεν αὐτόν (Act 8:38).¹⁰⁷ Since Luke understands that baptism is connected with cleansing and the washing away of sins (Acts 22:16), we can assume that Naaman's physical renewal has been adapted to form a basis for describing the Ethiopian eunuch's renewal in baptism.¹⁰⁸

Lastly, both Naaman and the eunuch are legally excluded from Israel's assembly because

¹⁰⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1540.

¹⁰⁵ Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 139.

¹⁰⁶ Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 58; Pervo, *Acts*, 220; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1540.

¹⁰⁷ Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 58; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 138.

¹⁰⁸ Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 41.

of their physical afflictions:¹⁰⁹ Naaman has leprosy (cf. Lev 13-14), and the eunuch has been castrated (cf. Deut 23:1 [23:2 LXX]). Both characters suit Luke's theological theme of God's mercy for all, including those who have previously been regarded as excluded from the community of Israel.¹¹⁰

In sum, Philip mirrors the actions of Elisha in Acts 8:26-40. A number of features from the Elisha and Naaman narrative shape Acts 8:26-40. Philip's actions recall Elisha, the prophet who was not only sent to the covenantal people of God, but to the Gentiles, those whom Israel considered outside the covenant.

Thus, Philip not only acts like Elijah, but emulates Elisha as well. In Acts 8:26-40, Philip looks like a prophet; indeed, for Luke, Philip is a prophet.¹¹¹ Not surprisingly, Philip's virgin-daughters are later identified as prophets (προφητεύουσαι) in Acts 21:8-9.¹¹² Philip, who is likened to both Elisha and Elijah, recalls Jesus's discussion of and identification with Elisha and Elijah in Luke 4 and 7. By associating Philip with these two prophets, Luke reminds his readers of these earlier intertextual references and his emphasis on Jesus's prophetic ministry toward outsiders.

Summary: Why is Philip Like Both Elijah and Elisha?

¹⁰⁹ Franklin Scott Spencer, "The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible: A Social-Science Analysis," *BTB* 22 (1992): 156.

¹¹⁰ Other than the parallels above, if we extend to the parallel between Gehazi (2 Kgs 5:20-27) and Simon (Acts 8:9-24), both have a money-minded character. The latter part of the Elisha and Naaman story is taken up with the money-minded Gehazi and the story of Simon who is quite money-minded is found before Philip and the Ethiopian story. See Brodie, "2 Kgs 5 as One Component of Acts 8:9-40," 45, 52, 59

¹¹¹ According to Strelan, Philip's running is consistent with Luke's portrayal of Philip as a prophet in the mold of Elijah, carrying out a commission. There are a few passages in the OT which suggest that running is characteristic of a prophet and conveys the notion of carrying out a divine commission. For Strelan, Luke's simple use of the word illustrates his skill and art in constructing character and in story-telling. See Strelan, "The Running Prophet," 38.

¹¹² Strelan, "The Running Prophet," 32.

Many scholars, such as Trocmé, Strelan, Spencer, and Brodie, focus on how Philip parallels either Elisha or Elijah in Acts 8:26-40. Luke, however, juxtaposes allusions to both figures in Acts 8:26-40, as he did before in Luke 4:25-27 and 7:1-17.

The thematic thread that connects Luke 4:25-27, Luke 7:1-17, and Acts 8:26-40 is the inclusion of outsiders. In Luke 4:25-27, Jesus speaks about Elisha and Elijah and in the process signals that God's divine grace extends to those on the margins of Israel and ultimately even to those beyond Israel.¹¹³ Jesus then demonstrates this inclusion in Luke 7:1-17 by healing the slave of a foreign military official (like Elisha) and raising the only son of a widow (like Elijah). In Acts 8:26-40, Philip's actions overlap with both Elisha and Elijah and this prophetic encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch points to the same emphasis: God's favor extends to the marginalized of Israel and goes on. God's favor even extends to the consummate outsider of the Ethiopian eunuch.

¹¹³ Carroll, *Luke*, 116.

CHAPTER 4: JESUS: THE ISAIANIC SUFFERING SERVANT

The book of Isaiah was regarded as the “Fifth Gospel” in the early Christian church.¹ Forty-five of the sixty-six chapters of Isaiah appear in some form in the New Testament.² Indeed, approximately 590 references to Isaiah are, explicitly or otherwise, found in the NT.³

Numerous Isaianic citations and allusions appear at critical points in Luke’s two-volume work.⁴ For example, it is significant that Luke uses quotations from or allusions to Isaiah in the passages where leading characters first appear or where their ministries are outlined or summarized: John the Baptist (Luke 3:4-6; cf. Isa 40:3-5), Jesus (Luke 4:18-19; cf. Isa 61:1-2; 58:6), Stephen (Acts 7:49-50; cf. Isa 61:1-2), and Paul (Acts 13:44-52; Cf. Isa 49:6; Acts 26:16-23; cf. Isa 35:5; 50:5).⁵ Also, for the universal mission theme alone, quotations of, allusions to, or conceptual influence from Isaiah occur at key places in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:76-79; 2:30-34; 3:4-6; 4:18-19;

¹ John F. A. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge; NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1, 30; Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, 1.

² Mary Evans, review of John F. A. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity*, *Evangelical Quarterly* 75 (2003): 64.

³ James A. Sanders, “Isaiah in Luke,” *Int* 36 (1982): 144.

⁴ The Isaianic citations and the allusions are these: Luke 1:17 (Isa 40:3); Luke 1:76-79 (Isa 9:1-2; 60:1-2); Luke 2:30-32 (Isa 52:10; 42:6; 49:6); Luke 3:4-6 (Isa 40:3-5); Luke 4:18 (Isa 61:1-2); Luke 7:22 (Isa 26:19, 29:18; 35:5-6; 61:1); Luke 8:10 (Isa 6:9-10); Luke 13:29 (Isa 59:19); Luke 14:15-24 (Isa 25:6-9); Luke 19:46 (Isa 56:7); Luke 20:9 (Isa 5:1-2); Luke 23:34 (Isa 53:12); Luke 24:47-49 (Isa 32:15; 44:3); Acts 1:8; 13:47; 26:20 (Isa 49:6); Acts 2:39 (Isa 57:19); Acts 7:49-50 (Isa 66:1-2); Acts 8:32-33 (Isa 53:7-8); Acts 26:16-18 (Isa 35:5; 42:7; 61:1) and Acts 28:25-27 (Isa 6:9-10). See Sanders, “Isaiah in Luke,” 150; Peter Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 367 (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 19, 63.

Luke may have had significant access to Isaiah in a version akin to the LXX. For the discussion on Luke’s accessibility, see David Seccombe, “Luke and Isaiah,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 252; F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 226; Thomas S. Moore, “‘To the End of the Earth’: The Geographic and Ethnic Universalism of Acts 1:8 in Light of Isaianic Influence on Luke,” *JETS* 40 (1997): 392; David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, WUNT 2 (Reihe; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 10, 142; Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, 3, 102.

⁵ Bart J. Koet, “Isaiah in Luke-Acts,” in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 80.

14:15; 20:9-16; 24:47-49; Acts 1:8; 2:39; 8:32-33; 13:47; 26:16-18; 28:25-27).⁶ Furthermore, Luke frames his two-volume work with explicit quotations from Isaiah, which appear at the outset of Jesus's ministry in the Gospel (Luke 3:4-6; 4:18-19) and as the culmination of Paul's final speech at the conclusion of Act (Acts 28:26-27). All of these points suggest that Luke did not merely make use of Isaiah as a source for prooftexts to support his own point of view; rather, Luke had investigated Isaiah extensively and had a thorough understanding of Isaianic themes.⁷ Thus, Isaiah's use in Luke-Acts is clearly critical for understanding the Lukan narrative.⁸ In Acts 8:26-40, Luke positions an explicit quotation from Isaiah's fourth Servant Song (Isa 52:13-53:12) as a crucial focal point of the passage. This chapter will argue that this quotation from Isaiah also crucially furthers Luke's focus on outsiders and their inclusion, both in Acts 8:26-40 and beyond.

The chapter will focus on the Isaianic Suffering Servant, whom Luke identifies as Jesus in Acts 8:32-33, and will argue that Luke uses Isaiah 53:7-8 in Acts 8:32-33 for two purposes. First, Luke quotes Isaiah 53:7-8 in order to identify both Jesus and the Ethiopian eunuch with the Suffering Servant. Second, Luke emphasizes the theme of the universal inclusion of outsiders by mentioning the Servant's numerous descendants in Acts 8:33b, which points to a fulfillment of the promise in Isaiah 56:3-8.

⁶ See Moore, "To the End of the Earth," 392.

⁷ Seccombe, "Luke and Isaiah," 259; Moore, "To the End of the Earth," 392; Koet, "Isaiah in Luke-Acts," 80.

⁸ Koet, "Isaiah in Luke-Acts," 80. For the importance of Isaiah for Luke-Acts, see Larrimore C. Crockett, *The Old Testament in the Gospel of Luke, with Emphasis on the Interpretation of Isaiah 61.1-2* (PhD diss., Brown University, 1966), 17; Seccombe, "Luke and Isaiah," 259; Sanders, "Isaiah in Luke," 144; Bart J. Koet, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, SNTA 14 (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1989), 143; Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts*, 252; Moore, "To the End of the Earth," 392; Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, 198.

Isaiah 53:7-8 in Acts 8: Jesus as the Suffering Messiah

The brief quotation (Isa 53:7-8) from the final and most famous Isaianic Servant Song (Isa 52:13-53:12) is a key passage for interpreting the eunuch episode in Acts 8:26-40.⁹ Luke emphasizes the importance of the Isaianic quotation in three ways: (1) by locating it in the center of Acts 8:26-40, (2) by quoting Isaiah 53:7-8 from the voice of the narrator, and (3) by posing the Ethiopian's following question concerning whether the prophet was speaking of himself or another.¹⁰

First, the Isaiah 53:7-8 quotation is located at the heart of a chiasm that comprises Acts 8:26-40.¹¹ Second, out of the five lengthy, specific quotations from Isaiah in Luke-Acts—Luke

⁹ The exact verbal agreement with the LXX suggests that Luke quotes not from a memory but from a written source. Thus, the choice of verses used in the eunuch pericope is not a haphazard one but a well-known part of the Isaianic text. Indeed, Luke himself is responsible for this choice. See Morna D. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1959), 114; Justo L. González, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 115; Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122.

¹⁰ For the discussion on how Luke emphasizes the identity of the Isaianic character, see Seccombe, “Luke and Isaiah,” 252-9; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Luke: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 98; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 142; Brittany E. Wilson, ““Neither Male nor Female”: The Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:26-40,” *NTS* 60 (2014): 422; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 140.

¹¹ Spencer suggests an elaborate chiasmus based on the work of Dionisio Mínguez and Robert F. O’Toole:

A εις Ἱερουσόλυμα	to Jerusalem (Acts 8:25)
B πολλές τε κώμας τῶν Σαμαριτῶν	and many Samaritan villages (Acts 8:25)
C εὐηγγελίζοντο	evangelized (Acts 8:25)
D ἐλάλησεν πρὸς Φίλιππον	spoke to Philip (Acts 8:26)
E πορεύου ... ἐπὶ τὴν ὁδὸν	go on the way (Acts 8:26)
F καὶ ἰδοὺ ... εὐνοῦχος	and behold, a eunuch (Acts 8:27)
G εἶπεν δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τῷ Φιλίππῳ	the Spirit said to Philip (Acts 8:29)
H ἀναβάντα καθίσει σὺν αὐτῷ	went up to sit with him (Acts 8:31)
I ἡ δὲ περιοχὴ τῆς γραφῆς	but the περιοχὴ of Scripture (Acts 8:32)
J Ἡσαίας 53:7-8α	Isa 53:7-8a and discussion (Acts 8:32-35)
I' ἀπὸ τῆς γραφῆς ταύτης	from this Scripture (Acts 8:35)
H' ἀνέβησαν ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος	went up from the water (Acts 8:39)
G' πνεῦμα κυρίου ἔρπασεν τὸν Φίλιππον	Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip (Acts 8:39)
F' καὶ οὐκ εἶδεν αὐτὸν οὐκέτι ὁ εὐνοῦχος	the eunuch did not see him anymore (Acts 8:39)
E' ἐπορεύετο γὰρ τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ	he went his way (Acts 8:39)
D' Φίλιππος δὲ εὐρέθη εἰς Ἄζωτον	but Philip was found at Azotus (Acts 8:40)
C' εὐηγγελίζετο	evangelized (Acts 8:40)
B' τὰς πόλεις πάσας	all the cities (Acts 8:40)
A' εἰς Καισάρειαν	to Caesarea (Acts 8:40)

3:4-6 (Isa 40:3-5); Luke 4:18 (Isa 61:1-2); Acts 7:49-50 (Isa 66:1-2); Acts 8:32-33 (Isa 53:7-8a); and Acts 28:25-27 (Isa 6:9-10)—this Isaianic citation in Acts 8:32-33 is the only OT passage explicitly cited by the narrator in Acts (whereas most Isaianic quotations in Luke-Acts occur in the course of speeches).¹² Third, the following question of the eunuch reveals Luke’s critical awareness of the key interpretive question related to the passage, namely, is Jesus the Suffering Servant?¹³

Unlike other NT authors, Luke clarifies that the Isaianic Suffering Servant is Jesus.¹⁴ Matthew applies one of the Suffering Servant passages to Jesus’s ministry of healing (Matt 8:17; cf. Isa 53:4), John to Jesus’s ministry (the signs: John 12:38; cf. Isa 53:1), and Paul to the preaching activity of the church (Rom 15:21; cf. Isa 52:15) and the unbelief of the listeners (Rom 10:16; cf.

For the discussion on the similar chiasm, see O’Toole, “Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch,” 25-9; Franklin Scott Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible: A Social-Science Analysis,” *BTB* 22 (1992): 163; Franklin Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 132; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 292; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 142; Koet, “Isaiah in Luke-Acts,” 88; Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall, *Called to be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 117; Franklin Scott Spencer, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles*, IBT (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 49; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, PCNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 118-9; Manuel Villalobos, “Bodies *Del Otro Lado* Finding Life and Hope in the Borderland: Gloria Anzaldúa, the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8:26-40, *Y Yo*,” in *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*, SemeiaSt 67, ed. Teresa J. Hornsby and Ken Stone (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 206; Wilson, “Neither Male nor Female,” 422; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 1535; Aaron Perry, “Lift up the Lowly and Bring down the Exalted: Gender Studies, Organizations, and the Ethiopian Eunuch,” *JRL* 14 (2015): 54-5; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 131; Cf. for the less extensive chiastic proposals, see Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 76-7.

¹² Seccombe, “Luke and Isaiah,” 252; cf. Sanders, “Isaiah in Luke,” 144; Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology*, JSNTSup 110 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 236; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 140.

¹³ Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts*, 236.

¹⁴ Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lukan Old Testament Christology*, JSOTSup 12 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 238, 229; Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts*, 193, 245, 325; 327-8; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 31 (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 414; Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, 122.

Isa 53:1).¹⁵ Luke, however, quotes Isaiah 53:7-8 in Acts to indicate that Jesus is the Suffering Messiah.

Many scholars contend that a doctrine of a Suffering Messiah was unheard of and considered unthinkable in first-century Jewish religious circles. While in later Judaism the concept of God's Servant carried messianic connotations at times,¹⁶ there is no evidence that anyone in pre-Christian Judaism ever thought of the Messiah in the terms of a Suffering Servant.¹⁷ F. F. Bruce, for example, explains that there is no evidence that anyone before the time of Jesus had identified the Isaianic Servant with the Davidic Messiah.¹⁸ Kenneth Litwak likewise states that outside of the Christian movement we have no direct literary evidence for a Messianic reading of the fourth Servant Song before the first century.¹⁹ Richard Hays also affirms this position, saying, "there is no documentable tradition of Jewish readers before the time of Jesus understanding Isaiah 53 as a prophecy about a coming Messiah."²⁰

Luke, however, cites from and alludes to the Suffering Servant passages in the following passages to denote Jesus: Luke 22:37 ("he was counted among the lawless" citing from Isa 53:12

¹⁵ Paul B. DeCock, "The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8 in Acts 8:32-33," in *Relationship Between the Old and New Testament*, (Bloemfontein, South Africa: New Testament Society of South Africa, 1981), 126; Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts of the Apostles*, ExpBC 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 365.

¹⁶ Longenecker asserts that the first messianic use in the Talmud of the suffering element in an Isaianic Servant passage is in b. Sanhedrin 98b, where some rabbis speak of the Messiah as "the leprous one" or "the sick one" and that the attribution can be dated no earlier than 200 CE. See Longenecker, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 364, 366.

¹⁷ Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts: Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 253.

¹⁸ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 5, 176.

¹⁹ Kenneth Duncan Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God's People Intertextually*, JSNTSup 282 (London; New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2005), 124.

²⁰ Richard Hays, "The Future of Scripture," *WTJ* 46 (2011): 30.

in Jesus's words at the Last Supper); Luke 23:9 ("Jesus gave him no answer" alluding to Isaiah 53:7 in depicting Jesus before Herod); and Acts 3:13 ("the God of our ancestors has glorified his Servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate" from Isaiah 52:13 in Peter's address to the crowd in Solomon's Portico). Also, Luke depicts Philip answering the eunuch's question about the identity of the suffering figure by "starting with this scripture" and proclaims to the eunuch the good news about Jesus (Acts 8:35), as prophets speak concerning Jesus in Luke's two books (Luke 24:27, 44; Acts 3:18, 24; 10:43; 26:22; 28:23).²¹ Though scholars disagree over whether Jesus identifies himself as the Suffering Servant,²² it is probable that already within the early Christian church there was an understanding that the Isaianic passages were fulfilled in Jesus.²³ As Barnabas Lindars states, "it is the generally accepted view" that the

²¹ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1589.

²² The commentators such as Williams, Hooker, O'Neill, Haenchen, and Fitzmyer are doubtful that Jesus identifies himself as the Suffering Servant. See Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 119; Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 149; J. C. O'Neill, *The Theology of Acts in Its Historical Setting* (London: SPCK, 1961), 133-9; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 311; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 414.

On the contrary, Cullmann, Jeremias, Goppelt, Bruce, and Schnabel believe that the Christological interpretation of Isaiah 53 lie in Jesus's own understanding of his person, mission and death. See Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1963), 51-82; Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* (New York, NY: Scribner's, 1971), 298-9; Leonhard Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. John E. Alsup, ed. Jürgen Roloff (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1981), 195-6; Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 176; *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text*, 227; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 428.

²³ The following scholars argue that the early church understood the Isaianic Suffering Servant passage was fulfilled in Jesus, see Vincent Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching* (London: Epworth, 1945), 14; C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 94, 132; Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 119; Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 64-5; Angus J. B. Higgins, *Jesus and the Son of Man* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1964), 43; Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, 292-3; Eric Francis Osborn, *Justin Martyr*, BHT 47 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1973), 103; Seccombe, "Luke and Isaiah," 256; William S. Kurz, *Acts of the Apostles*, CCSS (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 147; Clarice Jannette Martin, "A Chamberlain's Journey and the Challenge of Interpretation for Liberation," *Semeia* 47 (1989): 108; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, SP 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 156; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 414; Nicholas Thomas Wright, *Acts for Everyone* (London: SPCK; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 134; Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, 195; Schnabel, *Acts*, 428.

identification of Jesus with the Suffering Servant belonged to the earliest thought of the primitive church.²⁴ For Luke the genuine meaning of the Scriptures is only made clear by the promised and fulfilled one: Jesus.²⁵

What is more, Luke uses this first and the most explicit identification of the Suffering Servant with Jesus in Acts 8:32-33 in accordance with his own theological interest.²⁶ Indeed, as this chapter will consider next, Luke's use of Isaiah 53 in the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip pericope can be interpreted in two ways: the Suffering Servant represents outsiders and the inclusion of outsiders.

The Suffering Servant as a Representative Outsider

The Suffering Servant and Jesus

Luke identifies the Suffering Servant as a representative outsider by using the verses from Isaiah 53. Even though the Suffering Servant may have portrayed the suffering of Israel (or the prophet himself or some other individual) in its own literary context,²⁷ Luke reinterprets the text

²⁴ Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1961), 77.

²⁵ The following commentators believe that the Scriptural prophecy in Isaiah 53 is fulfilled by Jesus. See Paul B. DeCock, "The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8 in Acts 8:32-33," in *Relationship Between the Old and New Testament*, (Bloemfontein, South Africa: New Testament Society of South Africa, 1981), 111; John Squires, "The Plan of God in the Acts of the Apostle," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 30-31; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 70-110; Spencer, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles*, 63.

²⁶ DeCock, "The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8," 112; Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light: Aspects of Conversion in the New Testament*, OBT 20 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), 127; Martin, "The Function of Acts 8:26-40," 9; Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122.

²⁷ Jeremias and Stuhlmacher identify three traditional Jewish interpretations of the Suffering Servant in early Judaism: Israel as a whole, the prophet himself (especially in Isa 49:5 and 50:10), or some other individual: *Elias redivivus* (Sir 48:10) or the Messiah (Isa 52:13 and 53:11). See Joachim Jeremias, "Παῖς θεοῦ in Later Judaism in the Period after the LXX," *TDNT* 5 (1967): 677-700; Peter Stuhlmacher, "Isaiah 53 in the Gospels and Acts," in *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*, ed. Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher, trans. Daniel P. Bailey (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 157.

within the context of the suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Luke could have emphasized vicarious suffering and soteriological meaning; however, Luke only points to certain other features. That is, in Acts 8:32, Luke indicates Jesus's outsider status by incorporating the lamb imagery from the Suffering Servant passage.

Some church fathers and a few recent scholars believe that the comparison to a lamb suggests vicarious suffering and soteriological meaning. For example, Jerome states that just as a sheep “does not resist when it is led away to be a sacrificial offering, so too he suffered by his own will.”²⁸ Bede insists that just as a lamb was customarily sacrificed at the Passover, so too “Christ our Passover lamb has been immolated.” He also goes on to say that Christ has also clothed us with his wool, as Paul says, “All of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal 3:27).²⁹ Cyril of Jerusalem also states that “He is called a sheep; not a senseless one, but that which cleanses the world from sin by its precious blood, and when led before its shearer knows when to be silent.”³⁰ Craig Keener points out that the only other mention of a single “lamb” in Luke-Acts is the Passover lamb in Luke 22:7 and that the paschal lamb may have coalesced in early Christian thought with Isaiah 53:7 (the early Christian church views Jesus as a lamb [cf. John 1:36; Rev 5:6]).³¹ A few recent scholars likewise hold the meaning of vicarious and soteriological suffering in this passage.³²

²⁸ Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 14.53.8-10.

²⁹ Bede, *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 83.

³⁰ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 10.3.

³¹ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1586.

³² W. F. Burnside, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 131; Richard Belward Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1964), 122; John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1981), 358-9; Warren Austin Gage and John Randolph Beck, “The Gospel, Zion's Barren Woman and the Ethiopian Eunuch,” *Crux* 30 (1994): 37; Mikeal C. Parsons, “Isaiah 53 and Acts 8: A Reply to Professor Morna Hooker,” in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. William H.

However, as many other modern commentators agree, unlike other NT writers such as Paul (Rom 5:6-10; cf. John in 1 John 2:2; 4:10), Luke does not emphasize the concept of Jesus's vicarious suffering.³³ Luke, for instance, could have included verses found elsewhere in the "fourth Servant Song" (Isa 52:13-53:12). Luke must have known Isaiah 53:6 ("the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all") and Isaiah 53:8b ("stricken for the transgression of my people") which precedes and follows the selection. These verses would have been a suitable interpretation of his death as a saving event. If Luke had been interested in Jesus as the Servant who suffered vicariously, these omissions cannot easily be explained.³⁴ Instead, if we read the passage as it stands, we see

Bellinger, Jr. and William R. Farmer (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1998), 104-24; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 298; Philip A. Bence, *Acts: A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 1998), 96; Stewart Custer, *Witness to Christ: A Commentary on Acts* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2000), 113; Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 343; Guy Prentiss Waters, *A Study Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Pistyll Holywell, UK: EP Books, 2015), 219.

³³ The following commentators do not believe the Isaianic quotation in Acts 8:32-33 contains the notion of vicarious sacrifice. See Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: Macmillan, 1927), 280-1; Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 107-16; Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1960), 201; I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 172; Werner Georg Kümmel, "Current Theological Accusations Against Luke," *ANQ* 16 (1975): 134, 138; DeCock, "The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8," 111; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 312; Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1987), 68; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts*, 103; Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 176; F. F. Bruce "Philip and the Ethiopian," *JSS* 34 (1989): 92, 382; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text*, 226; Chalmer E. Faw, *Acts*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 106; Darrell Bock, "Scripture and the Realization of God's Promises" in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 54; Spencer, "The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible," 158; David P. Moessner, "The 'Script' of the Scriptures in Acts: Suffering as God's 'Plan' (βουλή) for the World for the 'Release of Sins,'" in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. Ben Witherington III (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 219; James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Narrative Commentaries (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 114; Mary Ann Stachow, "'Do You Understand What You Are Reading?' (Acts 8:30): A Historical-Critical Reexamination of the Pericope of Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40)" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1998), 259-60; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 414; González, *Acts*, 115; Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 126; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu*, NovTSup 107 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 105; Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 143; Paul Borgman, *The Way According to Luke: Hearing the Whole Story of Luke-Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 223; François Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Fifty-five Years of Research (1950-2005)*, trans. Ken McKinney (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 147, 207; Robinson and Wall, *Called to be Church*, 201; Parsons, *Acts*, 121; Pervo, *Acts*, 221; Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 418-9; Schnabel, *Acts*, 427.

³⁴ Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 113-4; Robinson and Wall, *Called to be Church*, 201.

that Luke tends to emphasize only certain other features of the unnamed character.

In Acts 8:32, Luke depicts the Suffering Servant as a slaughtered lamb and a shorn sheep: a ritually ostracized and socially marginalized one. In Acts 8:32, (the body of) the Isaianic figure is depicted as ritually unclean or polluted.³⁵ According to Levitical law in which Israelite purity entailed a standard of wholeness (especially bodily wholeness),³⁶ dead bodies were taboo to touch and were regarded as unclean (Lev 11:24-40; 21:1-4).³⁷ The marks of pollution and uncleanness are palpable in the Servant's affiliation with a slaughtered lamb and a shorn sheep since Luke himself is accustomed to these Levitical purity concerns (Luke 1:15; 10:30-34).³⁸ Luke includes the description of the Servant as a slaughtered sheep, or a polluted, dead lamb. Given these connotations, it seems clear that Luke is trying to portray the Servant as a religiously ostracized one.

In Acts 8:33, the Suffering Servant is also depicted as a socially marginalized one. In Acts 8:33a, the passage emphasizes the Servant's "humiliation" (*ταπείνωσις*) in this Isaianic quotation.³⁹ The word *ταπείνωσις* can refer to maltreatment, or submission to God in obedience, or physical lowering, or reduction to weakness or misery, or humility.⁴⁰ However, in Luke-Acts, the term *ταπείνωσις* is used to describe "lowliness" (Luke 1:48). Luke's use of *ταπείνωσις* recalls

³⁵ Spencer, "The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible," 158-9; Parsons, *Acts*, 121; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 141.

³⁶ Spencer, "The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible," 160.

³⁷ Spencer, "The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible," 160; Parsons, *Acts*, 121; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 141.

³⁸ Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 141.

³⁹ According to Decock, "humiliation is probably the key to the understanding of this passage." Parsons also asserts that the key word is the "humiliation" in the middle of the citation. According to Hooker, it seems that the significance of Isa 53 lay in the picture of humiliation. See Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 114; DeCock, "The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8," 115; Parsons, *Acts*, 121.

⁴⁰ For further discussion on the study of how Luke understood "humiliation," see Decock, "The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8," 115.

other passages in Luke-Acts: especially “the lowly” (ταπεινούς) are lifted up in Mary’s song (Luke 1:52) and, Mary’s own “lowliness” (ταπείνωσιν, Luke 1:48).⁴¹ Luke appears to have understood this term to refer to “a social position that was severely reprobative within Mediterranean society.”⁴² The Suffering Servant looks like a socially lowly person who is going through the social ostracism conveyed by ταπείνωσις.

Also, in Acts 8:33a, the phrase ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἤρθη can be translated “his justice was taken away” or “his judgement was taken away” (ἡ κρίσις can be translated as either justice or judgment). Then the verse refers to either the Servant’s unjust condemnation or God’s removing his condemnation by vindicating him. The former probably remains the primary sense since the sense fits in with Luke’s emphasis on justice.⁴³ With this translation, the right to a fair trial is taken away from the Servant.⁴⁴ The issue of injustice also accords with the Lukan portrait of Jesus’s innocence during his passion (Luke 23:4, 14-15, 22) and in the reference to the unjust treatment depicted in Acts 3:13-14.⁴⁵ Jesus does not get to have a full and just trial for his sentence. As Bede aptly explains, “the judge of all did not obtain a true judgment, but, guiltless, he was condemned by the sedition of the Jews and by the voice of Pilate.”⁴⁶ The Lukan Jesus died wrongfully. Thus, in this reading, the Servant dies unjustly, and his death takes place in the midst of the rejection: the

⁴¹ Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 143.

⁴² Willi Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric in Luke 14* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 14, 50; cf. Lucian, *Somnium* 9; Pollux, *Onomasticon* 5.162-4.

⁴³ On Luke’s use of the term “κρίσις” as “justice,” see Luke 11:42. For “κρίσις” as “judgment,” see Luke 10:14; 11:31-32. For the discussion of the use of “κρίσις,” see Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text*, 227; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 156; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1586; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 144.

⁴⁴ Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 126; Schnabel, *Acts*, 428.

⁴⁵ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 111, Bock, *Acts*, 344.

⁴⁶ Bede, *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 83.

Servant is socially marginalized and unjustly so. Overall, the Suffering Servant—Jesus for Luke—represents a religious and social outsider.

The Suffering Servant and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Luke also aligns the Suffering Servant with the Ethiopian eunuch—the representative outsider. Luke may have depicted the Suffering Servant as parallel with the eunuch as many scholars have assumed. For William Frank Lawrence, it may not be merely a coincidence that Luke chooses this Isaianic passage for the Ethiopian eunuch to read. The marginalized eunuch is reading a passage that deals with a figure who is oppressed maybe because the eunuch himself is also oppressed.⁴⁷ Luke may have seen a connection between Jesus’s experience of oppression as the Suffering Servant and the eunuch’s state as an oppressed person.⁴⁸

Spencer also suggests that the eunuch himself may have identified with the figure in Isaiah 53:7-8.⁴⁹ Spencer assumes the identification by raising the relevance between the Pentateuchal purity traditions and the eunuch episode.⁵⁰ The same Leviticus chapter, which limits priestly shaving and contact with the dead, imposes similar bans against those with physical deformities, such as the blind, the lame, the mutilated, the hunchback, and *the eunuch* (Lev 21:17-20).⁵¹ For Spencer, “the Ethiopian eunuch occupies the same pollution zone encompassing the slaughtered,

⁴⁷ William Frank Lawrence, Jr., “The History of the Interpretation of Acts 8:26-40 by the Church Fathers Prior to the Fall of Rome,” (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1984), 65.

⁴⁸ Lawrence, “The History of the Interpretation of Acts 8:26-40,” 76-7.

⁴⁹ Spencer, *Acts*, 93-4.

⁵⁰ In the Lukan narrative, various segments of Pentateuchal purity traditions are found (Luke 1:15; 10:30-34; Acts 18:18; 21:21-26). See Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible,” 159.

⁵¹ Italics original, see Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible,” 159.

the shorn, and, by extension, *the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.*”⁵²

Mikeal Parsons suggests that the eunuch himself may have been able to identify with the humiliation of the Servant.⁵³ Parsons explains that the eunuch is in a socially debased position which can be described as being in a state of humiliation.⁵⁴ Parsons also claims that the eunuch is like a lamb before its “cutter,” reduced to silence in humiliation.⁵⁵ The eunuch should be drawn to the figure in Isaiah who, like the eunuch, is in the same state of humiliation.⁵⁶

Warren Gage and John Beck highlight the irony that the eunuch’s attention is caught by the prophecy that the Servant would die childless.⁵⁷ For Gage and Beck, the Servant goes to death leaving no progeny to carry on his name and that is why the eunuch would be intrigued by the person of whom Isaiah wrote.⁵⁸

Wilson raises a few points of connection between the Suffering Servant and the eunuch. Wilson believes that the imagery of a lamb with his shearer (or literally “the one who cut him” [τοῦ κείροντος αὐτὸν, Acts 8:32]) “certainly resonates with the eunuch’s state as a castrated one.”⁵⁹ In addition, according to Wilson, Luke points to both the eunuch’s impotence and Jesus’s own impotent power as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53:⁶⁰ for example, both the Servant and the

⁵² Italics original, see Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible,” 159.

⁵³ Parsons, *Acts*, 121.

⁵⁴ Parsons, *Acts*, 121.

⁵⁵ Parsons, *Acts*, 121.

⁵⁶ Parsons, *Acts*, 121.

⁵⁷ Gage and Beck, “The Gospel,” 36-7.

⁵⁸ Gage and Beck, “The Gospel,” 37.

⁵⁹ Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 141.

⁶⁰ Wilson, “Neither Male nor Female,” 422.

eunuch do not generate descendants by means of sexual relations.⁶¹

Taking all these arguments into consideration, we can surmise that Luke associates the eunuch with the Suffering Servant—both are oppressed, polluted, humiliated, heirless, contemptible, and impotent figures. If the Servant’s humiliation denotes social and religious ostracism, the eunuch’s situation can be interpreted and identified by the Suffering Servant because he too is a social and religious outsider.⁶² It is both the Suffering Servant and the Ethiopian eunuch that could be regarded as a socially and religiously dishonored being in some segments of Jewish society.⁶³ It comes as no wonder that the eunuch appears so curious about the precise identity of the unnamed suffering figure and that the Ethiopian eunuch gravitates to this representative outsider.⁶⁴

The Inclusion of Outsiders in the Suffering Servant Passage

Luke’s use of Isaiah 53 can also be indicative of a much wider missionary agenda in Luke-Acts based on Isaiah. The use of Isaianic concepts in Luke-Acts characterizes the developing Christian mission which reaches out to all people including the disadvantaged and foreigners. The gospel and the renewed people of God in Isaiah—the Church of Jesus’s followers in Acts—includes those located on the margins or excluded from full participation in Judaism.⁶⁵ The following interpretations show the connection between the Suffering Servant and Luke’s theme of

⁶¹ Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 147.

⁶² Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 144.

⁶³ Spencer, *Acts*, 93.

⁶⁴ Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible,” 159.

⁶⁵ Bock, *Acts*, 339.

including the outsiders.

Acts 8:33c reads: “because his life was taken away from the earth” (ὅτι αἴρεται ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ). While the Hebrew text claims that the Servant is “cut off [כָּרַג] from the earth” (Isa 53:8), the LXX translation renders כָּרַג as αἴρω. The verb αἴρω could signify either (1) “take away,” in the sense of “remove” or “eliminate,” or (2) “take up,” in the sense of “lift” or “raise.”⁶⁶ Acts 8:33c can be interpreted in a few ways. While some commentators interpret this line as a reference to Jesus’s death (removal),⁶⁷ others to his resurrection.⁶⁸ Still others see it as referencing both his death and resurrection.⁶⁹

Acts 8:33c (“because his life was taken away”) may not be seen as referring to Jesus’s death since Luke is less likely to emphasize the salvific value of Jesus’s death here.⁷⁰ Also, the reference to his resurrection appears to fit in since Jesus is the first of the new people precisely because of his resurrection (Acts 4:10; 13:33-9),⁷¹ however, the verbs in these verses (ἐγείρω in Acts 4:10 and ἀνίστημι in Acts 13:33-9) are quite different from the verb αἴρω in Acts 8:33c. Acts 8:33c seems not to refer to Jesus’s death or resurrection.

Hence, as some other commentators read it as Jesus’s exaltation (ascension),⁷² the notion

⁶⁶ Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible,” 158.

⁶⁷ Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 227; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text*, 227; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 411; Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 171; Schnabel, *Acts*, 427; Parsons, *Luke*, 332.

⁶⁸ Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 312; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 156; Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 144; Pervo, *Acts*, 225.

⁶⁹ Kurz asserts that Acts 8:33c can have double meaning when interpreted in light of Christ: he was “taken from the earth” in the sense of being “done away with” in death, but has been “lifted up” from the earth, from his grave, by resurrection, See Kurz, *Acts of the Apostles*, 147.

⁷⁰ DeCock, “The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8,” 124.

⁷¹ DeCock, “The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8,” 124.

⁷² Burnside *The Acts of the Apostles*, 130; Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible,” 158; *Acts*, 94;

of lifting up the Servant's life in exaltation (ascension) is more convincing. Indeed, this section highlights the Servant's humiliation and exaltation:⁷³ in Acts 8:33 the Servant undergoes humiliation (ταπεινώσει, Acts 8:33a); however, he is taken up (αἴρεται, Acts 8:33c) and renewed in an exalted state.⁷⁴ Also, within Luke's overall narratives including the unique Lukan witness to Jesus's ascension into heaven (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:2, 9-11) and the emphasis on raising up God's prophet/servant in the Petrine speeches in Acts (Acts 2:22-24, 31-36; 3:13-15, 22-26), it is more probable that the emphasis lies on the ascension.⁷⁵ What is more, Acts 1:9 ("he was lifted up") and Acts 8:33c ("his life is taken away from the earth") use the same root word: αἴρω.⁷⁶ As the one exalted at God's right hand, Jesus has become the source of blessing for all human beings and pours out his Spirit over Israel and all the nations.⁷⁷ The restoration of Israel—the beginning of the gathering of the Church and its ongoing mission in Acts—begins as the immediate fruit of the ascension and the outcasts are being drawn into the renewed people of God.⁷⁸

Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 144; Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 144; Franklin Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 104; Bovon, *Luke the Theologian*, 147; Robinson and Wall, *Called to be Church*, 119; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1586.

⁷³ DeCock also states that, for the interpretation of this passage, we should bear in mind that the fourth Servant Song is a text about the exaltation of the humiliated Servant and that the Song was used in the Jewish tradition of the vindication/exaltation of the suffering just/wise man. See DeCock, "The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8," 122.

⁷⁴ While the Hebrew text claims that the servant is "cut off [כָּרַעַ] from the earth," the LXX translation oddly renders as "lifted up [αἴρεται] from the earth." It is the only time in all of Tanakh that the verb "cut off" (כָּרַעַ) is translated by "to lift" (αἴρω). Here is the most dramatic deviation from the Hebrew in the LXX version. This verbal shift allows Luke to interpret the Servant's exaltation. See Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 156; Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 144.

⁷⁵ DeCock, "The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8," 114; Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip*, 176-7.

⁷⁶ Perry, "Lift up the Lowly and Bring down the Exalted," 61.

⁷⁷ DeCock, "The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8," 124-5.

⁷⁸ DeCock, "The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8," 125; Perry, "Lift up the Lowly and Bring down the Exalted," 53.

This interpretation of exaltation leads to the reading of “who can describe his generation” (τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται) in Act 8:33b. Various translations of γενεά have been proposed: “age,” “era,” “family,” “race,” or “life-span” (temporal meanings), or those who are contemporaries, or an existing population within any given generation (Luke 9:41; 11:29-32, 50-51; 17:25; 21:32; Acts 2:40). In other words, the phrase τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται can refer (1) to cutting off his line of descendants, (2) to the lack of consideration for his fate, or (3) to the contemporaries who have slain him.⁷⁹ Luke normally applies the noun γενεά to Jesus’s wicked temporal “generation” in other passages (Luke 7:31; 9:41; 11:29-32, 50-51; 17:25; 21:32; Acts 2:40).⁸⁰

However, the term γενεά can be used to denote “descendants,” or “posterity,” here in the sense of “spiritual offspring” or “the faithful followers [disciples] of Jesus.”⁸¹ With this translation, 8:33b is not read as a lament over the fact that the Servant is cut off from his descendants, but as pointing to the fact of having an incalculable number of disciples: Christians will become so numerous that no one will be able to count them. In other words, the sentence can be understood as an expression of admiration or praise for the marvelous growth of Jesus’s followers:⁸² “The

⁷⁹ Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, trans. David M. G. Stalker (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1969), 265.

⁸⁰ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1586.

⁸¹ For the scholars who explain that the reference to descendants should be understood as a reference to Jesus’s (faithful) followers or disciples, see Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 119; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 312; Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 229; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:108; Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 431; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 299; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Brian McNeil (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 28; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 156; Schnabel, *Acts*, 428; Perry, “Lift up the Lowly and Bring down the Exalted,” 61.

⁸² DeCock, “The Understanding of Isaiah 53:7-8,” 123; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 145.

number of his disciples will grow incalculably, because He has become the Exalted.”⁸³ This interpretation reads the phrase τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται as the great increase of Christ’s dedicated followers or spiritual descendants touched by his suffering, death, resurrection, and, most of all, ascension (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4).

In that way, Luke indicates that the mission of the Suffering Servant to bring God’s salvation to all people is fulfilled. Luke takes up various elements of the Suffering Servant’s mission—announcing good news (Isa 61:1-2), the call to proclaim salvation to both Israel and the nations (Isa 49:6), and now the pattern of his passion and subsequent exaltation (Isa 52:13-53:12)—and applies them to Jesus’s suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension.⁸⁴ Thus, Luke presents one of the major themes in Luke-Acts: the universalization of the gospel and salvation through Jesus’s suffering and exaltation (Luke 3:6; 24:46-47;⁸⁵ Acts 8:33; cf. Isa 45:22; 49:6; 52:10).⁸⁶

We can conclude that this is the good news for the Ethiopian eunuch and that even this Ethiopian eunuch comes to belong to the Servant’s indescribable descendants.⁸⁷ In the universally inclusive messianic community founded by the Suffering Servant—Jesus, the eunuch finds the

⁸³ Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 312.

⁸⁴ Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, 207.

⁸⁵ According to Martin, with the Isaianic references at the beginning and the end of the Third Gospel, Luke declares that the salvation accomplished in Christ is not ethnocentric but available to both Jew and Greek. See Martin, “A Chamberlain’s Journey,” 114.

⁸⁶ Lechler considers the divine promise contained in Isa 49:6 to have received a “down payment” through the eunuch’s baptism. See Gotthard Victor Lechler, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Exegetical and Doctrinal Commentary*, trans. C. F. Schaeffer (New York, NY: Scribner, 1869), 153-60; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 293; Matthews, *Philip: Apostle and Evangelist*, 74.

⁸⁷ According to Hamm, “his growing band of post-Easter disciples, now including this eunuch.” See Dennis Hamm, *The Acts of the Apostles*, NCBCNT 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 45.

acceptance formerly denied him under traditional Jewish law and society.⁸⁸

The Isaianic Promise of Inclusion of the Outsiders

In Acts 8:26-40, Luke may have juxtaposed the Ethiopian with his favorite prophetic book Isaiah because of its hopeful references that Ethiopia would eventually recognize the God of Israel (Isa 18:1; 45:14-15).⁸⁹ Or Luke may have recalled the idea of the remnant people coming to Jerusalem from the distant nations including Ethiopia to seek God (Isa 11:11).⁹⁰ Luke also may have remembered that the Lord will gather the “outcasts of Israel” from the “four ends of the earth” (Isa 11:12). Through the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch from one of the ends of the earth, Luke may have seen, in the eunuch’s conversion, that no outcast, no matter how distant the land in which he or she dwells, would be forgotten.

Above all, Luke probably thinks of Isaiah 56:3-8 as many commentators have assumed.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Spencer, *Acts*, 94.

⁸⁹ Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 143; Robinson and Wall, *Called to be Church*, 118; Schnabel, *Acts*, 427; Wilson, “Neither Male nor Female,” 406.

⁹⁰ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 154-5, 158; Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 143; Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, 192-3; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 293; Schnabel, *Acts*, 427; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1538-9; Williamson, “The Ethiopian Eunuch: Dealing with a Gender-Bender,” 53; Waters, *A Study Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 216; Wilson, “Neither Male nor Female,” 421.

⁹¹ For the commentators who have assumed Luke has Isa 56:3-8 in mind, see Burnside, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 129; Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts: The Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1955), 107; Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 120; Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), 47-8; G. A. Buttrick, *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 179-80; Longenecker, *Acts of the Apostles*, 363; O’Toole, *The Unity of Luke’s Theology*, 146; Krodell, *Acts*, 38; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:109; White, “Midrash,” 84; Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 161-2; Porter, “What did Philip Say to the Eunuch,” 54-5; Kee, *Knowing the Truth*, 93-4; Koet, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, 84; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts*, 105; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text*, 225; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Spencer, “The Ethiopian Eunuch and His Bible,” 161; Scott, “Luke’s Geographical Horizon,” 535; Wright, Jr., *Africans who Shaped our Faith*, 212; Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 113; Smith, “Do You Understand What You are Reading?,” 68; Moessner, “The ‘Script’ of the Scriptures in Acts,” 231; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 410; Spencer, *Acts*, 93; Seccombe, “The New People of God,” 360; Martin, “A Chamberlain’s Journey,” 108-9; Walaskay, *Acts*, 87; Carson, “Do You Understand What You are Reading?,” 86, 145; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 296; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 140-2; Le

Luke, who already quoted Isaiah 56 in Jesus’s saying in Luke 19:46,⁹² is inspired by the reference in Isaiah 56:8 LXX to “the dispersed” (τοὺς διεσπαρμένους) of Israel.⁹³ Among the NT books, only Luke uses this word “διασπείρω” to describe the “scattering” of the Greek-speaking Jewish-Christian disciples following the death of Stephen (διεσπάρησαν [Acts 8:1]; διασπαρέντες [Acts 8:4; 11:19]).⁹⁴ It is the “scattering” of the disciples that leads to a “gathering together” into the new community of all the “scattered” peoples of the earth.⁹⁵

Also, by repeating the designation “eunuch” (Acts 8:27, 34, 36, 38, 39) and by focusing on the character who was a *eunuch* from a *foreign* land, Luke wants to point to Isaiah 56:3-8 where God promises to “gather the outcasts of Israel” (Isa 56:8)⁹⁶ including those “*eunuchs* and

Cornu and Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts*, 2:416; Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 143, 146; González, *Acts*, 117; Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 143; Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122; Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 103; Henderson, ““What is to Prevent Me from Being Baptized?,”” 16; Talbert, *Reading Acts*, 80; Robinson and Wall, *Called to be Church*, 111, 118; Bock, *Acts*, 341-2; Chance, *Acts*, 136; Williams, “The Acts of the Apostles.” 227; Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, 109; Wright, *Acts for Everyone*, 135; Parsons, *Acts*, 120; Thompson, *One Lord, One people*, 97; Pervo, *Acts*, 222; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 292; Shauf, “Locating the Eunuch,” 768; Patricia Beattie Jung and Joan Roughgarden, “Gender in Heaven: The Story of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Light of Evolutionary Biology,” in *God, Science, Sex, Gender: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Christian Ethics*, ed. Patricia Beattie Jung and Aana Marie Vigen (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 234; Duba, “Disrupted by Luke-Acts,” 119; Kuecker, *Spirit and the ‘Other,’* 161-2; Villalobos, “Bodies *Del Otro Lado* Finding Life and Hope in the Borderland,” 206; Williamson, “The Ethiopian Eunuch: Dealing with a Gender-Bender,” 53; Schnabel, *Acts*, 423-7; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1540, 2:1590; Allen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 78, 81; Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 36; Kurz, *Acts of the Apostles*, 146; Wilson, ““Neither Male nor Female,”” 406, 410-1, 417; Perry, “Lift up the Lowly and Bring down the Exalted,” 60; Waters, *A Study Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 217; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 131.

⁹² In Luke 19:46, Luke quotes a phrase from Isaiah 56:7: “My house shall be a house of prayer.”

⁹³ Keener states that if Philip “started” with Isa 53 (Acts 8:32-35), Luke’s biblically informed audience would not be surprised if his exposition reached the relevant passage about God accepting foreigners and eunuchs just three chapters later. See Keener, *Acts*, 2:1590.

⁹⁴ Stachow, ““Do You Understand What You Are Reading?” (Acts 8:30),” 224.

⁹⁵ Stachow, ““Do You Understand What You Are Reading?” (Acts 8:30),” 224-5.

⁹⁶ The word יָגָר can be translated as referring to the “exiles.” However, it can also be taken as referring to those who are separated from the people of Israel, that is, “outcasts.” See Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 120.

foreigners” (Isa 56:3-4) who come to “my holy mountain ... my house of prayer” (Isa 56:7).⁹⁷ Both foreigners and eunuchs are, of course, considered “outcasts” since they are the ones who are not permitted to worship in the Temple (Deut 23:1-8 [23:2-9 LXX]; cf. 1QSa II:5-6).⁹⁸ Such pronounced emphasis on the foreign eunuch highlights the concern for the outsiders in the reconstitution of the people of God—a time of full membership for eunuchs and foreigners when a move occurs from communal isolation and marginality to communal inclusion and wholeness.⁹⁹

In this reading, for Luke, the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch signifies the realization (fulfillment) of this vision since this man was a *eunuch* from a *foreign* land.¹⁰⁰ The Ethiopian eunuch becomes a prototype of both *eunuchs* and *foreigners* who enjoy unconditional acceptance into the new eschatological community.¹⁰¹ Thus, this Ethiopian eunuch pericope points to the fact

⁹⁷ Martin, “A Chamberlain’s Journey,” 108-9; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:109; Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 143; Robinson and Wall, *Called to be Church*, 111-2.

⁹⁸ Moessner, “The ‘Script’ of the Scriptures,” 231; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 121. For the translation “eunuch” in Isa 56 and the allusion to castration in Deut 23, see Hayim Tadmor, “Was The Biblical *saris* a Eunuch?,” in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield*, ed. Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin, and Michael Sokoloff (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 321-2.

⁹⁹ Martin, “A Chamberlain’s Journey,” 109; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 121.

¹⁰⁰ Rackham asserts that in the Ethiopian eunuch is fulfilled the divine promises to the faithful eunuchs of Isa 56:3-5. According to Buttrick, since the eunuch reads the book of Isaiah that may be an indication of that the new inclusive attitude where eunuchs are part of God’s people is realized. Martin states that the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch represents the realization of this vision for Luke. Witherington assumes that Luke might wish us to see this story as a whole being about the fulfillment of that promise in Isaiah 56. González asserts that the promise of Isaiah is being fulfilled. Wilson believes that “Luke’s description of a physical eunuch’s conversion fulfills Jewish scriptural texts that foretell God’s inclusion of physical eunuchs in the eschaton.” Lüdemann assumes that this eunuch story was seen fulfillment of OT prophecies (Isa 56:3b-5) in circles of the Hellenists. Chance states that the eunuch embodies those of whom Isa 56:3-7 speaks. For the scholars who hold this reading, see Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 120; Buttrick, *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 179–80; Moessner, “The ‘Script’ of the Scriptures,” 231; Porter, “What did Philip Say to the Eunuch,” 55; Martin, “A Chamberlain’s Journey,” 108-9; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:109; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 296; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 140-2; Henderson, “‘What is to Prevent Me from Being Baptized?’,” 17; Talbert, *Reading Acts*, 80; Chance, *Acts*, 136; Pervo, *Acts*, 222; Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, 109; Shauf, “Locating the Eunuch,” 768; González, *Acts*, 117; Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122; Chance, *Acts*, 136; Schnabel, *Acts*, 427; Wilson, “‘Neither Male nor Female,’” 406.

¹⁰¹ Martin, “A Chamberlain’s Journey,” 109.

that the outcasts will be accepted by God in the context of Isa 56:3-8.¹⁰²

Summary: The Outsider and the Inclusion of Outsiders in Isaiah

We can conclude that Luke, by using the verses from Isaiah 53:7-8, depicts the religiously and socially rejected Suffering Servant as an outsider. Luke also identifies the Suffering Servant with Jesus and the Ethiopian eunuch who are similarly religious and social outcasts. The use of the passage from Isaiah does not limit its vision to the Servant's debased status but identifies the eunuch as the same representative outsider. In addition, there are also allusions to the inclusion of the outcasts among followers of "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 18:25; 19:23; 22:4; 22:14, 22), otherwise known as Jesus's indescribable descendants. Now, the Suffering Messiah, Jesus enables the outsider—the *foreign eunuch*—to become an insider of the new community of God.

¹⁰² Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 118-9; Longenecker, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 362-3.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In this study, we have witnessed how Luke emphasizes his concern for outsiders and the theme of the inclusion of outsiders in Acts 8:26-40. The story of the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip represents Luke's special concern for the outsider and envisions the scope of the Christian mission: Luke presents the Ethiopian eunuch and the Suffering Servant as the representative of the marginalized and at the same time all three characters—the eunuch, Philip, and Jesus—signify and fulfill the inclusion of outsiders.

Chapter 1 set the stage for the discussion of the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip story in Acts 8:26-40. The chapter provided a brief overview of scholarship on Acts 8:26-40. Then, the chapter described what this study would focus on in the following body of the project: three characters—the Ethiopian eunuch, Philip, the Suffering Servant in Acts 8:26-40. The chapter also introduced the three interpretative trends which this study employed—intersecting the Ethiopian eunuch's identities, Elijah-Elisha allusions, and the theme of outcasts and their inclusion in Isaiah. Lastly, the chapter revealed this study attends to the theme that the three characters in Acts 8:26-40 represent outsiders and signify Lukan emphasis on the inclusion of outsiders in the kingdom of God.

Chapter 2 focused on the Ethiopian eunuch. The chapter surveyed classical evidence, scriptural texts, and interpretations in the early church about the Ethiopian's identity according to the various categories of geography, morality, ethnicity, social status, and gender. The chapter concluded that the eunuch was at least a quintuple outcast—geographically, morally, socially, ethnically, and in terms of gender, and that the multi-dimensional character represented the marginalized outsiders. Also, the chapter dealt with the theme of the inclusion of outsiders in the

kingdom of God. Via the Ethiopian eunuch, Luke pushes the limits and crosses the borders of the Christian community not only by employing multiple identity markers, but also by depicting how the eunuch takes initiative. With the expression “βαπτισθῆναι,” Luke shows the eunuch’s willingness to be baptized as initiation into the Christian community. With “κωλύει,” Luke emphasizes that no one can hinder God’s action and that even outsiders will be welcomed without hindrance. That is, the eunuch, who is a geographically marginalized, morally dubious, ethnically ambiguous, socially undefinable, and gender-liminal outsider, should not be prevented from the inclusion in the kingdom of God.

Chapter 3 examined how the story of Philip correlates with the Elijah-Elisha narratives. The chapter surveyed numerous allusions, echoes, and components from the Elijah-Elisha narratives in Acts 8:26-40. The chapter dealt with the following pericopae: Luke 4:25-27, 7:1-17, and Acts 8:26-40. The insight into Luke’s use of both Elijah and Elisha as models for God’s care for outsiders in Luke 4:25-27 leads to a better understanding of Luke 7:1-17 where Jesus cared for outsiders in the vein of both these prophets. Also, this understanding continues to help us comprehend why Philip looks like both Elijah and Elisha and reaches out to the representative outsider. Thus, the chapter concluded that the thread concerning Elijah’s and Elisha’s mission to the outsider connects all three of these passages (Luke 4:25-27; 7:1-17; Acts 8:26-40). Then, the mission of Philip overlapping with those of Elisha and Elijah points to the same attention: God’s favor applies to the marginalized and the consummate outsider—the Ethiopian eunuch.

Chapter 4 turned to the Isaianic Suffering Servant in Acts 8:26-40. The chapter mainly examined the citation from Isa 53:7-8 in Acts 8:32-33 and the Isaianic theme prevailing in the pericope. The chapter concluded that Luke depicts the Suffering Servant and Jesus as outsiders (religiously and socially) and that he also identifies the Servant with the Ethiopian eunuch who is

also a religious and social outcast. Also, the inclusion of the outcasts is fulfilled in the renewed people of Israel as the immediate fruit of Jesus's suffering, death, resurrection, and what is more, ascension. Thus, even the Ethiopian eunuch belongs to Jesus's indescribable descendants.

In sum, the Ethiopian eunuch would have embodied the characteristics of a representative outsider. Philip, the other main character in this scene, confirms the emphasis on the inclusion of outsiders due to all the Elijah/Elisha allusions in Acts 8:26-40. Lastly, the citation and the themes from the book of Isaiah in Acts 8:26-40 suggest that the Suffering Servant, Jesus is depicted as the representative outsider due to his religious and social ostracism like the Ethiopian eunuch. Lastly, Jesus's indescribable descendants after his exaltation denote the radical inclusion of the outsiders in "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 18:25; 19:23; 22:4; 22:14, 22). Now, the Suffering Messiah, Jesus enables even the outsider who was a *eunuch* from a *foreign* land to become an insider of the new community of God (Isa 56:3-8).

We have seen that Luke's narrative about the Ethiopian eunuch is not just another conversion story, but a story of God's vision to embrace outsiders: outsiders become insiders as Jesus's descendants. We can see the same vision in the United States with various categories of marginalization that revolve around geography, morality, ethnicity, social status, and gender. Who might be considered the outsiders among us today? Are Ethiopian eunuchs of today those who are un-documented immigrants from the South, international students from all around the world, refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, Native Americans surviving on reservations, protestors with the banner "black lives matter," single parents, the disabled, the elderly poor, drug/sex/pornography/alcohol/gambling/food/smoking/video game/plastic surgery/the internet addicts, families of shooting victims, tattoo-covered teens, religious minorities, or people who identify as LGBTI?

Some outsiders may come from unfriendly nations. Others come from ethnic groups with negative stereotypes such as immoral behaviors and vices. Still others may look neither male nor female. However, no matter where they are from and no matter who they are, they are the outsiders who need to belong to τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ.

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