

The God of Israel and Jesus Christ: Luke, Marcion, and the Unity of the Canon*

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Introductory Remarks

IN THE STUDY of history it is now almost a commonplace to note that the portrayal of certain persons or groups by their enemies or opponents is at best not accurate to the degree that we would wish and at worst totally distorted by the nature of the polemic. A well-known example from the world of New Testament scholarship of the apprehension of this methodological principle is the debate over Paul's portrayal of the Judaism of his period. In opposition to much of the accepted view of Judaism disseminated by Bultmann et al., E. P. Sanders's 1977 *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* sparked a widespread rethinking of the relationship of Paul's portrayal of Judaism to a Judaism that would be allowed to speak on its own terms, that is, from its own sources. Though Sanders's own picture has received critique,¹ his methodological point is accepted by scholars on all sides of the debate: In order to come to the

* This paper was delivered as a lecture for a joint Heidelberg—Tübingen OT/NT conference (January 31–February 1, 2003) organized around the theme “In welchem Sinne ist die Schrift Verbindlich?” The text has only a few minor alterations and thus reflects in both orientation and style certain aspects pertinent to a set theme and to a particular location and audience. Further, due to the constraints of time and space, no attempt has been made within the footnotes to defend each subsidiary position taken herein with respect to complex and still-debated issues in Lukan scholarship.

¹ See, e.g., Charles H. Talbert's presidential address to the Catholic Biblical Association, “Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 63 (2001): 1–22 and the literature cited therein.

best understanding possible of a person or group, we must first let them speak for themselves.

When we come to Marcion this methodological conviction, however, does not get us very far, except in the way of cautionary warning, since no writings of his are preserved except for partial appearances in the works of others. We must begin our study therefore with a caveat: The representation of Marcion or Marcionite theology in, for example, Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* is not necessarily the same as the way in which Marcion or his followers would have presented their own theology.² However, the position described by Tertullian does exist as a theological possibility, and it is to such a possible theological position that I take the word Marcionite to refer. But the precise relationship between the sources for Marcion's theology, their accuracy, and so on, I will have to leave to the Church historians.³

The God of Israel, Jesus, and the Gospel of Luke in Marcionite Theology

The purpose of this section is to remind us of the central issue that Marcionite theology raises and its implications for the relation of the Old and New Testaments (and, therefore, also for the possibility of the unity of the canon). The opening remarks of Book IV of Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* bring the crucial point of importance immediately to the fore.

For Tertullian, Marcion's *Antitheses* (ἀντιθέσεις, "Contradictions"), a work in which the latter set parts of (what we call) the Old and New Testaments against each other, made "such a division between the Law and the Gospel as thereby to make two separate gods [*duos deos dividens*], opposite to each other [*proinde diversos*], one belonging to one instrument (or, as it is more usual to say, testament [*testamenti*]), one to the other" (IV.1). Tertullian had no problem agreeing to a difference in dispensation as reflected in the Old and New Testaments: "I do not deny a difference in records of things spoken, in precepts for good behaviour, and in rules of law . . ." (IV.1). His irreconcilable disagreement with Marcion, however, was at the most basic of theological levels: that of the identity of God. In point of fact,

² There is nevertheless a general and significant agreement between the diverse sources. For a very succinct discussion of this agreement, see the introduction of Evans's translation of *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. and trans. Ernest Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), ix–xi.

³ See, e.g., Gerhard May's brief piece "Marcion ohne Harnack" and the first section of papers from the Mainz 2001 conference, "Die Quelle zu Marcion," in *Marcion und seine Kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung/Marcion and His Impact on Church History*, ed. Gerhard May and Katharina Greschat in Gemeinschaft mit Martin Meiser, TU 150 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002).

Tertullian's admission of dispensational difference hinges on the self-sameness of the God of the Old and New Testaments, for the sentence cited just above continues "provided that all these differences [i.e., things spoken, behavioral precepts, rules of law] have reference to one and the same God [*unum et eundem deum*], that God by whom it is acknowledged that they were ordained and also foretold" (IV.1).⁴ Thus Tertullian does not reject the manifest difference between the Old and New Testaments but denies that this difference requires us to posit two different gods.

This then is the issue raised by Marcionite theology: the relation of the God of the Old Testament to the God of the New Testament and to Jesus Christ himself. Marcionite theology holds that the God of the Old and the God of the New are not the same God; the creator and warrior god of the Old Testament is an entirely different entity from the good God and Father of Jesus Christ: "Marcion of Pontus developed this doctrine, with shameless blasphemy of the God of whom the law and the prophets tell, saying that he is the creator of evil things . . . but that Jesus came from that father who is high above the God who made the world."⁵ Thus, for the Marcionites, the god of Israel and Jesus Christ have nothing to do with one another except for at the level of total discontinuity and contradiction, as the *Antitheses* were arranged to show.

It is of considerable interest for our purpose that in addition to certain "Pauline" epistles (the pastorals and Hebrews were omitted from the ἀποστολικόν), Marcion selected Luke for his two-part canon as the one Gospel that would best fit with his teaching of a theology—in the strict sense—of separation.⁶ Of the explanations of his choice that have been offered, I wish to note especially Harnack's suggestion that "[d]er 'heidenchristliche' und asketische Charakter des 3. Evangeliums gegenüber dem 1. und 2., nachdem die drei ersten Kapitel des Werks getilgt waren, muß ihm sympathisch gewesen sein."⁷ While Lukan asceticism has not seen great discussion lately,⁸ the rest of Harnack's view fits well with the traditional emphasis of modern scholarship upon Luke's hellenism and further raises the important question of the theological significance of the opening scenes of the Lukan narrative for a reading of Luke's Gospel.

⁴ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, IV.1 (Migne, PL, 2.362BC).

⁵ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, I.27.2 (Migne, PG, 7.1.688A).

⁶ The text was entitled simply εὐαγγέλιον, the one Gospel.

⁷ Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott: Eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche*, 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996), 250*.

⁸ Though see Susan R. Garrett, "Beloved Physician of the Soul? Luke as Advocate for Ascetic Practice" in *Asceticism and the New Testament*, ed. Leif E. Vaage and Vincent L. Wimbush (New York: Routledge, 1999), 71–95.

Though reconstructing Marcion's exact gospel text is not possible on the basis of the evidence we possess,⁹ there is an important well-established fact about this text in relation to the beginning of the canonical Luke. In contrast to his treatment of the larger body of the Lukan Gospel, where for the most part it would appear that Marcion carefully excised and/or inserted what was necessary for his theology, Marcion's version of the Gospel of Luke retained only a small part of one verse of the first three chapters (3:1) and the last third of chapter 4.¹⁰ Rather than to Marcion's knowledge of a Lukan text without chapters 1–2,¹¹ such a total omission points, I think, to a Marcionite insight of fundamental material significance: It is simply not possible to read the Gospel of Luke with its opening chapters along Marcionite lines.

Why not? The simple but accurate answer is that the feel of these beginning chapters is just too Jewish. All of it had to go. But we may ask further, Jewish in what sense? Custom, ethos, allusions, or references to the Old Testament? Certainly that is the case. The Jewishness of the beginning of Luke's Gospel, however, runs much deeper than the general feel or atmosphere and actually only emerges fully at the intersection of what we might call theology proper and Christology—exactly that place where Marcionism carved out its distinctive teaching and held its appeal. This intersection and its implications underlie the necessity of the Marcionite rejection of the beginning portions of Luke's Gospel. The God of Israel and Jesus Christ must be kept separate, but the opening of the Lukan narrative will not allow such a separation. In fact it eliminates the possibility of conceiving of the God of Israel apart from Jesus Christ and vice versa.

Whether or not the actual Marcion grasped this matter in the way I have put it cannot be known, but the *in toto* rejection of 1:1–4:30 could

⁹ David Salter Williams, "Reconsidering Marcion's Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989): 477–96, draws out several of the difficulties and then attempts to reconstruct twenty-three different "explicit correlated readings" (i.e., passages that both Tertullian and Epiphanius cite explicitly). Williams's conclusion is that while there are certainly differences from the "modern, eclectically restored form" of Luke, Marcion's gospel nonetheless stood "closer to Luke than any other extant Gospel" (482).

¹⁰ At this point, I follow Harnack's reconstruction in *Marcion* (183–240).

¹¹ In asserting that Marcion did in fact know of Luke with chapters 1–2, I follow such scholars as Harnack, Loisy, Metzger, Zahn, et al. For the opposite position see, e.g., F. C. Conybeare, "Ein Zeugnis Ephräms über das Fehlen von c. 1 und 2 im Texte des Lucas," *ZNW* 3 (1902): 192–97; and, John Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament: An Essay in the Early History of the Canon* (Chicago: University Press, 1942). An important part of the question entails an opinion about the composition of Luke 1–2. For this matter, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 2 vols., AB 28/28A (New York: Doubleday, 1981, 1985), 1.309–312, is brief and judicious.

be seen to point that way. Regardless, I began with Marcion because the theology of separation raises in acute form an important question in relation to the *Verbindlichkeit* of the canon both in its external and internal dimensions—who is the God of the Bible?—and because Marcion’s rejection of the Old Testament and concomitant treatment of Luke’s Gospel sets this issue before us in sharp relief.¹² We will now make a few remarks about reading strategy and Lukan Old Testament hermeneutics, and then turn to the opening portions of the Gospel of Luke and focus on the introduction of Jesus into the narrative as κύριος as a way to open up the Lukan view of the relation of the God of Israel to Jesus Christ.

The God of Israel, Jesus, and the Gospel of Luke: Lukan Theology

Reading Strategy

At least since the time of Heidelberger Martin Dibelius, it has been assumed with confidence that the birth-infancy narratives are by and large later in origin than most of the material of the body of the Gospel. One of Raymond Brown’s monumental studies, *The Birth of the Messiah*, has in general confirmed this accepted hypothesis of an earlier generation.¹³ At times in the history of modern scholarship, however, this historical point—the relative lateness of the birth-infancy narrative—has disproportionately, indeed incorrectly, influenced the interpretation of the Gospel as a whole, as in for example Conzelmann’s relegation of Luke 1–2 to a position of unimportance in his famous book *Die Mitte der Zeit*.¹⁴ Yet the basic fact

¹² I have not attempted to translate “Verbindlich” or “Verbindlichkeit” into English due to the absence of a one-word equivalent. Part of the reason for the translation difficulty has to do with the fact that this one German word points in two directions. First, it can point to the inner relation of scripture to itself, so to speak (a kind of internal *Verbindlichkeit*), and, second, it can point to our relation to the canon (a kind of external *Verbindlichkeit*). Thus the conference theme had two subheadings: (1) *Vielstimmigkeit und Einheit der Schrift*, and (2) *Zum Problem der Normativität des Kanons*. While the internal and external dimensions can be distinguished formally, they cannot be separated, hence the general idea of the lecture: to problematize the distinction between external and internal as one of separation while accepting the descriptive difference. In this light, the lecture is best understood if seen as beginning with a question of external *Verbindlichkeit*, moving toward internal *Verbindlichkeit*, and then on that basis back out toward external *Verbindlichkeit*.

¹³ This is not to deny that the birth-infancy narratives contain traditions that may themselves be quite early.

¹⁴ Cf., also, e.g. J. Wellhausen’s slim commentary, *Das Evangelium Lucae* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1904), which begins outright with Luke 3:1.

remains that despite various attempts at reconstruction (proto-Luke, etc.), we have neither a single copy of Luke's Gospel without the birth-infancy narrative nor any really substantial evidence that the early followers of Jesus were acquainted with a Lukan Gospel minus the first two chapters.

The importance of this observation is at least twofold. First, if we want to understand *Lukan* theology we must read the Lukan Gospel as Luke shaped it,¹⁵ and this means taking seriously the placement of the first chapters at the beginning of the Gospel. Of course, Luke himself makes just this point with the use of the expression ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς in his προοίμιον. His narrative, he claims, is written “accurately in sequence,”¹⁶ at least in the literary sense.

Second, the importance of Luke's term διήγησις is presupposed. It is, in fact, the word that tells us in what way Luke wants his Gospel, or first book (πρῶτον λόγον; Acts 1:1), to be read: as a narrative. Despite the breaks or gaps in the narrative and the somewhat awkward but typical ἐγένετο δέ transitions, for example, the Gospel as a whole is nonetheless characterized by Luke in his highly self-conscious preface as a διήγησις, and the Gospel is therefore best understood if read this way. In terms of our particular study, this means that the way in which κύριος occurs in the narrative—its placement, its first and subsequent appearances, its relation to what comes before and after, and so forth—assumes first place in the order of interpretation. The uses of κύριος in the *Umwelt*, what we believe to have been likely, possible or impossible in the Jewish and larger Mediterranean world of the first century, Luke's relation to his sources, and so on, are all important hermeneutical factors with which we would have to deal in a larger study. But, acknowledging the necessary and helpful reflexivity that exists between narrative interpretation and factors

¹⁵ In this sense it really does not matter whether Luke composed chs. 1–2 first or last, whether he had them as a tradition and, after minor editing, simply affixed them to the body of the Gospel, etc. Whatever his compositional practice or treatment of his sources, it remains clear that he wanted 1–2 to be a part of his total narrative.

¹⁶ “Accurately in sequence” seems to me to be the best literal translation of ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς. Whether or not, and, if so, to what extent, Luke meant this in the strict sense of chronological agreement with actual events is impossible to know for sure. That Luke meant “accurately in sequence” in terms of the literary presentation itself seems to me to be confirmed by the nature of the preface (διήγησις, ἀσφάλεια, etc.), his use of καθεξῆς elsewhere (Luke 8:1 [in order or sequence; NRSV: went on through; Acts 3:24 [in order or sequence; NRSV: those after him]; Acts 11:4 [in order; NRSV: step by step]; Acts 18:23 [in sequence or in order; NRSV: place to place]), and both his respect for and rearrangement of Mark. See the brief discussion in Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.288–299, who himself thinks “literary order” is “the most evident sense of the adverb” (1.299).

external to the narrative proper, such external factors set in relation to the meaning of κύριος in Luke's Gospel must not be allowed to override the meaning generated by the narrative. The narrative has the first move, as it were.

Lukan Old Testament Hermeneutics

It has become well-known in contemporary Lukan exegesis that Luke 1–2 display a remarkable concern for continuity with the events, prophecies, and promises of the history of Israel. Such continuity is frequently, and rightly in my view, seen primarily in terms of Luke's use of the Old Testament.¹⁷ Luke Timothy Johnson may be correct that in its finer details Luke's method in using the Old Testament is subtle and “eludes . . . detection.”¹⁸ But there are nonetheless a number of important observations for us to make about Lukan Old Testament hermeneutics here in chapters 1—2 that have immediate bearing upon the interpretation of κύριος in the birth-infancy narrative.

Luke cites Scripture directly only twice (2:23, 24: both times prefaced with ἐν [τῷ] νόμῳ κυρίου), but the entire birth-infancy narrative is richly allusive,¹⁹ to the point that Nils Dahl suggested that Luke's intention was to “write the continuation of the biblical history.”²⁰ Against Raymond Brown's bridge metaphor,²¹ which fails because for Luke there is no gulf between the old and the new, Dahl's choice of the word “continuation” is apt. This is, in fact, the very point of Luke's numerous Old Testament allusions: There is continuity in the continuation of the action of the God of Israel that stretches from the Jewish biblical history to Jesus Christ. However, this continuation is not wooden. The promises in the Old

¹⁷ See, e.g., Joel B. Green's excellent essay, “The Problem of a Beginning: Israel's Scriptures in Luke 1–2,” *BBR* 4 (1994): 61–85.

¹⁸ Luke Timothy Johnson, “Luke–Acts,” *ABD* 4.409. For a comprehensive review of the treatment of Luke's use of the Old Testament, see most recently Dietrich Rusam's Bonn Habilitation, *Das Alte Testament bei Lukas*, BZNW 112 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003).

¹⁹ E.g., Gen 11–21 (Luke 1:5–2:52); 1 Sam 1:1–2:10 (Luke 1:5–2:52, esp. 1:46–55); Judg 13:2–25 (Luke 1:5–24); Dan 7–10 (1:5–2:52); Zeph 3:14–17 (Luke 1:26–33); Isa 2:9–12 (Luke 1:46–55); Isa 7:14 (Luke 1:27); Isa 9:6–7 (Luke 1:26–38); Isa 42:6 (Luke 1:79; 2:32); 49:6 (Luke 2:32); 52:10 (2:30–31); 2 Sam 7:12–16 (Luke 1:32–33); Mic 4:7–5:5 (Luke 2:1–14); Mal 3:1 (Luke 1:17, 76); Mal 4:5–6 (Luke 1:17).

²⁰ Nils Dahl, “The Story of Abraham in Luke–Acts,” in *Studies in Luke–Acts*, ed. Leander Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 139–58, esp. 153.

²¹ Raymond Brown, “Luke's Method in the Annunciation Narratives of Chapter One,” in *Perspectives on Luke–Acts*, ed. Charles Talbert (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), 126–38, esp. 138.

Testament and their fulfillment in Luke's time are not perfectly balanced or correlated. Luke does not work from a rigid prophecy/fulfillment scheme;²² nor are the prefigurations in the Old Testament of character and event (e.g., Abraham, Sarah, Hannah) read in simple typological correspondence with the characters and events of Luke's time. Rather, Luke's reading of the LXX²³ enables him to shape his story to exert pressure upon the reader by means of atmospheric resonance. The characters and events of the Old Testament are everywhere present and nowhere mentioned. The reader of the narrative in Luke 1–2 simply breathes the air of Old Testament, thereby rendering direct citation of the LXX superfluous. For those who have ears to hear, the stories of Abraham and Sarah and Isaac, and Hannah and Samuel, and Sampson, and King David, and the prophecies and promises of Isaiah, Daniel, Zephaniah, Micah, and Malachi echo throughout each line of the birth-infancy narrative. The hallowed past extends into the hallowed present even as this present reaches back into the past. The promises and their fulfillment form a single narrative grounded in the God of Israel's act in Jesus. As Paul Minear wrote nearly forty years ago: The "stories in Luke 1–2 unfold in such a way as to disclose a single skein of events, all of which stem from the marvelous fulfillment by God of his covenant promises to Israel."²⁴

What Minear and others²⁵ have seen clearly as a result of Luke's use of the Old Testament in chapters 1–2 is that the unity of the birth-infancy narrative itself and the continuity of the "new" events with the "old"

²² Martin Rese, *Alttestamentliche Motive in der Christologie des Lukas*, SZNT 1 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1969), 37–41, 134–35, is correct when he argues in relation to the Luke–Acts as a whole that a rigid prophecy/fulfillment scheme can obscure the distinctiveness and uniqueness of Luke's Old Testament citations. Rese purposefully does not treat allusions to the Old Testament, but his point holds here as well. This is not to deny the strong elements of prophecy and fulfillment that are obviously apparent (Schubert, Farris et al.) but is instead to point to Luke's varied and multifaceted use of the Old Testament.

²³ In light of recent Septuagintal studies it is necessary to clarify in what way the term Septuagint/LXX is being used. At this point in this essay, "the LXX" (the article is grammatically preferable in normal English usage) is used in the very general sense of the Greek-language Old Testament (assuming here that Luke's Old Testament texts were in Greek). Elsewhere in the essay, when citing from the Greek Old Testament, I will use "the LXX" to mean the critically reconstructed text of the Göttingen edition LXX.

²⁴ Paul Minear, "Luke's Use of the Birth Stories," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Keck and Martyn (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 111–29, esp. 116.

²⁵ See, e.g., the interpretive aside "God's Purpose, the Scriptures, and the 'Beginning' of Luke–Acts," in Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 51–57.

depend upon the purpose and action of God. Thus is such unity and continuity theological in the strict sense of the word, as it is the same God who provides the continuation of that which had been promised in the scriptures of Israel: There is fulfillment and unity of divine identity and purpose.

What has unfortunately not been as clearly seen is the depth or nature of this theological continuity. A primary reason is that Lukan theology and Christology have been kept too far apart. In this separation Luke's portrayal of God and of God's act in Jesus has been hidden from view. Conversely, Luke's view of Jesus and the animating power of his life have also remained insufficiently explored. In my judgment, both sides of this problematic could be helped by giving explicit and consistent attention to the question of the identity of God and of Jesus in relation to Luke's use of κύριος.

Luke 1:43

In the birth-infancy narrative, κύριος is used frequently in an unambiguous way to refer to the God of Israel (κύριος ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ; 1:68), and this usage normally displays septuagintal influence in both tone and diction. Luke writes, for example, in 1:6 of Zechariah and Elizabeth that they were righteous before God, πορευόμενοι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐντολαῖς καὶ δικαιομασιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμεμπτοι, and in 1:9 that Zechariah entered τὸν ναὸν τοῦ κυρίου to perform his priestly service. The use of κύριος for God alone that began in 1:6 extends through 1:38 where we encounter Mary's famous response to the news that she will bear God's Son: ἴδου ἡ δούλη κυρίου γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου. Between 1:38 and 1:39, however, there is a narrative gap during which time the conception of Jesus occurs. We are not told directly that he is conceived, but we can infer it on the basis of the encounter between Elizabeth and Mary in which Elizabeth refers to the "fruit" (καρπός) of Mary's womb (1:42) and addresses Mary as ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου. And it is with this address that Jesus himself appears in the narrative for the first time: ὁ κύριος in the womb.

As mentioned above, prior to 1:43 κύριος is used exclusively for the God (ten times), but now Jesus himself enters the narrative for the first time and is given the name/title ὁ κύριος. Elizabeth's acclamation, furthermore, is rooted in the Holy Spirit and, rather than issuing in a greeting of mere oriental politeness,²⁶ shows Jesus to be the κύριος to

²⁶ Werner Foerster in G. Quell and W. Foerster, "κύριος κτλ.," *ThWNT* 3.1038–98: "In orientalischer Höflichkeit mag (rein auf den Sprachgebrauch gesehen) Elisabeth die Maria 'Mutter meines Herrn' nennen" (1085) = *TDNT* 3.1039–98: "It is probably with oriental politeness, so far as linguistic usage is concerned, that Elisabeth can call Mary 'the mother of my Lord'" (1086).

whom she gives her allegiance: She calls him “my” κύριος. Elizabeth then continues: “Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her παρὰ κυρίου.” In this crucial moment of Jesus’ introduction, Elizabeth’s confession effects a double referent of the word κύριος between the as yet unborn and human κύριος of Mary’s womb and the κύριος of heaven, who has taken away Elizabeth’s shame (1:25, κύριος) and given the promise of the fruit of Mary’s womb.

Perhaps the fact that an overlap now exists between κύριος and κύριος is an obvious linguistic observation. Yet it is a crucial one. If one were to hear the Gospel read aloud (as would have been the case in the ancient world),²⁷ one would not be able to hear a difference between κύριος and κύριος but would instead experience a resonance, especially if the occasion was a Christian gathering for (charismatic) worship and edification in the 80s or 90s A.D.²⁸

- 1:6: τοῦ κυρίου
- 1:9: τοῦ κυρίου
- 1:11: κυρίου
- 1:15: τοῦ κυρίου
- 1:16: κύριον τὸν θεόν
- 1:17: κυρίῳ
- 1:25: κύριος
- 1:28: ὁ κύριος
- 1:32: κύριος ὁ θεός
- 1:38: κυρίου
- 1:43: τοῦ κυρίου
- 1:45: κυρίου
- 1:46: τὸν κύριον

In light of the Old Testament context of Luke 1–2, Luke’s frequent use of κύριος for the God of Israel, and the movement of the Lukan narrative, it becomes possible to draw the conclusion that the dramatic moment of 1:43 in the narrative bespeaks a unity of identity²⁹ between

²⁷ For an excellent discussion of early Christian literacy, see Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), esp. 2–10.

²⁸ By the time Luke’s Gospel would have been read, Jesus had already been acclaimed and worshipped as κύριος for at least three decades (cf. the pre-Pauline hymn in Phil 2:5–11).

²⁹ In this context I use identity to mean that which is essentially related to identifying the thing in question: As we will see, to speak of who Jesus is in Luke’s Gospel is already and simultaneously to speak of the God of Israel, and to speak of who the God of Israel is, is already and simultaneously to speak of Jesus. One

YHWH and the human Jesus within Mary's womb by means of the word κύριος. Such a unity is not for Luke, as one might want to claim in the case of John, theologically propositional or based upon predication. Rather, the unity is narratively constituted: By means of the same word and the flow of the narrative, Luke creates a space wherein an overlap cannot help but to take place, and which thus results in a doubleness in terms of the referent of κύριος.

Two further points are important in helping us continue to move forward. First, it is possible to speak this way because of the Holy Spirit. The reason that κύριος is now constitutive of Jesus' identity and that the one word κύριος has a twofold referent is because of the work of the Holy Spirit in the conception of Jesus. In the birth-infancy narrative of Luke, Jesus' life cannot be thought of apart from the Power of the Most High, as it is the Holy Spirit, God in his life-giving *Seinsweise*,³⁰ or τρόπος υπάρξεως,³¹ who begins the new baby's life as ὁ κύριος. Thus it is that by the power of the Spirit, God's life is now bound up with Jesus' life to such a great extent and with such intensity that they share the name/title κύριος.

Second, unlike the tetragrammaton, κύριος is not univocal. The word can refer to rulers, deities, slave masters, colt owners, and the like. Luke himself, for example, uses κύριος for Nero in Acts 25:26, and one can quite rightly assume that no overlap in identity between Jesus (or God) and Nero is intended (though there is a contrast). If, then, our interpretation of the overlap between the God of Israel and Jesus through the word κύριος is on target, we would need to see evidence in other parts of the narrative that would confirm the binding of the same word to these two different persons/characters in the narrative in particular, as distinct from other possible referents and/or overlaps. In other words, does our interpretation play out in the rest of the narrative?

cannot identify Jesus as who he is apart from the God of Israel, and vice versa. There is a binding of the two persons (unity) with respect to who they are (identity). For Luke, there does not seem to be a "personal or individual existence" (OED, "identity") of Jesus in abstraction from God or of God in abstraction from Jesus. Yet there is a distinction between κύριος ὁ θεός and κύριος χριστός. On this point, see below.

³⁰ Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* I/1 §9.2, 379ff. *Church Dogmatics* I/1 §9.2, 359ff.

³¹ Cappadocians: e.g., Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 46 (Migne, PG, 32.152B); Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, 1 (Migne, PG, 45.316C). For other uses, see the list in *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (ed. G. W. H. Lampe), 1434–35.

Luke 2:11

Many scholars both past and present have taken *χριστός* to be the most important Christological title for Jesus in Luke.³² I think that this assessment is incorrect, or at best highly debatable, but the details of this matter can wait for another time. What is important to note now is something that is significant in itself: The first time *χριστός* occurs in the Gospel narrative it occurs with *κύριος*. Luke does not write, as he is perfectly capable of writing elsewhere, *χριστός* or *ὁ χριστός* and leave it at that. Instead, he evidently wants the reader/auditor to read/hear *χριστός* together with *κύριος* right at the outset.

I agree with Fitzmyer et al. that we should, with the best Greek manuscripts and in light of Acts 10:36, read two anarthrous nominatives (*χριστός κύριος*) at 2:11 rather than correct to *χριστός κυρίου* in light of the expression *ὁ χριστός κυρίου* just fifteen verses later in Luke 2:26.³³ But this decision does not determine the meaning automatically. “Christ, the Lord” is the most common English reading, but the “anointed Lord” (taking *χριστός* as an adjective) is also possible. One might also propose the “lordly Messiah” as the meaning, though this is somewhat awkward grammatically. The first rendering keeps the titles separate and distinct (so Fitzmyer); the latter two bring them together.

I submit that whatever their various etymological and cultural histories, Luke here uses both words together in a mutually determinative manner: *χριστός* conveys which and what kind of *κύριος* Jesus is, and *κύριος* discloses the depth of Jesus’ messianic identity. This way of putting it would seem to require, in English at least, translating in a rather jarring way such that both titles are kept separate and intact as nominative nouns: “Christ Lord.” This jarring translation, however, points immediately toward a larger narrative interpretation that would bring the words together (the messianic *κύριος* and the Lord who is the *χριστός*).

The importance of 2:11 for our focus is that it serves to maintain both a distinction and a unity. On the one hand, Jesus is not the same person in the narrative as the *κύριος* who remains *κύριος πατήρ* in heaven (cf. in this context 2:9, 15, 26; cf. 11:3); Jesus is the messianic *κύριος*, who is born on earth. On the other hand, there is a unity between them such that they are both *κύριος* with respect to their basic identity. Of interest in this connection is Dibelius’s suggestion that Luke added *ὅς ἐστιν χριστός κύριος* with its titles to the pre-Lucan message *ἐτέχθη ὑμῖν*

³² E.g., E. Earl Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke*, NCB, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 9–12, 32–36; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.197.

³³ Contra, e.g., Paul Winter, “Lukanische Miscellen,” *ZNW* 49 (1958): 65–75.

σήμερον σωτήρ ἐν πόλει Δαβὶδ and thus created some tension with the other nearby uses of κύριος, which refer to God (2:9, 15, 26).³⁴ Whether or not Dibelius's hypothesis is true we cannot know—I am increasingly skeptical about unverifiable source hypotheses for Luke 1–2³⁵—but his recognition of the tension speaks again for a narrative overlap between Jesus and the God of Israel arising out of the word κύριος. In other portions of the Luke–Acts narrative, such a tension between the proper referent of κύριος is so pronounced as to be fully ambiguous, rendering an exegetically responsible choice between Jesus and God impossible, as we shall see in Luke 3:4–6.

Luke 3:4–6

In order to see the significance of 3:4–6 clearly, we should first make mention of 1:76. In Luke 1:76 Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesies that his son John will go “ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἐτοιμάσαι ὁδὸς αὐτοῦ.” Luke 1:76 is fully ambiguous in itself as regards the identity of the κύριος. That is, one cannot decide on exegetical grounds whether the κύριος is the God of Israel or Jesus. In fact, we can go further and assert that the *either* YHWH or Jesus forced upon the text by many exegetes turns out to be a false dichotomy. Alfred Plummer, for example, writes that “[h]ere κυρίου means Jehovah, not the Christ,”³⁶ while Bovon, Fitzmyer,

³⁴ Martin Dibelius, “Jungfrauensohn und Krippenkind. Untersuchungen zur Geburts-geschichte Jesu im Lukas-Evangelium,” in *Botschaft und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze von Martin Dibelius*, 2 vol., ed. Günther Bornkamm (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953, 1955), 1–78 (62–63).

³⁵ H. J. Cadbury's judgment is prudent: Luke's “personal style is never so totally wanting as to prove alien origins for a passage, and is never so persuasive as to exclude the possibility that a written source existed, although the source be no longer capable of detection by any residual difference in style” (*The Making of Luke-Acts* [London: Macmillan, 1927], 67). Though with a slightly different emphasis, Brown, *Birth*, 246, cites this passage from Cadbury in order to assess the current state of the question: “[t]he linguistic opponents have fought one another to a draw at the present moment of our scientific research.”

³⁶ Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), 42. So also Friedrich Bleek, *Synoptische Erklärung der drei ersten Evangelien* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1862), 63; C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 186; H. J. Holtzmann, *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament. Erster Band: Die Synoptiker—Die Apostelgeschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1889), 36; Erich Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1919), 388; Schneider, “Gott und Christus,” 167, and, idem, *Lukas*, 62 (though here Schneider asserts that in light of the whole Gospel κύριος may be seen to refer to Jesus, but the immediate context requires “God” to be the referent).

and Jeremias, among others, think the κύριος is Jesus.³⁷ Johannes Weiss shrewdly attempts to have it both ways—that is, he sees the ambiguity—but leaves the matter uninterpreted: κυρίου “scheint nach V. 17 auf Gott bezogen werden zu müssen; vielleicht aber hat Lk es auf Christus bezogen, da er sonst κυρ. so braucht (im Gegensatz zu ὑψιστος).”³⁸ In any case, in the next edition of the commentary, the ninth, father Bernhard flattened Johannes’ judgment and, noting the change from the eighth edition, asserted that the κυρίου refers to YHWH.³⁹

This either/or dichotomy is widespread, but in every case it begins with a false assumption about the relation of Lukan theology and Christology which, when carried over into exegesis, obscures the theological significance of the use of κύριος and smothers the actual dynamic of the text. The doubleness in the referent of κύριος retains the ambiguity present in the text and allows the ambiguity to be understood as both/and. To speak of the God of Israel as κύριος is to speak of Jesus as κύριος, and vice versa. This unity is confirmed in Luke 3:4–6.

³⁷ Bovon, *Lukas*, 1.108; Joachim Jeremias, *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums: Redaktion und Tradition im Nicht-Markusstoff des dritten Evangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 23; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.385; So also A. R. C. Leaney, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, BNTC (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), 90, and William Manson, *The Gospel of Luke*, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 15.

³⁸ Bernhard Weiss and Johannes Weiss, *Die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas*, Meyer Kritisch exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 8th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892), 318. The eighth edition of the Meyer series commentary was done by Johannes.

³⁹ Bernhard Weiss, *Die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas*, Meyer Kritisch exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 9th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901), 294. Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, 388, mistakenly disagrees with “Bernhard” (it should be Johannes; Bernhard thinks otherwise, at least by 1901). Perhaps Klostermann realized his mistake, for in the second edition (1929) he drops the reference to Weiss. One also wonders if Klostermann did not in fact become more sympathetic with Johannes’s statement in the eight edition of the Meyer commentary. After declaring that in light of 1:16–17 the κυρίου of 1:76 certainly refers to God, Klostermann writes: “Lc selbst müßte dann die Beziehung auf den Messias Jesus hineingelegt haben” (28). Johannes Weiss himself, however, later seems to have agreed with his father (see *Die Schriften des Neuen Testament. Erster Band: Die drei älteren Evangelien. Die Apostelgeschichte* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1906], 392, where Jesus/Messiah is not even mentioned). A serious problem with the approach of Weiss and Klostermann is that while they attempt to work on two different levels, that of the pre-Lukan context and the Lukan one, they frequently merge the two levels and lose consistency. Such a merger also creates methodological and hermeneutical confusion, as can be seen in the use of other Lukan narrative clues (1:16–17) to support the pre-Lukan hypothesis about referent (1:76).

Luke 3:1 begins formally the body of the Gospel and opens with specific historical indications of the time at which the “fulfilled” (1:1) events took place. John the Baptist, now a grown man, appears from the wilderness as a prophet, fulfilling his vocation as a herald by trumpeting forth anew the words of the prophet Isaiah:

φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
 ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου
 εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ
 πᾶσα φάραγξ πληρωθήσεται
 καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ βουνὸς ταπεινωθήσεται
 καὶ ἔσται τὰ σκολιὰ εἰς εὐθείαν
 καὶ αἱ τραχεῖαι εἰς ὁδοὺς λείας
 καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ

The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
 Prepare the way of the Lord!
 Make straight his paths!
 Every valley shall be filled,
 And every mountain and hill shall be made low!
 And the crooked places shall be made straight,
 And the rough places shall be made smooth!
 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God!

This citation of Isa 40:3–5 in Luke 3:4–6 is the fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy in Luke 1:76 and forces again the question of the identity of the κύριος. In the Isaiah quotation itself the κυρίου of 40:3 (Luke 3:4) clearly refers to YHWH, as does the τοῦ θεοῦ of 40:5 (Luke 3:6). In Luke’s narrative, however, the referent of the κυρίου is, as in the prophecy of 1:76, ambiguous. Because 3:4–6 is an Old Testament quotation, the κύριος in 3:4 is unquestionably the μόνος κύριος of the Old Testament; because John the Baptist in Luke’s narrative literally does prepare the way for Jesus structurally, sequentially, and as his prophet, the κύριος indubitably refers to Jesus (the absolute ὁ κύριος is used at least thirteen times in Luke’s Gospel). Exegesis that would see here only a reference to Jesus simply ignores the multiple uses of κύριος for God earlier in the narrative and the force of the point that this passage is an indisputable citation from the Old Testament.⁴⁰ Conversely, exegesis that would see here only a reference to God simply ignores the structure and movement of the Gospel.⁴¹

⁴⁰ So, e.g., I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1978), 136, who identifies the κύριος as Jesus, “not as God.”

⁴¹ So, e.g., Bleek, *Synoptische Erklärung*, 159, who gives the complete weight to the Old Testament quotation and speaks of a people prepared for YHWH.

Furthermore, as in Mark 1:3, in Isa 40:3 (Luke 3:4) there is a small but significant difference between the septuagintal text and Luke's citation of this same text. Where the LXX reads εὐθείας ποιείτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, "make straight the paths of *our God*" (Isa 40:3), Luke reads εὐθείας ποιείτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ, "make straight *his* paths" (Luke 3:4).⁴² It is tempting to argue with Bovon, Green, Schneider, Schürmann, et al. that the αὐτοῦ adds clarity and provides the interpretative key.⁴³ The exegetical move would then be to assert on this basis that Luke, with Mark,⁴⁴ intends that the κύριος of 3:4 refer to Jesus—hence the substitution of αὐτοῦ for τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. This argument, however, moves in the wrong direction. In reality, the αὐτοῦ produces precisely the reverse effect. It removes clarity and creates ambiguity, as it removes the noun and substitutes a pronoun, thus throwing all the weight back upon κύριος. As a result the referent of the αὐτοῦ in itself is unclear and is dependent upon whom one takes the κύριος to be—a decision which is fraught with ambiguity.

It is exegetically impossible to resolve the ambiguity of the κύριος with an either/or dichotomy. There is simply no way to settle the issue with certainty. A both/and exegesis avoids pressing the text into a preconceived either/or mold and instead reflects the tension inherent within the text. As in the prophecy in 1:76, so here in its fulfillment the ambiguity of the κύριος overlap captures the fundamental correlation between the God of Israel and Jesus expressed in the doubleness of the single κύριος.

Wirkungsgeschichte: The impact of the overlap and ambiguity in Luke's use of κύριος can be seen already in the clarifying tendency of the scribes of Codex Bezae (D), though for D one cannot speak of a systematic clarification. A good example is the reading of Bezae here at Luke 3:4–6. The best way to see the significance is to compare the relevant parts of the text of the LXX, the best Lukan reading, and D.

φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
 ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν **κυρίου**
 εὐθείας ποιείτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν
 . . . καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ (LXX)

φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
 ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν **κυρίου**

⁴² On the reading of Codex Bezae, see below.

⁴³ Bovon, *Lukas*, 1.170.; Green, *Luke*, 171; Schneider, "Gott und Christus," 167 nt. 36, Schürmann, *Lukas*, 1.160 nt. 98. So also, e.g., Evans, *Saint Luke*, 106; and, Plummer, *Luke*, 87.

⁴⁴ Mark is much more clear here than Luke. Mark begins outright with Jesus and John the Baptist, and there are no other previous occurrences of κύριος, as in the Lukan text, that cause one to wonder about the referent of κύριος.

εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ
 ... καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ (Luke)

φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
 ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν **κυρίου**
 εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους ὑμῶν
 ... καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον **κυρίου** (D)

The differences of D are striking. Whereas in the septuagintal text the κύριος ambiguity does not exist because of the clear continuity of θεός (τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ; this is not to mention that the possibility of ambiguity did not yet exist), in the D text, the ambiguity does not exist because of the change to direct address (the significance of the ὑμῶν)⁴⁵ and scribal adjustment toward κύριος. Thus, in the Bezae reading the removal of θεός and the second use of κύριος, coupled with John's direct address to the crowds, clearly points toward a scribe's Christological interpretation of κύριος. The Lord of whom John speaks in D is Jesus. In the Gospel alone, a similar Christological tendency can also be seen, for example, at 7:13; 13:15; and 22:61, where D reads Ἰησοῦς in place of κύριος.⁴⁶

Luke 20:41–44

There no need here for a detailed investigation of our final passage from the Gospel, but it is important nonetheless to mention. A significant question emerges from the fact that Jesus is clearly ὁ χριστὸς κυρίου (2:26) and simultaneously ὁ κύριος (1:43, etc.) and χριστὸς κύριος (2:11): How do the nominative and the genitive fit together? That is, how can Jesus be both *the Lord* (κύριος) and the *Christ of the Lord* (κυρίου)? Precisely this matter is at issue in Luke 20:41–44, where on the basis of Ps 110:1 it is the Lord who raises the same question: “David therefore calls him κύριον; how then is he his son?” (20:44).

Two observations are pertinent to our purpose here. First, as with 2:11, Luke preserves a distinction between the messianic κύριος (David's son,

⁴⁵ So, rightly, George Edward Rice, “The Alterations of Luke's Tradition by the Textual Variants in Codex Bezae” (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1974), 44. Rice treats only Isa 40:3 and argues that the purpose of the Bezae scribes was to heighten the role of John the Baptist. That such a tendency exists in D may well be the case. But if one looks at the entire quotation from Isaiah (40:3–5), the more immediate explanation here is that of an alteration for Christological purposes.

⁴⁶ Cf. Luke 1:9 where D reads θεοῦ instead of κυρίου and 24:3 where D omits τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ altogether.

ὁ χριστός) and the κύριος in heaven (ὁ κύριος)⁴⁷ at whose right hand the exalted Messiah will sit. Conzelmann's description, therefore, of Luke's use of κύριος for God and for Jesus as a *Vermischung* is inaccurate.⁴⁸ Even within the single word κύριος Luke is careful to preserve a distinction between, to use other language, the κύριος υἱός and the κύριος πατήρ. In light of this preserved distinction, the overlap in the referent of the word κύριος should not be understood in terms of a meshing or mixing together of two different persons/characters (as *Vermischung* implies), but rather in terms of the narrative continuity and unity of identity of Jesus and the God of Israel together as κύριος, as I have attempted to describe above.

Second, this distinction between the messianic and heavenly κύριος (or Father and Son) is grounded in an Old Testament text, which is to say that there is scriptural justification for Luke's use of κύριος for both the God of Israel and for Jesus. The connection to the Old Testament highlights once again the importance of the Jewish scripture for a major facet of Lukan Christology.

Acts 2:36 and 10:36

The last two passages we need to consider are in Acts. The first passage is Acts 2:36b, which, after citing Ps 110:1 (109:1 LXX), reads: "God has made him [Jesus] both Lord [κύριος] and Christ [χριστός]." We cannot know for certain whether this confession is an early piece of kerygma adapted by Luke or an original part of the Lukan speech-composition.⁴⁹ Regardless, to read this verse in itself as an expression of Lukan theology is wrongheaded. It is clearly not the case that Luke believes Jesus to have become κύριος and/or χριστός only with his resurrection and exaltation—the entire Lukan narrative tells against such an interpretation. Instead, we should see this passage as strategically incorporated into the larger narrative and seek to discern its meaning and function in that connection. With the larger narrative context in mind, the contribution that Acts 2:36 makes to the understanding of κύριος has to do with the significance of the resurrection for Jesus' identity as ὁ κύριος.

⁴⁷ NA²⁷ does not print the article. The text-critical problem here is difficult to solve. However, when one takes account of the fact that the D scribes have a noticeable tendency to alter uses of κύριος throughout the Gospel text, then B is the only strong ms. left with an anarthrous reading. In this light, I would tend to go with the majority of the best Greek mss. and read the article. But an articular reading is not certain, and, in any case, Luke's point remains the same with both readings.

⁴⁸ See *Die Mitte der Zeit*, 4.I.2 "Vater, Sohn, Geist," esp. 165 & 172.

⁴⁹ On speeches in the Mediterranean world, Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 45–47, manages to be lucid and brief without oversimplifying the matter.

Between the earthly and exalted Jesus is his crucifixion and death. Jesus' crucifixion as a criminal⁵⁰ and ultimately his death quite understandably threatened his identity as ὁ κύριος. But in raising Jesus from the dead, God the Father ensures the continuity of the messianic κύριος through suffering and death. From his conception by the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus is κύριος, but the resurrection nevertheless makes a profound difference for Lukan Christology, for it vindicates Jesus as the κύριος πάντων and establishes his rule overall (effected in the spread of the Gospel). Thus the difference between Luke 1:43 and Acts 2:36 is not one of identity but one of place (earthly and heavenly Lord) and effect (universal mission). Through its development the narrative "appears as the path of character,"⁵¹ meaning in this case that the identity of the character is inseparable from the narrative in which he appears. Indeed, "the identity of the character is constructed in connection with that of the plot."⁵² Jesus κύριος, then, is in Acts the same character in the still-unfolding same story that began in Luke 1–2: There is a narratively constituted continuity of identity through his crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

Acts 10:36 declares that Jesus is κύριος πάντων. Epictetus says the same thing of the Roman Emperor,⁵³ and similar pronouncements exist in surviving inscriptions.⁵⁴ So also, from the domain of the mystery cults, in Plutarch's *Moralia* Osiris is ὁ πάντων κύριος. In relation to the Roman Emperor, I would see here a rival claim to ultimate and definitive lordship, and in relation to the gods and goddesses of the mystery cults, a clash with the κύριοι πολλοί, to use Pauline language. But what about in relation to the Jewish God, who in Old Testament theology is certainly the only κύριος πάντων? Nehemiah 9:6, for example, says simply: σὺ εἶ αὐτὸς κύριος μόνος (You yourself are the only κύριος!; LXX 2 Esdras 19:6).⁵⁵ This universal Lordship continues

⁵⁰ In Luke's story, I take the centurion's judgment of Jesus as δίκαιος (23:47) as pointing toward existing accusations of Jesus' criminality. Cf. Jesus' question to the arresting party in 22:52 (ληστής is used frequently in Josephus for the "bandits"), the description of Barabbas (ληστής), and the crucifixion of the two criminals (κακοῦργοι) alongside Jesus.

⁵¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University Press, 1992), 146. See especially chapter 5 "Personal Identity and Narrative Identity" and chapter 6 "The Self and Narrative Identity."

⁵² *Ibid.*, 141.

⁵³ Epictetus, *Discourses* IV.1.12 (the Roman Emperor is ὁ πάντων κύριος καίσαρ).

⁵⁴ E.g., ὁ τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου κύριος Νέρων (Ditt., Syll³ II.814, lns. 30–31).

⁵⁵ Cf. e.g., Deut 6:4: ἄκουε Ἰσραὴλ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστὶ (Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!); Isa 2:11 (cf. 2:17): καὶ ὑπωθήσεται

clearly even within the Gospel of Luke itself, where Jesus addresses the God of Israel as *πάτερ κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς* which is, of course, formally the same thing as *κύριος πάντων* (10:21; Marcion omits *καὶ τῆς γῆς*).⁵⁶

The only way the *κύριος πάντων* predication of Jesus would not constitute a rival claim or a clash—indeed an outright Marcionite rejection of the God of Israel—would be if God and Jesus could both be *κύριος πάντων* in such a way that there was no conflict between them. On Old Testament theological grounds, there is simply not room for two *κύριοι πάντων*. Indeed, in an Old Testament framework the idea of two *κύριοι πάντων* is a logical contradiction.

Ἰησοῦς κύριος πάντων is in the end only a possibility because in some way Jesus shares an identity with the Lord of Israel that is narratively constituted through the word *κύριος*. This shared identity as *κύριος* both derives from and interprets the *κύριος* overlap and ambiguity of the narrative (the latter of which is considerably more pronounced in Acts). The possibility and continuity lie with God himself in the power of his Holy Spirit, and thus is the continuity between the Old and the New, strictly speaking, theological.

Conclusions

We began with the Marcionite severing of the God of Israel from Jesus Christ and the attempt to read some of the Lukan Gospel in light of such a complete separation. We then turned to a few important texts in Luke's Gospel and in Acts and saw that contrary to the Marcionite reading, the unity between the God of Israel and Jesus Christ in the Lukan narrative is so strong that we could say with Hans Frei that Jesus *κύριος* is the

κύριος μόνος ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ (And the only *κύριος* will be exalted in that day!); Isa 42:8: *ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεός τοῦτο μου ἐστὶν τὸ ὄνομα τὴν δόξαν μου ἐτέρῳ οὐ δώσω* (I am the Lord God, this is my Name; my glory I will not give to another!); Ezek 39:7: *καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ ἅγιον γνωσθήσεται ἐν μέσῳ λαοῦ μου Ἰσραὴλ καὶ οὐ βεβηλωθήσεται τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ ἅγιον οὐδέτι καὶ γνώσονται τὰ ἔθνη ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ἅγιον ἐν Ἰσραὴλ* (And my holy name will be made known in the midst of my people Israel and my holy name will no longer be blasphemed. And the Gentiles will know that I am *κύριος*, the Holy One of Israel), etc. For similar expressions in the OT apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, see Henry J. Cadbury, "The Titles of Jesus in Acts," in *The Beginnings of Christianity. Part I: The Acts of the Apostles*, 5 vols., ed. Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1933), 5.354–75 (361–62).

⁵⁶ Luke also has Paul say this of God in the Areopagus speech (Acts 17:24). Interestingly, Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.117, classifies the phrase "Lord of heaven and earth" as an Aramaism in light of the parallel with 1QapGen 22:16.

“manifestation of the presence of God acting.”⁵⁷ Or, to put it more precisely for our question here: Jesus is the presence of the God of Israel acting. In this connection clarity emerged with respect to a material agreement between the Lukan narrative and Marcionite theology, namely, that the person of Jesus Christ is a potential theological threat to the Old Testament precisely at the point of his relation to the God of Israel: If the God of the Jewish scripture and the God of Jesus Christ are not the same God the unity of the old and the new collapses. But it is also exactly at this point that Marcionite and Lukan theology part ways, toward a strict separation and discarding of the Old Testament on the one hand, and toward a unity of the old and the new at the most basic level of the identity of the God of Israel and Jesus Christ on the other.

When one looks at Luke, then, the *Verbindlichkeit* in relation to the Old Testament inheres less in explicit textual clues than it does in the presentation of the divine reality, or, differently said, the continuity of the self-same God. So, at both a theological-confessional level and a literary-presentational one, the binding authority of the Old Testament derives from God.

This raises for us the following interconnected questions: What exactly is the relation between internal and external *Verbindlichkeit*? Is it simply that as a community we have decided that a positive relationship to the Old Testament is necessary, and that we could have just as easily decided on the Marcionite option, only we did not? Or, is there some logic or force—or something—within this sort of internal *Verbindlichkeit* that guides us of necessity in certain ways rather than in others in terms of our binding attachment (external *Verbindlichkeit*) to the Old Testament?

Luke’s answer—that is, the internal answer—is that it is the same God. Must not that also be our answer—the external one? And, if so, does not that raise the question of the divine authority of the text vis-à-vis the community’s reception of this text? (Which points again, of course, toward the relation of internal and external *Verbindlichkeit*, as well as to the question of legitimate and illegitimate forms of *Sachkritik*.) **N-V**

⁵⁷ Hans W. Frei, “The Identity of Jesus Christ” in *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays*, ed. George Hunsiger and William C. Placher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 74.

